

The Renaissance

Years: 1485-1660

Content:

- world view shifts from religion and after life to one stressing the human life on earth
- popular theme: development of human potential
- popular theme: many aspects of love explored
- unrequited love
- constant love
- timeless love
- courtly love
- love subject to change

Style/Genres:

- poetry
- sonnet
- drama
- written in verse
- supported by royalty
- tragedies, comedies, histories
- metaphysical poetry
- elaborate and unexpected metaphors called conceits

Effect:

- commoners welcomed at some play productions (like ones at the Globe) while conservatives try to close the theaters on grounds that they promote brazen behaviors
- not all middle-class embrace the metaphysical poets and their abstract conceits

Historical Context:

- War of Roses ends in 1485 and political stability arrives
- Printing press helps stabilize English as a language and allows more people to read a variety of literature
- Economy changes from farm-based to one of international trade

Key Literature/Authors:

- William Shakespeare
- John Donne
- Cavalier Poets
- Metaphysical Poets
- Christopher Marlowe
- Andrew Marvell