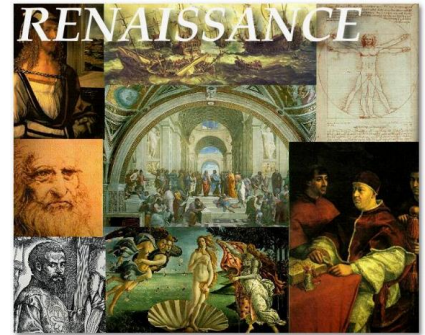


Renaissance or Elizabethan literature

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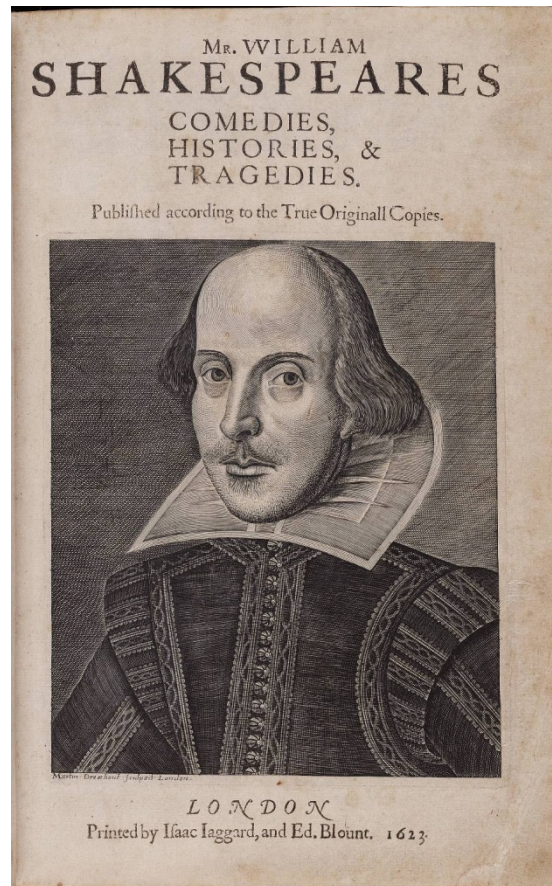


The Renaissance

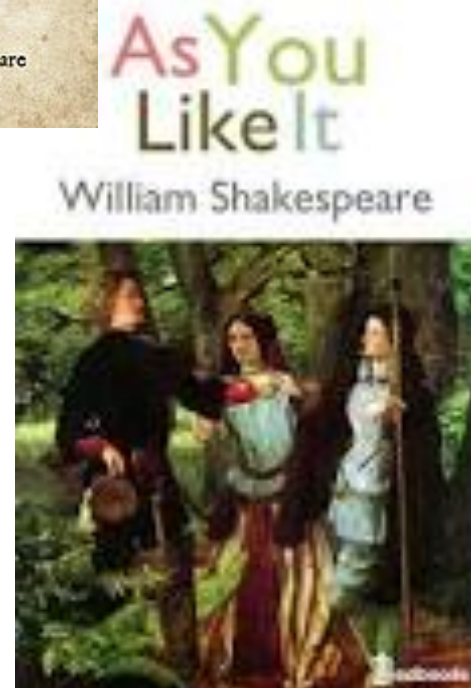
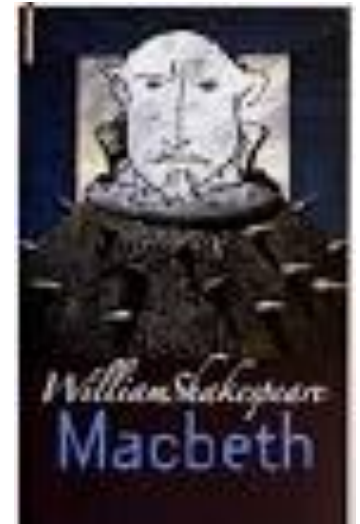
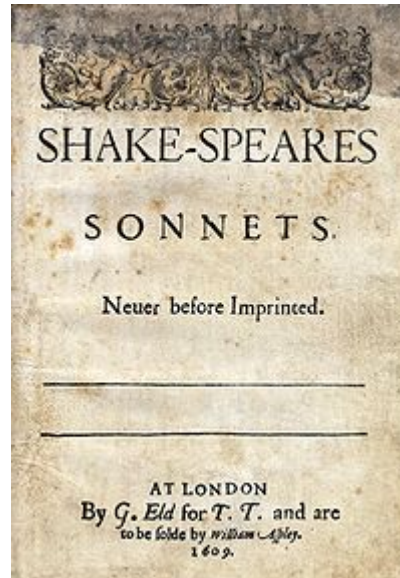


- In England the Renaissance is often referred to as the Elizabethan era or even the Shakespearian era.
- The word 'renaissance' is French and means rebirth, in this case the rebirth of ancient Greek and Roman literary traditions.
- The Renaissance started in Italy in the 15th century or even earlier.
- In England the Renaissance started later and it coincided with Shakespeare's era. (=the late 16th century and the early 17th century)

William Shakespeare 1564-1616



Playwright and poet





Playwright and poet

- Shakespeare wrote comedies, tragedies and historical plays.
- He was also a poet. He wrote a large number of sonnets.
- An Elizabethan/Shakespearian or an English sonnet has fourteen lines; three quatrains and a couplet at the end ($4+4+4+2=14$). The rhyme pattern builds up the quatrains and the couplet and the metre used is **the iambic pentameter**.
- **An iambic pentameter** is a line with ten syllables; first an unstressed syllable and then a stressed syllable ($2+2+2+2+2=10$ syllables)

SONNET 18 (4+4+4+2=14)

and its rhyme pattern

- Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? a
- Thou art more lovely and more temperate: b
- Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, a
- And summer's lease hath all too short a date; b
- Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, c
- And often is his gold complexion dimm'd; d
- And every fair from fair sometime declines, c
- By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd; d
- But thy eternal summer shall not fade e
- Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st; f
- Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade, e
- When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st; f
- So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, g
- So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. g



Random facts about Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era



- **Tragedies:** Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet etc.
- **Comedies:** Twelfth Night, As You Like It, The Merry Wives of Windsor etc.
- **Historical plays:** Richard II, Henry IV etc.
- Shakespeare used **blank verse** in his plays.
- **Blank verse = unrhymed iambic pentameters**

Random facts...

- Shakespeare's plays were based on old stories that he recreated.
- Shakespeare added an enormous number of words of French and Latin origin into the English language.
- Shakespeare was a revolutionary in the sense that the Christian ideal of turning the other cheek instead of practising revenge was finally introduced into European literature in his plays. Hamlet hesitates and debates with himself whether or not to kill his uncle who has killed his father.
- Shakespeare was also a pacifist; in Hamlet he says that a group of soldiers are fighting over a piece of land barely big enough to bury the dead soldiers on.



Random facts...



- The roles of women were played by young men in Shakespeare's plays.
- Shakespeare mixed elements of comedy into his tragedies and elements of tragedy into his comedies. This made his plays more interesting and this is one of the reasons why they are still so popular.
- A huge number of people saw Shakespeare's plays. Both aristocrats and ordinary people went to the theatre and there were even prostitutes and drunks in the audience.
- Contagious diseases spread easily in places like theatres and when there was an outbreak of plague the theatres were closed.