

A Comparison of the comic scenes in selected tragedies of Marlowe and Shakespeare

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Abstrak

'The poet or the novelist can proceed as long as he has pen, ink, and paper, but the dramatist must have players, a stage, and an audience.' A good playwright, if he wants to be successful, must consider his audience. Marlowe's and Shakespeare's audience was a very miscellaneous one. The average Elizabethan audience ranged from noblemen, like the young Earl of Southampton, who were daily frequenters of playhouses, to the rabble of apprentice and cutpurses, who cracked nuts and fought for bitten apples in the pit.' According to Ben Jonson, a popular playwright had to present something which would: 'Be fit for ladies, some for lords, knights, 'squires; Some for your waiting wench and city wits; Some for your men and daughters of Whitefriars.' (Prologue to *Picoene*).^{13th} Marlowe and Shakespeare tried to satisfy their own artistic impulse as well as the different tastes of their audience. A section among the audience, which was called the groundlings, had a great influence on the provision of the comic scenes in Marlowe's and Shakespeare's tragedies. They were the less educated and less sophisticated masses among the playgoers. Comedy was very much appreciated by these people, even if it was in a tragedy. Figures like Agner or the horse-courser in *Troilus and Cressida*, the servants of Menecrates and Abina in *Tamburlaine*, or the gravediggers in *Hamlet* and the porter in *Macbeth* and Mad Tom in *Lear* were familiar to them from their daily life...