

## The Influence of Shakespeare on Literature

There is no individual writer who has wielded greater influence than Shakespeare over the English language. He constantly satirized linguistic and stylistic fashions among his contemporaries and experimented with all kinds of innovations, dialectical adaptations and archaisms which enriched the English language. Shakespeare's influence on language is indeed deep rooted.

Shakespeare enriched the English language by breathing into it a lot of striking metaphors, new phrases and a host of new words which he coined. The metaphors which Shakespeare employed were out of the ordinary: "*He cannot buckle his distempered cause with the belt of rule.*" This magnificent metaphor of a dropsical body from Macbeth has been used to shed light upon the disorganized state of Macbeth's party. He introduced a number of phrases which have entered into our daily conversation like- '*Pink of courtesy*', '*hoist with his own petard*' and more.

He even tried to suggest local color through usage of provincial words such as '*pheeze*' in 'Taming of the Shrew' and 'blood bolter'd' in Macbeth. He formed a lot of new words by adding prefixes '*en*' (or '*em*') and '*un*' such as *endeared*, *enkindle*, *empoison*, *unexpressive*, *unkiss*. He made new effective poetic compound adjectives like '*daring-hardy*', '*happy-valiant*' and fashioned nouns from verbs such as '*fathere'd*', '*spaniel'd*' and so on.

Shakespeare wrote on a variety of subjects and touched upon a number of human facts and relations which enabled him to create a vocabulary that is believed to comprise about 21000 words. Shakespeare introduced a number of words in the English vocabulary such as *assassination*, *incarnadine*, *dwindle*, *enthroned* and so on.

Owing to his innovations and inclusions, he is now looked upon as one of the greatest individual contributors to the English language.

When reflecting upon the influence of Shakespeare's plays on literature, it is striking that there seems to be hardly a lone segment of English literary history untouched by the hand of the Bard.

Shakespeare's works are dominated by classic narrative structures that, although not invented by Shakespeare, were arguably applied better by him than any author since. Chief among these are the heroic or romantic tragi-comedy. In the heroic plot, a social power is disrupted, perhaps by the overthrowing of a king or an invasion; in the romantic plot, lovers meet, fall into a conflict, and are separated. The key difference between a tragedy and a comedy in either case is the resolution: in a comedy, lovers are reunited or political stability restored; in a tragedy, lovers are forever parted or heroes die. When written well, these classic plots resonate with audiences as they are full of emotion, adventure, and very human and universal problems.

However, as we've already understood is not only the stories themselves which have caused Shakespeare's works to remain popular for centuries, but the manner in which they are told—the style and form of their composition. Within the classic plots we see strong characters and voices that “plead, cajole, reason, threaten and debate”. What makes Shakespeare's works so special is that his use of symmetry (a style of strong phrasing that brings attention to a particular character by making their speeches more compelling), metaphor (for which Shakespeare is famous, is where we see rich imagery and creative turns of phrase), and rhetorical questions (which draw the reader in and engage them in the dialogue) create passionate and vivid verses and attracted the attention of the poets mentioned further.

Shakespeare has had significant influence from the time of his death until today, in contemporary movies, plays, and poems. Many authors have been influenced and inspired by his works, and the phrases and words he has contributed to the English language.

Ironically, Shakespeare was loved by even those who mocked him. World renowned author, George Bernard Shaw ridiculed those who worshipped Shakespeare, inventing the term bardolatry, to denote the study of Shakespeare. He secretly greatly admired Shakespeare.

Many writers have admired and thus been influenced and inspired by Shakespeare. He has influenced many English poets.

In the late 17th century, English poet John Milton wrote a well-known epitaph on Shakespeare called "An Epitaph on the admirable Dramatic Poet, W. Shakespeare". This work appears in the Second Folio, the 1632 edition of William Shakespeare's works. In this work, Milton talks about Shakespeare's influence on him and his immortality, Thou in our wonder and astonishment, Hast built thyself a live-long monument.

In the 18th century, there was Alexander Pope, one of the greatest poets of the Enlightenment. Pope wrote an edition of Shakespeare in 1725, with significant commentary. Pope also makes many references to Shakespeare in his many works.

In the 19th century John Keats, one of the principle poets of the English Romantic Movement, was so greatly influenced by Shakespeare that every time Keats would write, he would keep Shakespeare's works next to him for inspiration and guidance. In Keats's poems Shakespeare's style is replicated and plenty of his imagery is found. Keats never failed to mention his greatest role-model in personal letters to friends.

Shakespeare has also influenced major novelists such as Herman Melville. Herman Melville was even more influenced by Shakespeare. He not only used devices such as formal stage directions and extended soliloquies in *Moby-Dick*. Melville used the classic Shakespearean tragic figure, as his novel's main antagonist, Captain Ahab, "a great man brought down by his faults," inspired by *King Lear*.

Shakespeare changed the view of romance as a valuable topic for tragedy. In *Romeo and Juliet*, he extended the potential of characterization,

plot, language, and genre in tragic, dramatic plays. Before this play, soliloquies had only been used to communicate information about the characters or events; instead he used them to explore character's minds.

Shakespeare was the best at everything he did. No one is better at summing up human emotions in simple, yet eloquent phrases. Shakespeare's stories surpass time and culture. Many authors around the world continue to adapt them. Shakespeare's characters are like no other, particularly his tragic ones.

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