

Death and art in europe between 1300 1400 essay sample

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



Plague was known to enter the Europe first in the year 1347 from the Sicilian City of Messina and paved its way throughout the continent in the following years. The facts about the epidemic that made it the most deadly diseases that had ever hit the continent were, the ignorance to cure it and the potential carriers of the disease, the speed at which it spread and its high mortality rate. Hence the period was often portrayed by death. Europe evidenced the constant jolts of altering strength of this disease every now and then for almost 380 years starting in the year 1347.

Consequently, the population, social networking and the economy as a whole were affected by leaps and bounds. And art was no exception to this situation. The instances of this appalling disaster were depicted in the numerous artistic demonstrations of the period surrounding the era. The paintings, sculptures etc. sometimes illustrated the situation in forms of mockery for the hopeless situation and sometimes presented the situation in forms of glory and hope for having conquered the epidemic.

The Black Death caused by plague marked an inerasable scar of ultimate misery and gloom in the history of Europe which was apparent in many artistic forms in the continent. It was the personal experience with the death of the near and dear ones and their bleak situation that was reflected in the paintings and other art forms.

The sudden reduction in the population of Europe as a dire consequence of plague had a profound impact on the minds and thought process of the people. It was the superstition that prevailed in those times that compelled the people to believe that plague was a serious denunciation of God.

Therefore, people began to find ways to explore the value of life and

simultaneously attain spiritual enlightenment. As a result, many churches had ordered for paintings that could induce repentance amongst people to get closer to God and seek forgiveness for their sins for which they believed that they were being punished by God.

The Dance of Death was known to be a very common theme during the Black Death. The developmental stages of this theme were - physical performance, woven in words as poetry and lastly painted. The continent's human and financial resources were at a not easily recoverable loss.

Recession was evidenced by many countries in Europe. Even the sculptures that even exist today, speak out volumes on the suffering of the people affected by plague. Numerous mercy columns were erected across the continents to mark the end of the serious epidemic that shook the entire continent as a whole and caused immense social and economic loss to the inhabitants. To name a few columns, The Pestsäule plague column in Vienna, Plague Column at Valtice, The Trinity Column.

While most of the paintings during the era reflected the death site of the person infected with plague, many sculptures in the various parts of the continent stand to celebrate the glorious win over the terribly dreadful disease. Contrary to what the art forms in Europe portrayed during the pre-plague era, the paintings and literature during the plague period presented the triumph of death over ignorant human beings and their unhygienic and superstitious living standards. It was a time when too much of religious feelings existed thus having a significant impact on the schools of thought of people regarding the gruesome situation that existed in the continent. Few

paintings even depicted hope of breaking free from the widely scattered epidemic. During the pre-plague era, the art of the continent illustrated the grandeur of the gracious aristocrats while equipped with supreme health and armory. The health that was portrayed in the paintings spoke out large volumes on the absolute living conditions that existed in the pre-plague era. On the contrary, the post-plague era's art put forth the illustrations of a common man's suffering with the disease in an extremely pathetic life conditions. Most of the paintings exhibited skeletons with torn pieces of flesh and the decomposing corpses. Due to the rapidly contagious nature of the disease, the persons suffering from this disease were deserted by their families and left to suffer the fury of the disease. The art during this period even depicted this seclusion that was practiced. The examples of the art and sculptures can be found in the appendix section of this paper.

References

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