

NAME: EMOLE HANNAH ONYEJIEKE
REG NO: 2016/234722
DEPARTMENT: ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA.

DISCUSS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIEVAL DRAMA AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA.

Medieval Drama arose from the ashes of Roman drama. It was emerged after this degeneration which was the product of the church, born out of the desire to suppress certain infamous elements of past dramatic traditions.

The beginning of the medieval church sermon and mass which had some dramatic characteristics. The human impulse to indulge in mimesis, which received impetus from the religious tropes gave birth to the new form of drama prevalent during the medieval era.

Renaissance Drama is used to describe a period of great intellectual and artistic achievements. Renaissance is a French word which means 'rebirth'. The Renaissance period, therefore means the period of cultural rebirth. It was a period that marked the rediscovery of Greek and roman civilization.

Medieval Drama is theatre in the middle ages which was quite unlike the theatre of Shakespeare's day 'Folk plays', or 'Mumming's', about heroes, battles and dragons, treated secular themes but much other medieval drama had a strong religious ethos. Medieval mystery plays for example, dramatized bible events, while morality plays allegorized the human struggle to choose between vice and virtue. Drama could be associated with Christian feast days and was not performed in theatres, but in public and private buildings, in open spaces like church yards, on temporary structures like 'scaffolds' and pageant wagons. Plays were often of composite or anonymous authorship, and some plays like the mystery plays were performed by ordinary towns folk.

During the Reformation, the drama began to change. Genres like tragedy, comedy and satire replaced the mystery and morality plays of the middle ages. Play wrights experimented with forms borrowed from classical authors, studying the tragedies of Seneca and the comedies of Terence and Plautus. Plots and characters were taken from a range of sources. Shakespeare, for example read medieval chronicles, classical drama poetry, narratives of travel and

the colonization of the new world, and the romances and of legends of earlier centuries.

New themes appeared as well as love between men and women as a theme adaptable either to comedy, or to tragedies such as Othello or Anthony and Cleopatra. History and politics were also of great interest in age of strong rulers,

Elizabeth I, James VI and James I, ideas about power of monarchs and the burdens and dangers of kingship were explored in history plays, or in tragedies like King Lear. The shift in focus from religious to humanist values led to the creation of the flawed hero, embodied in characters like Hamlet, King Lear and Othello.

As it expanded and gained prominence, the drama required spaces of its own. The appearance of the theatres and the existence of professional acting companies (composed, until the latter half of the 17th century, only men & boys), showed that plays, players and play wrights had become an established part of the contemporary scene.

Medieval drama and renaissance drama are too distinct periods in history. It belongs to the middle ages and centered on concepts such as religion, Chivalry, and Courtly love and Renaissance drama involved religion, historical and social issues. It explored religion in a different approach. It was written in early modern English.