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DEPARTMENT: ENGLISH AND LITRARY STUDIES.

COURSE:INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA (ELS 140)

**DISCUSS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIEVAL
DRAMA AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA.**

Medieval can be defined as having characteristics associated with the middle ages, archaic or brutal.

Renaissance can be defined as the transition period between medieval and modern times. The rebirth or revival.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Some historians believed that drama never existed, the church crumbed down drama. Drama later emerged. Ironically, it was the church that brought back drama. In the middle age when the middle class emerged, the economic system opened up and people were engaged in businesses. During this period, there were so many crusade by the church. The great theatre was a religious one, On a close examination, it reveals so many important things with the Greek theatre.

1 .Like the Greek theatre, the medieval age/theatre began as a spring time religious observance, revealing the resurrection of a great divine figure and by analogous extension the rebirth of vegetation in the field.

2. Like the Greek theatre, the medieval age was intensively public and communal which attracted mass audience for the celebration of a common mythos in the old and new testament.

3. Like the Greek drama, the medieval became a function of a revolving civic government: It became a part of the political and social life of the community as well as a vehicle for its religion.

It was a communal production, the priest in charge will organize it with his co-workers and then present it to the people. There was no playwright like the Greek and Roman theatre.

QUEM QUERTIS: This is the first attempt by the church to present drama to the public. It was not a full drama, it was just a trope. The medieval theatre was born in the liturgy of the Christian church in the 10th century when series of liturgical laboration . Thus from the latin word troupus which means added melody. The most significant of these troupe is when quem queritis appeared in the eastern mass, they

celebrate a responsive chanting, the visit of the women, who were met by an angel who told them that Christ has risen and their grief turned to joy.

Also a similar trope was added to the Christmas mass-which concerned the shepherds seeking the infant Jesus.

From trope to full fledged drama occurred in the later 10th century. It is important to note that this liturgical mini opera similar contains all the classical requirements of a serious drama because it contains exposition, conflict, catharsis etc. It was a full theatre at this stage. They used costume, there was impersonation. It centered fully on a Christian religion as a divine figure (Jesus). The language was vulgarized i.e it was translated to other languages. By the end of the 12th century, it was a full fledged liturgical drama. Eventually, this liturgical drama outgrew the mass, outgrew production capabilities of the clergies who were managers, It outgrew the cathedral and went into the market place i.e it was commercialized. In the 13th century, drama left the church.

Middle ages lasted for about a thousand years. There was no emperor. It was the catholic churches that ruled so they appointed dukes, knights,

priests to aid them. In medieval period, the tragic concept was moved around the hero.

RENAISSANCE PERIOD

The peculiar changes that occurred in the Western Europe in 15th and 16th centuries produced the name renaissance. It simply means rebirth. It was a period when man regained the glory of theatre, drama and rebirth of culture. So many factors brought about renaissance but Western Europe experienced economic change.

Factors that brought about renaissance

1. The economic experience of the age: So many peasants touched money and there was a political change as many of them went into politics.
2. There was a clear shift from a church centered, ordered, hierarchical society to free moving one with emphasis on man(individual). This was the major event that shaped the renaissance period.

3. This period was marked by sudden but wonderful burst of classical dramas (Greek) and music. There was a new inventions, new productions and a radical revision of medieval religious tenets.
4. The invention of printing press by John Caston (a German), made it possible for dissimilation of knowledge to other parts of the world. Among the arts, drama was the most influenced/ reflected in the English renaissance. Therefore, the term Elizabethan is used to describe the works in British renaissance. The works of the reign of King James including many of Shakespearean works was called Jacobean works. Then Charles's work was known as Caroline. Shakespearean tragedy has so many similarities with the Greek tragedy , the major difference is that shakespeare dose not use kings and people of noble birth as his hero but people of excellent character and good personality.

Elizabeth name was popular in the renaissance period, renaissance means rebirth of knowledge and this means that knowledge was almost dead before the coming of the renaissance period.

