CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE ELIZABTHAN AND JACOBEAN DRAMA

1.1. Introduction to Drama

Drama is an art form that explores human conflict and tension. It generally takes the form of a story presented to an audience through dialogue and action. The story is conveyed using the elements of the theatre: acting, costumes, scenery, music and sound. M.H. Abrams defines drama as: “The form of composition [that is] designed for performance in the theatre, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue (The common alternative name for a dramatic composition is a play)” (1998: 69). E. Kier comments that, drama is understood as the specific mode of fiction represented in performance (1980: 97). The term ‘drama’ comes from a Greek word meaning “action”, which is derived from the verb “to act”. The performance of drama in theatre, performed by actors on a stage before an audience, presupposes collaborative modes of production and a collective form of reception. The structure of dramatic texts, unlike other forms of literature, is directly influenced by this collaborative production and collective reception.

Drama is any work designed to be presented by actors. It is a real or fictional depiction of characters and events presented to an audience. Being a serious performance; it is sometimes applied to real-life events that have a similar serious nature, such as a trial or a disaster. Different people whether primitives or of modern professions impersonate certain characters for a ritualistic or religious purpose or
entirely for entertainment. This impersonation is the first and cardinal element in
drama and the attendance of the audience is the second element. Drama in its middle
sense is something to be interpreted by actors, and in the modern period, this
something is a dialogue to be spoken. In general, drama ranges from tragedy to
melodrama and from high comedy to farce. Sometimes, clear distinctions are in
practice drawn between the “art” proper and the technique of the art used for non
aesthetic ends. People go to see plays sometimes for pure entertainment and
sometimes for experiencing the emotional intensity. Apart from entertainment, drama
aims to reform society through creating awareness among people regarding different
issues.

1.2. Origin of Drama

At the end of the sixth century B.C. the Greek theater was established in
Athens. Ancient Greek drama had theatrical culture that flourished in ancient Greece
between 600 BC and 200 BC. The city state of Athens, which became a significant
cultural, political and military power during this period, was its centre, where it was
institutionalized as a part of a festival called the Dionysia, which honored the God
Dionysia. During this period tragedy (late 6th century B.C.), comedy (486 B.C.), and
the satire, these three dramatic genres emerged. Athens transferred this festival to its
numerous colonies and collaborators in order to promote a common cultural identity.
Western theatre was originated in Athens and its drama has had a significant and
sustained impact on Western culture as a whole.

The ancient Athenians created a theatre culture whose form, technique and
terminology have lasted two millennia, and the plays created by them are still
considered among the greatest works of world drama. Greek drama was dominated by the works and innovations of five playwrights over the 200 years following Thespis. The first three of them were tragedians. Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.), who is most famous for his tragic trilogy the *Oresteia*, introduced the concept of a second actor, expanding the possibilities for plot and theatrical representation through the interaction of two characters in his dramas. Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) initiated this innovation after Aeschylus. He is famous for his *Oedipus Rex*. In his works the role of the chorus in Greek drama diminishes in favor of the interplay between characters and the development of character itself. It was Euripides (480-406 B.C.), however, while winning fewer competitions than Aeschylus or Sophocles, who foreshadowed the ultimate form of drama, employing a far naturalistic or human approach in his works.

The dramatic performances were important to the Athenians. They used to organize competition of tragedies and festival in the city Dionysia. The festival was started roughly around 508 BC and it was used to organize to foster loyalty among the tribes of Attica. The Greek theatre history began with festivals honoring their Gods. God, Dionysus, was honored with a festival called by “City Dionysia”. In Athens, during this festival, men used to perform songs to welcome Dionysus. Plays were only presented at City Dionysia festival. Athens was the main center for these theatrical traditions. Athenians spread these festivals to its numerous allies in order to promote a common identity.

After the destruction of Athens by the Persian Empire in 480 BC, the town Athens and acropolis were rebuilt. Theatre became formalized besides the formalization of the major part of Athenian culture and civic pride. This century is normally regarded as the Golden Age of Greek drama. The central part of the annual
Dionysia festival which took place once in winter and once in spring, was the competition between the three tragic playwrights- Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides at the Theatre of Dionysus. (Pfister 1977: 21)

Tragedy, comedy, and satire plays were the theatrical forms. Tragedy and comedy were viewed as completely separate genres. Satire plays were used to deal with the mythological subjects in comic manner. Aristotle’s Poetics set out a thesis about the perfect structure for tragedy. Tragedy evolved from dithyrambs. Dithyrambs were songs sung in praise of Dionysus at the Dionysia at the festival each year.

Comedy was an important part of ancient Greek theatre which was derived from imitation. Aristophanes wrote many comedies. Out of these many, only 11 survived. A humorous comedy titled as Lysistrata is about a strong woman who leads a female coalition to end war in Greece. According to M. Banham: ancient Greek comedy is traditionally divided between “old comedy” (5th century B.C.), “middle comedy” (4th century B.C) and “new comedy” (late 4th century to 2nd B.C). (1998: 444)

1.3. Development of Drama

The development of drama passed through many different steps. First, it was composed of an act. When the act was completed with full meaning, it became a story. When this story was performed on the stage, it was the natural development of the drama. Many important events of history as well as great personalities started formalized and were reflected through drama. The following generations started representing the main parts of the story of great personalities on stage through it. The
fusion of real and imaginary elements used to appeal most powerfully to the imagination of audience.

There was chronological development from miracle plays to morality and thence to interludes. There were many types of drama. Following were prominent among them.

1.3.1. The Religious Drama

This type of drama had a distinctly religious origin in Greece as well as in Europe. The service of the church was the subject of these plays. The characters were used to be drawn from New Testament and there was a reward for good characters who enhance a moral lesson. Later on, the church realized the descent of morality on the stage because the stage was possessed by frightful plays in the days of Roman Empire. The plays of every kind were forbidden as the church itself started providing substitute for them in the famous mysteries and miracles.

1.3.2. Miracle and Mystery Plays

Drama’s history in England is approximately dated from the eleventh century and the earliest theatrical performance in English is believed to have been the performance of a Latin play in honour of St. Kathrine. By the time of the Roman conquest (1066), a form of religious drama established itself in France, after which it found its way into England for a didactic purpose. Priests started conveying truths of their religion and its instructions to different sects of people through it.

The priests of the churches perform religious duties in the churches using the Latin language. This form of drama was known as the miracle or mystery plays. The source of the mystery plays was the Bible. The mysteries and miracles were consisted
of the different stories of the saints in whose honor they used to act. These plays changed the stage, from the interior of the building to the porch. Later, it was taken from the porch to the churchyard and finally from the church premises altogether to the village green or the city street. By this time laymen began to take part in the performances, and soon they superseded the priests entirely. The Latin language was taken by French and then by English (Paul 2005: 7). The Mysteries taught and explained the universal principles of life, religion and arts. Hence, they were called in the true sense of the word “universities.”

In Europe, particularly in France, the plays which represented the lives of saints were miracles, while the mystery represented scenes from the life of Christ or stories from the Old Testament that is associated with the coming of the Messiah. In England, miracle plays had their origin from the Bible. The name mystery was used after the religious drama had perished. The miracles had taken strong hold upon the English people, and they continued to be immensely popular until they were replaced by the Elizabethan drama, in the sixteenth century. (Long 2006:116-18)

In short “miracles” were based on biblical or sacred stories. The “morality” were didactic religious parables. The term “mysteries” was never applied in England to the miracle plays or morality plays. The term “mysteries” was used in England later on. Historians of English drama have commented that the term “mysteries” was French and not English.

Mystery and Miracle plays were earliest formally developed plays in medieval Europe. Medieval mystery plays focused on the representation of Bible stories in church. These plays developed from the 10th to the 16th century. They reached the
height of their popularity in the 15th century before being rendered obsolete by the rise
of professional theatre. The name derives from mystery used in its sense of miracle,
but an occasionally quoted derivation is from misterium, meaning craft, a play
performed by the craft guild.

A kind of dramatic poetry was developed in later middle ages. Its characters
were personified types of virtue or vice. This kind of play is partly an independent
growth and partly a development of the didactic side of the miracle plays.

1.3.3. The Moral Drama

The moral drama conveys the idea of morality. Life, death, repentance,
goodness, love, greed, and other virtues and vices get personified by allegorical
characters in such a type of moral drama.

The moralities were the dramatic counter part of the allegorical poetry. Morality gave free scope to the imagination for new plots and incidents. Here moral
plays differ from miracle plays. There were differences in these plays in Spain,
Portugal and in England. They were wonderfully developed by the genius of Calderon
and Gilvicent in Spain and Portugal but in England the morality and the allegorical
poetry which preceded it, were a lacking kind of performance.

The Morality Play arouse in part from the desire of religious writers to teach
the principles of Christian living in a more direct and compact fashion than was
possible through the Bible stories of the Mysteries. In its strict form, the morality Play
used to be dramatized as a moral allegory. It was in part an outgrowth from the
Mysteries, in some of which there had appeared among the actors abstract allegorical
figures, either good or bad. The majority of the characters were of this sort. There was
no exclusion of supernatural persons such as God and the Devil. The hero is generally a type-figure standing for all Mankind. The two definitely opposing groups of virtues and vices were included for the control of the hero. The commonest type of Morality used to be presented in brief glimpses of the entire story of the hero’s life. It used to show how he yields to temptation and lives for the most part in reckless sin, but at last in spite of all his flippancy and folly is saved by tenacity and penance, pardoned through God’s mercy, and assured of salvation. Related to this J. W. Long’s comment is worth quoting here:

To enliven the audience, the devil of the miracle plays was introduced; and another lively personage called the vice was the predecessor of our modern clown and jester. His business was to torment the “virtues” by mischievous pranks, and especially to make the devils life a burden by beating him with a bladder or a wooden sword at every opportunity. The morality generally ended in the triumph or virtue, the devil leaping into hell-mouth with vice on his back. (2006:121)

The morality play is a genre of Medieval and early Tudor theatrical entertainment. In their own time, these plays were known as “interludes”, a broader term given to dramas with or without a moral theme.

According to G. Sampson, “The morality when extended to secular abstractions became the interlude” (1970:195). The moralities survived, and dealt with their old subject, man as an object of contention between the good and the bad qualities of the soul.
Morality plays are a type of allegory in which the protagonist is met by personifications of various moral attributes who try to prompt him to choose a goodly life over one of evil. The plays were most popular in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries. Having grown out of the religiously based mystery plays of the middle ages, they represented a shift towards a more secular base for European theatre.

The purpose of the morality and the miracle plays was didactic, but the characters of the morality were personified abstractions instead of being taken from the Bible or from the legends of the saints. The characters appear with all kinds of mental and moral qualities on the stage with a free will. The Devil had a prominent position in the miracle plays. (Paul 2005: 8)

1.3.4. The Interlude

In the sixteenth century, the Morality play in its turn was largely substituted by another sort of play called the Interlude. But in the case of the Mystery and the Morality, the Interlude developed out of the Morality, and the two cannot always be distinguished, some single plays being distinctly described by the authors as ‘Moral Interludes.’ In the Interludes the realism of the Moralities became still more pronounced, so that the typical Interlude is nothing more than a coarse farce, with no pretence at religious or ethical meaning. The term Interlude denotes literally ‘a play between’. The interludes were played sometimes in the halls of nobles and gentlemen, or in the town halls or on village greens. The actors were sometimes strolling companies of players, who might be minstrels or rustics, and were sometimes also retainers of the great nobles, allowed to practice their dramatic ability on tours about the country when their masters were not needed for entertainment.
It is difficult to make any accurate line of distinction between moralities and interludes. In general interlude was dramatic scenes with music and singing where a fun and entertainment were wanted. W. Long describes the interlude as a slipping into a miracle play to enliven the audience after a solemn scene. According to Goodman, interlude means a play interposed between the two other things. (Long 2004: 291)

G. Sampson defined the interlude as: something “played between” the parts of something else, like a musical intermezzo, and it may mean a piece “played between” performers. The term was applied to compositions which, unlike the moralities, employed for secular characters, for secular instruction or diversion; but no definition can be strictly applied, for the miracles themselves were sometimes spoken of as interludes. (1970:196)

The miracle plays passed into the Moralities, and the Moralities into the Interlude. This type of drama was in vogue at the beginning of the Elizabethan reign. Comic relief was often provided in the Moralities by means of an Interlude. The Interlude disassociated itself and became the independent species of drama. Interludes were truer to life and more regular in form.

1.3.5. The Artistic Drama

The artistic drama represents the human life as it is. It does not indicate to morality. It is the final stage in the development of the English Drama.

According to Long, the artistic drama differs radically from the religious and the moral plays by its purpose. The artistic dramas’ purpose is not different than the miracle plays, but the motive is always subordinate to the chief end of representing life itself. (Long 2006:123)
1.4. Beginning of English Drama

Drama form was brought to England from Europe by the Romans, and auditoriums were built for purpose of performing plays in different regions of the country. The clowns developed their plays in the Middle Ages, a form of early street theatre associated with the Morris dancing, focusing on themes such as Saint George and the Dragon and Robin Hood. The actors travel around the country performing old stories for their audiences in return for money and hospitality. The medieval mystery plays and morality plays, which dealt with Christian themes, were performed at religious festivals. (Columbia Encyclopedia.2009)

The Romans established vast amphitheatres for the production of plays when they were in England, but when they left England, their theatres also departed with them. The earliest records of acting in the Middle Ages are concerned not with plays but with individual players. The minstrels played an important part; they used to sing long poems in the honour of great heroes. Religiously the church was against minstrels, but it realized that the stories of minstrel encourage pilgrims in different stages of their journeys and some churchmen imitated the method of the minstrels and stood in the public places for the religious guidance with secular stories.

The liturgical plays were developed in the thirteenth century which were merely a part of the church service. Throughout the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century the drama became secularized. The words were not spoken in Latin but in English. These early plays were known as Miracles or Mysteries. The Mysteries were acted by priests and the Miracles by the trade guilds of the cities. These plays were performed in open air places (Sanders 2004: 37). Later,
the Morality plays came into existence, in which the characters were abstract vices and virtues.

When the aristocracy began to develop a taste for the theatre, works of higher quality were required. Some of these works existed as most of them were not published. The aristocracy admired the plays which were written brilliantly. Aristocrats interest in certain works of playwrights, make the libraries get furnished with their works.

English drama grew with the development of the whole nation and reflected its need. It is a growth entirely of its own kind. Spanish drama is close to English in the joyful enthusiasm of its productiveness. French classical drama was bound by its relations to a royal court, and debarred from an intimate union with the national life. When England had become decisively a power in the world, drama became ordinarily comprehend and existed as a form of old English literature. (Sampson 1970:193)

The Latin influence on the English plays can be seen in the first English comedy titled as Ralph Roister Doister, by Nicholas Udall and the first English Tragedy, Gorboduc by Thomas Sackville in 1561. Further Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe displayed their knowledge. Kyd wrote The Spanish Tragedy, a master piece. He discovered how the blank verse can be converted into a theatrical medium. Marlowe wrote some great works in English drama such as Dr. Faustus, The Jews of Malta, Tamburlaine and Edward II. In comedy there were dramatists like John Lyly, the author of Euphues, Robert Greene and George Peele. By 1592, when Shakespeare began to build up his personal reputation, a set of traditions was developed. The body of traditions gave Shakespeare the basic material with which to work.
At first, the plays were held in inn-yards. The actors were considered vagrant. Their profession was not respected. The other very important dramatic tradition in this period was that of tragedy. The Elizabethan audiences liked spectacular scenes of tragedy. They were full of actions with bloody scenes. The English Renaissance, a cultural and artistic movement in England lasted from 16th to early 17th century. It paved the way for the dominance of drama in the country. Poetry and drama flourished during reign of Queen Elizabeth I. William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson and John Webster were renowned playwrights of this period. They wrote plays based on themes like history, comic and tragic incidents. While most of the playwrights specialized in only one of the themes, Shakespeare emerged as an artist who produced plays based on all the three themes.

1.5. Types of Literature during the Elizabethan Era (1558 - 1603)

The European Renaissance dates from almost the late 14th to the 16th centuries and from the end of the War of the Roses to the Restoration of the monarchy. It is termed as the English Renaissance. It began in Italy around the mid- 14th century, slowly moved outward over all of Europe and reached England around the 16th century. But its full effect on England became visible only in the 16th century, reaching a peak with the Elizabethan (1558-1603) and Jacobean (1603-25) periods.

The Elizabethan Age saw a remarkable growth in literature in England. The literature of this time was characterized by a new energy, originality and confidence. Renaissance humanism, Protestant eagerness, and geographical and scientific discoveries, all contributed to the upsurge of creative power. England’s renaissance in the realm of thought and art is typified by the official recognition that Elizabeth I gave
to Oxford and Cambridge. These universities were acknowledged as the focal point for the nation’s learning and scholarly activities. Queen Elizabeth’s personal love of poetry and drama helped to flourish the different types of literature in the period which can be summarized as follows.

**1.5.1. Drama**

Italian and Latin comedies were source for Elizabethan comedies. These comedies used to be often romances in praise of patron or monarch. Love and suffering were the main theme of Elizabethan comedies. During this period, history plays and chronicles were common. As far as tragedy was concerned, they used Seneca as a model. Being melodramatic, these tragedies used to be full of emotional speeches and scenes. A great deal of stage views were used by playwrights skillfully. Tragedies were concerned with the darker side of human characters such as immorality, greed and cruelty. Most of the time they also touched the melancholic aspects of human life. Almost all the playwrights of this age took interest in contemporary politics and history.

Christopher Marlowe’s privileged and strange two-part tragedy *Tamburlaine* (1587–1589), Thomas Kyd’s popular revenge tragedy *The Spanish Tragedy* (1589), William Shakespeare’s romantic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* (1595), and Thomas Heywood’s domestic tragedy *A Woman Killed With Kindness* (1603) are the most influential tragedies. These models for tragic drama were developed by writers like George Chapman, John Webster, John Ford, Philip Massinger, and James Shirley. A related line of historical drama can be traced from John Bale’s moral history *King John* (1539) through Marlowe’s *Edward II* (1592), Shakespeare’s first *(Henry VI, Part One; Henry VI, Part Two; Henry VI, Part Three;* and *Richard III*) and second
(Richard II; Henry IV, Part One; Henry IV, Part Two; and Henry V). Other historicals trace Shakespeare and John Fletcher’s Henry VIII (1613), and Ford’s Perkin Warbeck (1634). (Sanders 2004:101)

In Elizabethan England, travelling companies staged performances in barns and yards and they were at the mercy of guilds. By the end of the 16th century, two public playhouses had come up outside of London where the people enjoyed drama. These playhouses were the Theatre (1576) and the Curtain (1577). They were followed by Rose (1587), Swan (1595), Globe (1599), Red Bull (1605) and Hope (1614). All were built outside of the city limits to avoid problems with the city government. Some theatres were built inside the city limits but were the private playhouses, allowing for a smaller and wealthier audience. Dramas presented through these playhouses manifest the contemporary society to the audience.

The patronage of the court of the kingdom made the dramatic companies more prosperous. It helped to improve the quality of the plays. The links between the court and the theatre became stronger than the link between the court and the parliament. The courts and counselors used to visit the theatres to enjoy drama and share audience entertainment. Tragedy does not get success without audience’s interest in serious matters of tragedy. At the theatres like the Red Bull especially during the holidays the common men used to stand under the stage to evaluate the incidents of the play. But at the Globe, there were courtiers, university men, gentlemen and their wives and merchants for evaluation. (F. Wilson 1961: 5-6)
1.5.2. Comedy

Drama was struggling for maturity at the beginning of Elizabethan era. The drama at the initial stage was scholarly in the quality of a actors’ voice and aristocratic in authorship. Later on the drama was in the hands of the university wits. Peele, Greene, Lodge, Kyd and Marlowe, began to realize its latent potentialities and vitality. It expressed indirectly by an image, form, or model and embodied the essential characteristics of Elizabethan drama.

During the Elizabethan period, the Latin comedies of Terence and Plautus made a considerable impact on the English stage. Nicholas Udall’s Floures for Latin speakyng, was an effort to bring the Latin comedy into English. Anthony Munday’s Fedele and Fortunio was enacted before Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare’s comedies rely on an enchantment theme of love intrigues, friendship and dual of false identities in addition to comic situations. These themes provided frameworks for Shakespeare’s comedies. Shakespeare’s comedy A Midsummer Night’s Dream was a new kind of play with magic and fairly showing a world parallel to that of human beings.

John Lyly was one of the most talented writers of Elizabethan era who composed seven comedies. His comedies, Sapho and Phao, Endimion, Gallathea, Midas and The Woman in the Moon were performed in the presence of the Queen Elizabeth. They dealt with themes like culture and education, manners and class etc.

Lyly penned comedies for the children’s companies such as Campaspe (1583) and Sappho and Phao (1584). He combined classical settings with topical allusion to court and country in skillful structures. The romantic comedies of the next generation of writers, including those of Shakespeare, were heavily influenced by Lyly’s works.
Another important model was comedy portraying the city, exemplified by Thomas Dekker’s *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* (1599).


Robert Greene wrote in a talented manner. Some of his comedies are significant examples of Elizabethan drama. *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *James IV* are two of his better works where he uses historical events and figures in imaginary situations.

### 1.5.3. Tragedy

Seneca, the Greek writer was the model of the early Elizabethan dramatists. In 1581 Seneca’s tragedies were translated into English. Some of his tragedies had horrific themes. All Elizabethan tragedies used stage to show cunning or deceitful actions and supernatural powers. In Elizabethan drama, villains were more interesting than the central characters and the scenes which involve them excited the audience more than the actual story. In Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*, (a melodrama) there are eight deaths of both homicidal and suicidal types. Such death scenes used to attract the audience’s attention and excite their emotions.

Besides Thomas Kyd (1558-94), Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) was another central figure of tragedies. His contribution to English drama is undoubtedly worthy. He dealt with dramatic effect and the first sustained analysis of the effects of power in his plays: imperial power in *Tamburlaine*, acquisitive and commercial power in *Jew of Malta*, monarchical power in *Edward II* and demonic, satanic power in *Doctor
Faustus. Marlowe was an erudite scholar with an exhaustive grounding in classical learning and executed dramatic situations to perfection. Highly dramatic situations, characters and speeches are characteristic of Marlowe’s work as a whole.

William Shakespeare is one of the most notable authors of this period. He was famous in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, who provided England philosophical, commercial, economic, military and political language. Shakespeare’s drama, explored various shades of human character. His drama was about all people in different manners. Shakespeare’s work presented human beings in their various roles and businesses. Each of these roles shows particular aspects of what it means to be human: a greedy merchant, a gallant prince or a jealous lover. Shakespeare explored the weaknesses of humans, creating more ‘complete’ characters than ever seen before on the English stage. His history plays and the great tragedies show the human side and kings.

Shakespeare’s exploration of human ambition, greed, lust, conspiracy and madness, bravery, courage is incomparable in English literature. Issues of patriarchy, social organization in which a man is socially a head, the woman’s desires, rights and intellectual abilities are the subjects of works like As You Like It, The Merchant of Venice and Twelfth Night.

Romeo and Juliet marks as the first great tragedy. Shakespeare attacks society’s hypocrisy and intolerance in this play about two ‘star-crossed lover’. Julius Caesar (1599) is about the slow attrition of a republic, caused partly by the selfishness of politicians. Hamlet, (1601) a Senecan tragedy summarizes the human themes of doubt, despair, ambition and moral dilemmas. Othello (1603) deals with human jealousy while King Lear (1605) portrays failure of an egotistical man who is
unable to recognize evil or virtue. Macbeth (1606) is about succession, kingship and the social order. There are other plays besides these too, where Shakespeare has explored the concerns of his age like commerce, marriage, morals, monarchy, disease, violence, myth, magic, national identity and language. His plays are unique in the sense that they are a strange mixture of conventional themes and subversive politics.

1.5.4. Prose

Elizabethan age is marked by the remarkable development in prose as a literary form. The prose of this era includes a variety of forms: translations, polemical, religious and educational tracts, satires, literary debates, criticism, grammar, logic and rhetoric etc. Elizabethan non-fiction was polemical and political in theme. Works of criticism and rhetoric also appeared in large numbers in Elizabethan period. However, pamphlets and courtesy books on morals were a common form of religious writing during the era. A significant genre of the literature of Elizabethan age was religious prose writings.

An important prose form of this period was famous admonition tracts. The ‘admonitions’ to Parliament were written with hidden aims. John Bridges, Dudley Fenner, Walter Travers deserve a special mention in this connections. Others such as Robert Greene dealt with a set of “cony-catching pamphlets” with deceit as their main theme. Thomas Dekker wrote prose that mainly dealt with London subcultures. Edmund Spenser wrote his Veue of the Present State of Ireland in 1596 in a dialogue form dealing with Ireland’s customs and law to its poets and poetry. Sir Francis Bacon also occupies a dominant place in English prose. The images and figures of speech in his essays were simple and clearly illustrate the ideas that he wished to communicate.
Miguel de Cervantes was identified as the founder of the fiction genre. The themes of Elizabethan fiction were love, marriage and courtship. Different writers wrote satires on London life and its corruption and lack of faith. There was a variety of romances, pastoral, courtly, middle-class, etc, the central figure was cheat or beguiler. Everyday working class language and speech were used in several novels. One of the most prolific and talented writers of prose of the Elizabethan age was Robert Greene whose works have dealt with courtship, failed love affairs, gentlemanly behaviour towards ladies etc.

1.5.5. Poetry

Elizabethan poets, while continuing to be under the influence of Homer, Virgil and other classical poets, attempted to make the idiom more English. Mutability and change were of central concern in the poetry of this age. Anxieties regarding contemporary politics, monarch and society were embodied in the poems. Religious metaphors were recurrent in the works of many writers.

The Elizabethan literary scene can be equally divided, in terms of fame, between the sonnet and the play. The Elizabethan sonnet was produced by three principal figures: Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86) was an initiator of ‘literary clubs.’ He was associated with Edward Dyer, Edmund Spenser and other such major figures of the time. Sidney’s Astrophel and Stella is a collection of 108 sonnets and 11 songs and it deals with unfulfilled love of Astrophel for Stella. Sidney’s sequence popularized the 14 line sonnet, which was later taken up by many other poets.
Edward Spenser (1552-99) published *The Shepherd’s Calendar* in 1579 and it was one of the most important poems in the rural tradition. Spenser produced extraordinary poetry in the form of *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*. The most famous and enduring of Spenser’s poetry is *The Faerie Queene* which is the symbol of glory and a ‘moral allegory’.

Sir Walter Raleigh was Elizabeth’s favourite for a long time and is known for his huge work, *The History of the World* (1614) and his poetry moves between extensive praise for the lady and melancholy.

William Shakespeare is one of the famous figures. He wrote about 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and several other poems. In 1593, Shakespeare published his non-dramatic, lustful poem *Venus and Adonis* followed by *The Rape of Lucrece*, which is a dramatic poem full of soliloquies.

### 1.6. Types of Literature during the Jacobean Era (1603-1625)

Jacobean Literature, in its poetry and prose, shows a great deal of overlap with late Elizabethan literature (1580-1600). Satire as a genre straddles these eras. The following are the types of literature in Jacobean Period.

#### 1.6.1. Prose

During the Jacobean period translations became very popular and some of the writers took interest in science and learning, human psychology and behaviour. Virtue, faith, evil and human corruption were the subjects of many prose works. There were pamphlets, lengthy prose works and essays on education, knowledge, wisdom, culture and other social conditions from major writers such as Bacon and Milton.
King James I wrote pamphlets and theological treatises. His style was pedantic and heavy.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626), was one of the most productive writers of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era. He wrote on history, travel, government, politics, ethics, religion, law, gardening, family, health and science. Bacon’s essay on education, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) was intended as a gift to James I. Bacon wrote a number of remarkable essays and for his brilliant writing, he is called a “Renaissance Man”.

In 17th century different books of famous writers appeared; Joseph Hall’s *Characters of Virtues and Vices* in which he praises virtue and satirizes evil was published in 1608. Thomas Fuller (1608-61) began with a chronicle form with *The Hostorie of the Holy Warre* (1639), which is a detailed history of Crusades.

Biographies and autobiographies emerged as a genre in the 17th century. One of the earliest prose work known as *Life of Sidney* (1652) was biography by Fulke Greville. The autobiographical mode even included sermons as seen in the works of the most important preacher of the age, John Donne. His writings reveal the conflicts of his mind.

1.6.2. Poetry

Ben Jonson and John Done were the famous poets of the Jacobean period. They were the masterminds of the metaphysical poetry. They have the quality of production and precision of expression. Donne’s poetry is typical of expressing strong emotions and Jonson’s poetry is typical for its classicism and high degree of refinement which comes from wide social experience. Henry Vaughan, Thomas
Traherne, Abraham Cowley and Richard Crashwa were reflective spiritual poets who were influenced by John Donne. Robert Herrick was the greatest Royalist poet. Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, and Richard Lovelace were Royalists in the graceful tradition. They changed their lyricism to political exaggerated enthusiasm during the English Revolution.

The Spenserians, who were indebted to the pastoral traditions of Edmund Spenser, made considerable impact. However, this was also the period of Ben Jonson, whom one cannot classify into either of these traditions. Ben Jonson is known mainly as a satirist. He wrote songs, odes and epigrammatic verse.

The Spenserian poetry preferred pastoral themes and included narrative poetry and idealized the ‘golden age’ of old England. Political, moral and religious allegories like Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* were also produced during this period.

The Metaphysical poetry used unusual logic and images which were exaggerated and difficult to understand. The metaphors used were strange and artificial. A metaphysical poetry of this era often combined religious fervor and human love. It contained large doses of wit. The metaphysical poets examined serious questions about the existence of God or whether a human being could possibly perceive the world. It also attempted to shock the reader and wake him or her up from his or her normal existence in order to question the unquestionable. Most popular and pioneer of metaphysical poetry is John Donne. ‘The Canonization’, ‘A Valediction: forbidding mourning’ are John Donne’s famous metaphysical poems.
1.6.3. Drama

The Jacobean dramatists used everyday speech in their drama. The main themes were money, property and class. Moral, sexual corruptions were recurrent themes especially in the tragedies. It was characterized by its realism and taste for the satire.

James I and his wife Anne of Denmark supported the dramatists. The world of Jacobean tragedy was a dark world of corruption, perversion, blood and passion whereas the world of comedy was limited, London was the city of comedy and its people were obsessed with money and sex. John Webster, Thomas Middleton, John Ford and Ben Jonson produced their works during this period. During this period, Shakespeare wrote a number of his great plays for example: King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Coriolanus, Anthony and Cleopatra, Prince of Tyre and The Tempest.

The majority of the dramatic works during the Jacobean era were written under the influence of Marlowe, Shakespeare and Dekker. Dekker’s The Shoemaker’s Holiday was first enacted at Queen Elizabeth’s court in 1599 and it was called as a ‘city comedy’. City comedies used themes of adultery and unhappy marriages. Thomas Heywood was one of the major dramatists of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era. The four major types of plays written by him were identified as: classical plays, history plays, realist and domestic plays. George Chapman (1559-1634) is known mainly as the first major translator of Homer into English. His first surviving comedy, The Blind Beggar of Alexandria marks the begging of the Jacobean satiric tradition. The most significant satirist of the Jacobean period is undoubtedly Ben Jonson. Ben Jonson’s plays explore the influence of excessive emotional steps of jealousy, greed, anger or lust in people.
Under James I, the “Golden Age” of Elizabethan literature continued, with writers such as William Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Dekker, Thomas Chapman and Francis Bacon by contributing to a flourishing literary culture.

1.6.4. Masque

Masque was very popular during the Jacobean era. It was a royal and personal form of entertainment. Masques included drama, dancing, music and poetry. During this period the actors used the masques when they played the role of mythological figures. James I and his wife Queen, Anne of Denmark were interested in masques, and so many masques were performed in the court. The audiences for masques were royals, noblemen and members of the wealthy class.

Ben Jonson was famous for his masques. His masques were *Masque of Blackness*, *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* and *Masque of Beauty*. Short masques were also included by William Shakespeare in his famous plays, *The Tempest*, *Henry VIII* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Peele’s *Arraignment of Paris* introduced short masques into the play. Samuel Daniel’s *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* celebrated the new monarch (James I).

English masque would scarcely need to be chronicled among dramatic forms. Masques came into prominence during the reign of James I. They were usually performed in the royal court on special occasions. Moreover the use of expensive costumes, stage settings and special effects were needed. The masque specially served a moral purpose to demonstrate the victory of good over evil.
1.7. William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English poet and playwright. He is widely regarded as the greatest writer in English literature and the world’s eminent dramatist. His literary works include some collaboration. He wrote about thirty seven plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several other poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

Shakespeare is considered as the father of English drama. His plays were written in blank verse with some prose. He had different abilities and unbelievable understanding of human psychology and no other English writer has the ability to deal with love and compassion and richness and control of language as he has.

The greatness of Shakespeare lies in the fact that though some critics are inclined to designate the period from 1558-1625 as the Elizabethan age, some referred it as an age of Shakespeare. He started his literary career at the end of the sixteenth century; Shakespeare’s work reflects the political, social and literary tendencies of the whole era. His age conveys the idea of the beginning of renaissance and its close. This period as it is known through the history, begins with the accession of Elizabeth in 1558 and ends with the death of James I in 1625.

Under the rule of the Queen Elizabeth1, peace settled everywhere in England. The middle classes had prosperous lives, Shakespeare’s parents belonged to this class and this made a fertile land for Shakespeare’s genius to flourish. In Europe at that time, there was peace at home under a settled monarchy, and it was good for living anywhere.
R.J. Rees (1973) describes the stability under the ruling of Queen Elizabeth and James I as the flowering period for English drama and the fertile land for dramatists and poets to show their genius and their intellectual productivity.

1.7.1. Shakespearean Drama and Theatre

Shakespeare lived and wrote in the rich literary, theatrical, and cultural environment of the Renaissance, and made the best use of it. He absorbed the essentials and the best features of the various traditions of literature, of drama, theatre, thought and culture which were the legacy of the Renaissance so much so that his drama and poetry became the confluence of fusion of a whole range of influences acquired. Later on most of the times, these were transmuted by his individual genius to supreme effect.

Through his dramas, Shakespeare dealt with the different sects of the culture at once of the times. His dramas were enjoyed by all people, monarch, the court and the nobility. Shakespeare used the theatre through his dramas for the portrayal of Elizabethan society.

The first and most important role of drama and theatre was to promote an awareness of sociopolitical and socio-cultural problems and issues. So they became prominent means in the hands of Shakespeare to mirror socio political life and the changes which occur during this phase. Drama and the theatre used to provide delight and entertainment to the audience. The theatre presented and communicated different terms, ideas and situations which were absorbed by the audience and readers.

Shakespeare wrote dramas for the stage and theatre to reveal verisimilitude of life. When he started writing, the London theatre was in the initial stage of the
Elizabethan dramatic Renaissance, so his participation was a great help to theatrical renaissance. Related to this, A. Desai says, Shakespeare’s drama tickled the feeling of the audience and reflected their life, even in the theatre the audience sat on the all sides of the stage closing and paying attention to the actors. (2001:15)

Shakespeare used the Elizabethan English which was extremely different and rapidly changing. Shakespeare himself enjoyed fun of the language of every classes, courtiers and scholars. Shakespeare’s English is difficult for the foreign readers even for many modern English readers.

In 1594, Shakespeare was the leading playwright of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men theatrical company. The company first performed its plays in the playhouse called the Theater in the north of London, later on moved at the end of 1598 into a new theatre called the Globe on the bank side south of the Thames. (Rees 1973: 8)

During 1580 to 1615 Spenserian and Shakespearian stage was highly developed. The lyrics and allegories, the poems and dramas of this time sharpen the native English genius and add to them the youth and ardour of their own spirits that make the English full of freshness, and brilliance of style unequalled in any other period of literature. The stage was approximately covered by Shakespearean drama and the innumerable varieties, poems, and plays of other writers.

**1.7.2. Forms of Shakespearean Drama**

William Shakespeare has been widely acknowledged as world’s greatest dramatist. His dramas have been loved and admired by all. His plays are divided into three genres that are: comedies, tragedies and histories. The three forms of his drama are discussed below.
1.7.2. a. Comedies

In comedy, the information comes to the audience from a variety of sources and the comic effect is produced through different points of view of audience from different angles. Comedy is one of the original four genres of literature defined by the philosopher Aristotle in his *Poetics*. The other three genres are tragedy, epic poetry and lyric poetry. Literature in general is defined by Aristotle as a mimesis or imitation of life. Comedy is the most divorced from a true mimesis while tragedy is the truest mimesis. The genre of comedy is defined by a certain pattern. According to Aristotle’s definition, all comedies begin with a low, typically with an “ugly” guy who cannot do anything right. By the end of the story or play, the “ugly” guy has won the “pretty” girl, or achieved some other goal. Comedies usually have elements of the supernatural. Comedy includes the unrealistic in order to portray the realistic. For the Greeks, all comedies ended happily which is opposite of tragedy.


Shakespeare’s comedies are full of laughter, irony and satire. His Comedies treat different subjects lightly. They use puns, metaphors, and “thoughtful laughter”. Disguises and mistaken identities are very common in such comedies. The plot is
often very twisted and confusing and the theme is full of love and friendship, played within a courtly society. Songs by a jester or a fool parallel the events of the plot. Strange and banal characters are also inserted into the plot of his drama. (Luce 2000: 430-31)

1.7.2. b. Tragedies

Greek drama served as a model for Renaissance drama. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, defined tragedy and asserted that it was the noblest and most serious, dignified and important form. Many Renaissance plays resembled Greek tragedies. In several of Shakespeare’s plays, there is a central protagonist who undergoes a harrowing experience as he is brought down from his lofty height, ending in death. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle outlines the protagonist of tragedy in the following way. Protagonist is someone of high estate; a prince or a king. He is like us - perhaps a bit different in his level of nobility so that we can identify with him and admire him as a man as well as respect him for his high estate. The protagonist has a ‘tragic flaw’ in his character which contributes to his own destruction and fall. This can take the form of an obsession. The flaw is often part of his greatness which causes the protagonist to make mistakes and misjudgments. That in turn begins to alienate him from his supporters so that he becomes isolated. He begins to fall from his high level. He eventually recognizes his mistakes and struggles to regain his position but fails and he comes crashing down. An important aspect is the suffering of protagonist, which the audience observes and identifies with. They experience ‘pity’ and ‘terror’ as they watch what seems to them as an avoidable suffering.

In tragedy, the focus is on the mind and inner struggle of the protagonist. The emotional information comes to the audience from that source. In comedy the
information comes from a variety of sources and the comic effect is produced by a display of many different points of view, coming at the audience from different angles. Moreover, all of Shakespeare’s plays have elements of both tragedy and comedy, sometimes very finely balanced creating effects.

Shakespeare’s tragedies were written throughout his entire career, beginning with two of his earliest plays, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Titus Andronicus*. He wrote tragic plays titled as: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Troilus and Cressida*. *Cemberline* was listed in the First Folio as a tragedy, but is now sometimes regarded as a dark comedy.

Shakespeare’s tragedies can be divided into two distinct groups. The love, or “heart,” tragedies of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Othello* which involve a pair of lovers torn apart by fate and society. In these three tragedies main characters are not masters of their own destiny, but pawns pulled toward death or permanent separation by forces beyond control. *Othello* as well as *Troilus and Cressida* are considered by some experts to be borderline heart/head tragedies, as they combine elements of both genres.

The remaining “head” tragedies are defined by their relationship to Greek philosopher Aristotle’s theories of dramatic tragedy. There appears a fatally-flawed protagonist fully capable of free will who unfortunately has his good characteristics overcome by ego. The protagonist of Shakespeare’s tragedies is always faced with opportunities for redemption, but always unable to take them in time, leading almost to death.
Shakespeare represented in his writing, tragedy as a certain aspect of life in a certain way (Bradley 1905: 41). Shakespeare’s tragedies demonstrate his relative independence from classical models. He has taken the notion of decorum from Aristotle and Horace with few exceptions. He focuses on high-born characters and national affairs as the subject of tragedy. He uses the fall of a notable person as the main focus in his tragedies. According to Ribner though in most other respects, the early tragedies are far closer to the spirit and style of moralities, they are episodic, carried with character and incident; they are loosely unified by a theme or character. (Ribner 1987:12)

Besides, Shakespeare wrote tragedies as he thought that the tragic plots used by other English writers were lacking artistic purpose and form. Shakespeare’s work is extraordinary in suspense and climax which attract the attention of the audience. A.C. Bradley divides tragedy into an exposition of the state of affairs; the beginning, growth, and vicissitudes of the conflict; and the final catastrophe or tragic outcome. Bradley emphasizes the Aristotelian notion of the tragic flaw: the tragic hero errs by action or omission; this error joins with other causes to bring about his ruin. According to A.C. Bradley,

This is always so with Shakespeare. The idea of the tragic hero as being destroyed simply and solely by external forces is quite alien to him; and not less so is the idea of the hero as contributing to his destruction only by acts in which we see no flaw. (1905: 86)

Bradley’s emphasis on the tragic flaw implies that Shakespeare’s characters bring their fates upon themselves and thus, in a sense, deserve what they get. It should however be noted that in some of Shakespeare’s plays (e.g. King Lear), the
tragedy lies less in the fact that the characters “deserve” their fates than in how much more they suffer than their actions (or flaws) suggest they should.

A hero today is seen as a person who is idolized. Nowadays, a hero does not have wealth or certain political beliefs, but instead can be regarded as a hero for his/her actions and inner strength. However, in the plays of Shakespeare, the tragic hero is always a noble man who enjoys some status and prosperity in society but possesses some moral weakness or flaw which leads to his downfall. External circumstances such as fate also play a part in the hero’s fall. Evil agents often act upon the hero and the forces of good, causing the hero to take wrong decisions. Innocent people always feel the fall in tragedies.

1.7.2. c. Histories

The histories were the plays based on the lives of English kings. Therefore, they can be more accurately called the English history plays. Shakespeare’s imagination took the hold of real life and through it he understands man and the world. Shakespeare’s plays began to deal in an original and powerful way with the matter of history. Goodman describes Shakespeare’s compression of the large matter of history into dramatic form which demanded vigorous exercise of the plastic energy of the imagination (Goodman 2004: 451). He further comments that the circumstances with which Shakespeare was dealing with reality of the world must have served to make clear to Shakespeare the purpose of art in actual life.

The events about which Shakespeare wrote occurred some two centuries before his own time; he intended to make the audience familiar with the characters and events he was describing. The battles among houses and the rise and fall of kings
were woven closely into the fabric of English culture and formed an integral part of the country’s patriotic legends and national mythology.

Shakespeare’s “history plays” are generally thought of as a distinct genre, as they differ somewhat from other comedies and tragedies in tone and form. While many of Shakespeare’s other plays are set in the historical past, and even treat similar themes such as kingship and revolution (for example, *Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Hamlet, or Cymbeline*), they form a linked series; they are set in late medieval England, and they deal with the rise and fall of the House of Lancaster—what later historians often referred to as the “War of the Roses.”

Shakespeare’s most important history plays were written in two “series”. The first series was written around 1589-93 consists of *Henry VI*, Parts I, II and III, and *Richard III*, and covers the fall of the Lancaster dynasty and the events in English history between 1422 and 1485. The second series was written around 1595-1599 consists of *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, Parts I and II, and *Henry V*. which were written at the height of Shakespeare’s power. This series back in time examines the rise of the Lancastrians covering English history. *King John* and *Edward III* are anonymous historical plays. It has been claimed that they were written by William Shakespeare. *Henry VIII* is a history play based on the life of the king Henry VIII of England. It is generally believed to be a collaboration between William Shakespeare and John Fletcher.
1.8. Famous Theatres during the Elizabethan and Jacobean Eras

The meaning of Theatre as Columbia Encyclopedia 2009 defines it:

A building, structure, or space in which dramatic performances take place. In its broadest sense theatre can be defined as including everything connected with dramatic art—the play itself, the stage with its scenery and lighting, makeup, costumes, acting, and actors.

According to Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2003:

Theatre is a building, room or outside structure with rows of seats, each row usually higher than the one in front, from which people can watch a performance or other activity.

The famous theatres during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras were as following:

1.8.1. The Theatre

The Theatre was the first successful building in London specially devoted to the performances of plays. It was built in Shoreditch, outside the city of London by James Burbage, father of Richard Burbage, the greatest tragedian actor of his time. In 1576 James Burbage and John Brayne hired a plot of land on which they built the Theatre. (Bowsher, et al.2010:19)

The Theatre was like Curtain theatre in a peculiarly shaped building, specially designed for acting; “those playhouses that are erected and built only for such purposes … namely the Curtain and the Theatre”. (Adams 1917: 77)
1.8.2. The Newington Butts Theatre

The Newington Butts Theatre was located in Southwark and situated over the river Thames. It was one of the most former Elizabethan theatres preceding the Theatre of 1576 and the Curtain theatre, which were considered as the first playhouses in London. William Ingram believes that the Newington Butts Theatre was probably the first, before The Theatre and Curtain to begin construction, and may have been the first completed. (Ingram 1992:150)

In 1576 the Newington Butts Theatre was built by actor Jerome Savage. Famous theatrical productions of great dramatists were performed at this. Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* and William Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* and other early Shakespeare’s plays were performed at this theatre. When a public act of violence by an unruly mob in Southwark broke out in 1592, the Privy Council closed Newington Butts and all of the other playhouses around London.

1.8.3. The Curtain Theatre

The Curtain Theatre was built in 1577 in Shoreditch outside the city of London. It was the second public playhouse in London. Henry Lanman was a theatrical entrepreneur and was responsible for its creation. He was also the theatre’s manager until 1592. A number of companies performed at The Curtain including the Chamberlain’s Men.

Q. Adams has mentioned that: The Curtain was like the Theatre in a peculiarly shaped building and purpose, specially designed for acting. He talks about the origin of the name of the curtain theatre as it may have been derived from some previous owner of the property, it may have come from some early association with the walls
(curtains) or defenses of the city, or, it may have come from the mediaeval Latin Cortina, meaning a court, a close, a farm enclosure. For Adams whatever its origin, the last seems the most plausible explanation. (1917: 77)

1.8.4. The Rose Theatre

The Rose Theatre was the first playhouse on the bankside in Southwark. It was home to the Admiral’s Men for several years. When the Lord Chamberlain’s Men built the Globe theatre on the bankside in 1599, the Rose was put into a difficult position. The residents of the city wrote a complaint of the trouble of playhouses to the Privy Council. The Privy Council decreed in 1600 that only two theatres would be allowed for stage plays, and they declared The Globe theatre in Bankside, and the Fortune theatre in Shoreditch for staging plays.

The original size of the Rose was small and it was enlarged in 1587 to receive a large number of audiences to see a new troupe of a new acting company for better entertainment. A. Gurr states that the original Rose was smaller than other theatres but in 1587 Henslowe enlarged it for 500 extra spectators. (1992:123)

The Rose was built on a “messuage called the Little Rose” in 1587 on the bankside in Southwark by Philip Henslowe and John Cholmley. The origin of the name of The Rose was derived from the place where it was erected as Q. Adams states: “The Rose derived their names from the estates on which they were erected”. (1917: 46)

1.8.5. The Swan Theatre

The Swan Theatre was built in 1595 in Southwark, London and was the fifth of the large public playhouses of London after the Theatre, Curtain, the Newington
Butts Theatre and Rose theatre. The Chamberlain’s Men played in it. T. Simon has mentioned that The Swan was located on the west end of the Bankside district of Southwark, across the River Thames from the city of London. It was shaped as a square with an open top and flat bottom. Inside were a stage, floor, and levels based on class. It was one of the beautiful amphitheatres in London. (1994:164)

1.8.6. The Globe Theatre

The Globe Theatre was built in 1599 using timber from an earlier theatre, The Theatre, which had been built by Richard Burbage’s father, James Burbage, in Shoreditch, London in 1576. In 1613 the Globe was burnt during the performance. Wooden beams were also burnt.

L.P. Smith has described The Globe in this way: the back wall of the stage had two or three doors on the main level. The doors entered into the backstage area where the players change their dresses and wait their entrances. And there was the balcony for the musicians and for scenes such as the balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet. (1907: 33)

The Globe was rebuilt in 1614 as the second Globe. Under the force of the Puritans in 1642, the English Parliament issued regulation suppressing all stage plays in the theatres. The puritans wanted to change the Church of England, with its Roman Catholic type of structure and traditions for another reform and plain church model. In 1644 the English Civil war broke out, the Globe was demolished by the Puritans. The Globe is never re-built after its demolition by the Puritans.
1.8.7. The Fortune Theatre

The Fortune Theatre was built in 1600 to the north of the Thames. Philip Henslowe decided to build a new public playhouse. He intended to make a competitive playhouse to the Globe. When the Fortune was built, different writers like Jonson and Dekker presented their plays in it. They gave the Fortune more success and fame until it was destroyed by fire in 1621.


1.8.8. The Red Bull Theatre

The Red Bull Theatre was built in 1605 in London. It was of the same size as the Globe and Fortune. Its companies offered credible competition to the King’s Men and Prince Henry’s Men. For more than four decades, it entertained audiences of the northern suburbs of London. The Parliament closed all playhouses in 1642, but the Red Bull continued to perform plays illegally. It burned in the Great Fire of London and was among the last of the Renaissance theatres to fall. Red Bull was most likely similar to the other outdoor theaters with an uncurtained thrust-forward stage backed by balcony, surrounded by standing rooms and overlooked by galleries. The first acting troupe to play at the Red Bull was the Queen Anne’s Men. But later the Queen’s Men occupied it until 1617.

In 1648 The Parliament declared severely repressive actions on performances in the playhouses. In 1650, the Red Bull was attacked and the actors were arrested while performing. (D. Payne 1993:167)
1.8.9. The Blackfriars Theatre

The Blackfriars Theatre was built in the Blackfriars district in London. It started as a playhouse for child actors to represent scenes of any event or actions. When it was controlled by the King’s Men, it became famous for different works of performances. Different works of different writers like Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher were presented in the Blackfriars Theatre. It was one of the first commercial theatrical enterprises in London. After the King’s Men controlled it, they started using it as a theatre for performance in 1609.

1.8.10. The Whitefriars Theatre

The Whitefriars Theatre located on the north side of river Thames. It was converted from refectory hall to a private playhouse in 1606. The combined troupes of the child actors of King’s Revels and Queen’s Revels performed in it from 1608 to 1613. R.A. Foakes indicates that, the Queen’s Revels Children were joined in 1613 by the Lady Elizabeth’s Men to combine a company to use the Whitefriars as its winter playhouse and the Swan Theatre as a summer venue, as the King’s Men did with the Blackfriars and the Globe. In 1614 the combined company lost the lease of the Whitefriars and the Lady Elizabeth’s Men opened the new Hope theatre at the south of the Thames. (2003: 30)

1.8.11. The Cockpit Theatre

The Cockpit Theatre was the first theatre near Drury Lane. It was involved in a kind of operating form from 1616 to 1665. It was located outside the legal power of the City of London and set up to enhance cock fighting in 1609. The rooster fighting
was very popular during Elizabethan period and The Cockpit Theatre hall became the perfect place for cock fighting.

The Cockpit converted into a theatre for Queen Anne’s Men and further it housed several companies to play in it. After presenting a play that offended King Charles I, in 1642 an act of Parliament closed all theatres. The Cockpit, however, illicitly continued shows, but in 1649 it was raided and closed by Puritans. In the late 1650, Oliver Cromwell granted special permission to present two of his musicals in The Cockpit Theatre. Later the Cockpit was transformed into indoor theatre having a capacity of a large number of people to sit at a time.

1.8.12. The Hope Theatre

The Hope Theatre was built on the south side of the river Thames. Philip Henslowe and Jacob Meade built the theatre in 1613–1614 for Lady Elizabeth’s Men. It served as both a theatre and an arena for bearbaiting and bullbaiting. It was one of the famous theatres in London like the Globe, the Curtain, the Swan, and other famous theatres of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period.

The importance of the playhouses in the art and culture is huge. The playhouses were established to boost up junior artists for performing dramas to reflect their society.

1.9. Literary and Social Issues

1.9.1. Individualism

The term individualism suggests that people should consider themselves first, that does not mean to hurt others in any way. It means everyone is responsible for his own behavior and life, and should make that a high priority. Individual responsibility
and individual success has another valuable aspect. It means people who make good decisions, come out ahead better than the one who does not take any decision. If everyone pooled all their effort, thought resources and so on, then everyone would come out equally well no matter how good or bad their lifestyle. Individualism is the quality of people to be different from others.

Commencing with an understanding of “individualism,” let us see how A.S. Hornby defines it:

Individualism is the quality of being different from other people and doing things in your own way and individualism is the belief that individual people in society should have the right to make their own decisions, etc. rather than be controlled by the government. (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. 2005)

Individualism is the quality of being individual and makes the individual its focus. Individualism begins “with the fundamental premise that the human individual is of primary importance in the struggle for liberation.” Individualism is associated with artistic interests and lifestyles where there is a tendency towards self creation and experimentation as opposed to tradition or popular mass opinions and behaviors. (www.jstor.org, date: 2/12/2012)

In 1830s, the word “individualism” was first introduced in the English language as a disadvantageous word. More positive use of the term in Britain came to be used with the writings of James Elishama Smith, who was a millenarian and a Christian Israelite. Although an early socialist found in individualism a “universalism” that allow for the development of the “original genius.” Without
individualism, Smith argued, individuals cannot amass property to increase one’s happiness. (Gregory 1986: 81,93)

Individuality is the state or quality of being an individual. It means a person separates from other persons possessing his or her own needs, goals, and desires. Individualism is political and social philosophy. The most important form of individualism is political. It varies in degree from pure anarchism to the theory that the State’s only proper functions are to maintain order and enforce contracts. In ancient Greece and Rome, political theory and practice were anti-individualistic; for they considered and made the State the supreme good, an end in itself, to which the individual was a mere means.

An individualist enters into society to serve the interests of persons, or at least demands the right to serve their interests, without taking in considerations the interests of the whole society. “Societies and groups can differ, in the extent to which they are based upon predominantly self-regarding (individualistic and arguably self-interested) rather than other-regarding (group-oriented, and group, or society-minded) behavior”. (www.britanica.com, date: 10/12/2012)

Individualism sometimes is closely associated with artistic interests and lifestyles and certain variants of anarchism or liberalism. It is assumed that individuals know best and that public authority or society has the right to interfere in the person’s decision-making process only when needed.

Oscar Wilde wrote in his famous essay “The Soul of Men under Socialism” that “Art is individualism, and individualism is a disturbing and disintegrating force. There lies its immense value. For what it seeks is to disturb monotony of type, slavery
The word “individualism” has been used to denote a personality with a strong tendency towards self creation and experimentation as opposed to tradition or popular mass opinions and behavior.

1.9.2. Egalitarianism

The French word *egal* means “equal”. Egalitarianism is a belief of thought that favors equality of some sort. Its general premise is that people should be treated as equals on certain dimensions such as race, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, economic status, social status, and cultural heritage. Egalitarian doctrines maintain that all humans are equal in fundamental worth or social status.

Egalitarianism means people should be treated as equals and have the same political, economic, social and civil rights or as a social philosophy advocating the removal of economic inequalities among people or the decentralization of power. An egalitarian believes that equality reflects the natural state of humanity (G. John 1998: 342). It is a social and political philosophy asserting the equality of all men, especially in their access to the rights and privileges of their society.

1.9.3. Conventionalism

Following are the various shades of meaning associated with the word ‘Convention’ as it is mentioned in the *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* 2003:

- Convention (CUSTOM): A usual or accepted way of behaving, especially in social situations, often following an old way of thinking or a custom in
one particular society. It is a common way of showing something in art or writing.

- Convention (MEETING): A large formal meeting of people who do a particular job or have a similar interest, or a large meeting for a political party.

- Convention (AGREEMENT): A formal agreement between country leaders, politicians and states on a matter which involves them all.

The conventionalism that characterize the Elizabethan and Jacobean era can simply be understood in terms of the high degree of respect to all the norms of discipline and order that have passed down across generations to which society has to conform. It is beyond all doubt that in such a highly conventional or traditional state, any attempt to disrupt the normal scheme of things is deemed a violation of the sociality of long-held and established conventions.

Individualism, egalitarianism and conventionalism are of paramount significance to the fundamental arguments of the present research. These significant movements have played substantial roles during the Elizabethan era. Shakespearean drama represents these movements prominently. Taking into consideration these movements, the researcher has analysed and interpreted the selected plays.