

The winter's tale essay



The plays in which I have been studying are Mankind and Shakespeare's "The Winters Tale." The play Mankind was written in the late 15th century and "The Winters Tale" in 1611. Although there are only 100 years between these plays the dialect and purpose are completely different this may be due to the affairs of that time, such as wars, religion, language, purpose, audience and social class[u1].

In the time of "The Winters Tale" it was a relatively peaceful time for example there was no war. The time of Shakespeare was in the time period of the Renaissance when the studies of art and anatomy were rife. The people of this time were more monarchy orientated than religiously orientated. They believed that the monarchy were hand picked by God. They also feared and followed the example of the monarchy. The play "The Winters Tale" is mainly about the monarchy it shows.

The difference of social class as King Politeness spies on his soon Floriezel as there has been rumours he has been seeing a shepardess. He finds out the truth and forbids him from seeing Perdita. Just on the basis of she is a Shepardess. This shows that the monarchy viewed themselves to good to associate with the lower class.

At the sheep Shearing king polixenes is disgusted at the actions of the people. The language used at this time was both poetry and prose. Both poetry and prose were usually written by educated people as literacy was not very common in the lower classes. The audience of Shakespeare's plays were usually a mix of all classes although the higher classes would sit in the theatres whereas the lower class stood both inside and outside the theatre.

There was more emphasis and interest in art and entertainment at this time compared to that of Mankind. The main forms of entertainment were jesters, bear baiting, theatres and art galleries although this was not the same for the lower classes they had sheep shearing's festivals as shown in scene IV of "The Winter's Tale". King Polixenes is disgusted at the actions of the people who attended the sheep shearing. Shakespeare wrote his plays during the late 16th century and early 17th when both Elizabeth I and James I were on the throne but not at the same time. During the reign of Elizabeth I plays were censored.

Due to strict laws prohibiting any explicitly religious or current political events being represented on stage. Shakespeare had to be careful of what he included in his plays. This was bound to be frustrating for Shakespeare as he possibly wanted to write other plays about current affairs and religion but he couldn't as there was so much red tape so to speak. Social class was also a big factor in Elizabethan and Jacobean times as is evident in "The Winter's Tale" when Florizel and Perdita are forbidden to see each other. King Polixenes also says it is fine to breed to types of flowers although one is superior to the other.

Although when it comes to royalty and a civilian coming together his view completely changes. Also women in society were seen as second class citizens and the inferior sex. From a young age they were taught to be meek and obedient although many women worked along side their husbands and fathers and also it was their duty to feed and clothe their families.

Shakespeare often wrote plays around this theme with people disguised as

those of a different class. The play Mankind was written in 1470 I know this because coins which are referenced to in the play.

Factors such as affairs of that time, such as wars, religion, language, purpose, audience and social class can also affect a plays dialect and purpose. There were many wars at this time, such as The Hundred Year's War and The War of The Roses. The Hundred Years' War (French: Guerre de Cent Ans) was a prolonged conflict between two royal houses for the French throne, vacant with the extinction of the senior Capetian line of French kings. The two primary contenders were the House of Valois, and the House of Plantagenet. The House of Valois claimed the title of King of France, while the Plantagenet's from England claimed to be Kings of France and England.

The Plantagenet Kings in England, also known as the House of Anjou, had their roots in the French regions of Anjou and Normandy. French soldiers fought on both sides, with Burgundy and Aquitaine providing notable support for the Plantagenet side. The Wars of the Roses (1455-1487) were a series of civil wars fought over the throne of England between adherents of the House of Lancaster and the House of York. Both houses were branches of the Plantagenet royal house, tracing descent from King Edward III. The country was torn due to the warring countries and to take their mind off the turmoil which their country was in the plays would be a way of taking their mind off it. They were also very church and morally orientated.

They also believed there were consequences and rewards to their actions. Due to the invention of the printing press it was easier to distribute scripts to the actors. There was evil poetry, prose and mercy poetry this play was

expected to be written by an educated person or a priest. Unlike Shakespeare's *Mankind* which was performed in rural areas they would tour local towns and villages. Although there were no theatres but the plays were performed either outside or in outside houses.

The main forms of entertainment are jesters and religious festivals, the plays like *Mankind* may have featured in the religious festivals as it is a morality play which teaches certain morals. Like *Mankind* teaches good always triumphs over evil. The king of this time was Edward IV he was an extremely capable and daring military commander, Edward destroyed the House of Lancaster in a series of spectacular military victories; he was never defeated on the field of battle. The social divide was not as evident as in Shakespeare's time as there was more focus on religion rather than riches.

Or it possibly wasn't evident in this play as it was focused on morals and the audience was a poorer audience. Whereas Shakespeare's play *The Winter's Tale* was based on the difference in social class and was written for richer people in theatres.