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DEPT: ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES

COURSE: ELS140 (INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA)

LECTURER: MR ODOH

Discuss the Relationship between Medieval Drama and Renaissance

Drama

The Medieval era lasted from 5th century to the 15th century. The medieval drama dealt majorly on religious ideas such death, resurrection, good and evil, heaven and earth etc. The medieval drama started after the era of the classics. It witnessed the reign of the church. The Church banned all forms of drama during this period. The Medieval drama dramatized religious events and where performed at first in churchyards and non-permanent buildings. The medieval drama also centered in courtly love and chivalry. The medieval drama was mostly miracle plays, morality plays and mystery plays. A good example of this is the Beowulf and Everyman. The medieval was written in Old English and Middle English.

The Renaissance moved away from the medieval drama. It was more of a secular drama. The English Renaissance Drama started in the 15th to the early 17th

century. The Renaissance drama borrowed from the Classical drama. Genres like tragedy, comedy, and satire replaced the mystery, morality and miracle plays. It was ushered in by the medieval drama. In the renaissance drama, the identity of the playwright became important. New themes appeared as well. Love between men and women were a theme adaptable to either comedy or tragedy such as Othello. History and politics were also of great interest in an age of strong rulers like Elizabeth 1 and James VI. Ideas about the power of monarchs and the burdens and dangers of kingship were explored in history plays or in tragedies like King Lear. Jacobean revenge drama examined not only the ethics but also the psychology of revenge and aggression. The shift in focus from religious to humanist values led to the creation of the flawed hero embodied in characters like Hamlet, Lear and Othello. Renaissance involved the emergence of humanism. The renaissance drama used Elizabethan English.

The both period had religion as a theme though Renaissance tried to move away from the church view. They also entertained the people though medieval drama had more to inculcate morals to the audience.

REFERENCES

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