

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE PERIOD IN DRAMA

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INTRODUCTION

Medieval drama

Medieval theatre refers to theatrical performance in the period between the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D. and the beginning of the Renaissance in approximately the 15th century A.D. Medieval Theatre covers all drama produced in Europe over that thousand-year period and refers to a variety of genres, including liturgical drama, mystery plays, morality plays, farces and masques. The most famous examples of medieval plays are the English cycle dramas, the York Mystery Plays, the Chester Mystery Plays, the Wakefield Mystery Plays and the N-Town Plays, as well as the morality play, Everyman. One of the earliest surviving secular plays in English is The Interlude of the Student and the Girl (c. 1300).

Renaissance drama

Renaissance theatre encompasses the period between 1562 (performance at the Inner Temple during the Christmas season of 1561 of *Gorboduc*, the first English play using blank verse) and 1642 (ban on theatrical plays enacted by the English Parliament).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIEVAL DRAMA AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA

In *Everyman*, there is use of abstract qualities like Beauty, Knowledge to address the themes of that age. Renaissance drama, which lasted from approximately 1500-1700, was the rebirth of interest in theatre across Europe. In fact, the Renaissance drama introduced many of the elements that were not available in the Middle Ages: indoor theatres, an arched stage, a curtain dropped between scenes, more elaborate set design. All of these changes were implemented during the Renaissance. More importantly, however, the purpose of drama transitioned from stories told by the Church to stories made primarily for entertainment for both royalty and commoners. Whereas medieval dramas were essentially amateurish endeavors in which clergy or various trade guilds participated, the Renaissance Theatre was composed of professional actors, among who were those who specialized in tragic roles and others in comic roles. These actors were not members of a guild, a requirement for workers, so they placed themselves under the patronage of royalty; in this way, they would then be considered servants and, therefore, be allowed to perform. background image Medieval mystery plays, for example, dramatized Biblical 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 permanent theatres, but in public or private buildings, in open spaces like churchyards, on temporary structures like 'scaffolds' and pageant wagons, or in the street. Plays were often of composite or anonymous

authorship, and some plays, like the mystery plays were performed not by professional actors but by ordinary townsfolk. During and after the Reformation, the drama began to change. Genres like tragedy, comedy and satire replaced the mystery and morality plays of the middle ages. Playwrights 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.

Medieval Period is also called the middle ages. It lasted from 5th to 15th century. Medieval Drama was therefore preceded by Greek and Roman drama and followed by Elizabethan drama. Medieval Drama arose from the ashes of Roman Drama just before it evolved into Medieval Drama, there was that level of infamy which entered it and which was vehemently opposed by the church. That was why some critics describe it as degenerate theatre and its disappearance during the barbaric invasions of the sixth century was the immediate aftermath of that degeneration. The Drama that emerged after the degeneration was the product of the church, born out of the desire to suppress certain infamous elements of past dramatic traditions, and out of the desire to fashion drama, dramaturgy and service along ecclesiastical lines for the propagation of the Christian faith.

The beginning of Medieval Drama is, therefore, traceable to the medieval church sermon and mass which had some medieval characteristics. The human impulse to indulge in mimesis which receives impetus from the religious troupe gave birth to a new

form of drama prevalent during the medieval era. The most famous examples of medieval plays are the English cycle dramas, the York Mystery Plays, the Chester Mystery Plays, the Wakefield Mystery Plays and the N-Town Plays, as well as the morality play, Everyman.

The types of medieval drama are background image mystery play, miracle play and the morality play. Each plays depicts different thing. Medieval drama could also be seen as middle page drama. During this time period, church services were held in Latin, which wasn't understood by the majority of the congregation. Most people couldn't read and had no experience. Medieval drama is known for its highly stylized character and action, its verse dialogue and its religious themes. Drama developed roughly from the 10th to 16th century, peaking in the 15th century.

The renaissance was a period of a great flowering of English drama. It differed from many ways from the medieval dramatic tradition immediately preceding it but was strongly influenced by classical drama. Renaissance drama, centered in England, evolved out of the morality and mystery plays of the medieval era. While these earlier plays attempted to teach a lesson and were often performed by monks or tradesmen, the renaissance dramas moved toward entertain men. Renaissance drama developed around the 15th century and was at first often performed as short plays at court or in the homes of nobles. The playwrights of the era, such as Shakespeare and Marlowe, were not intellectuals and wrote to entertain rather than to instruct. The subjects of renaissance plays often included comedy, and some, such as Skelton's Magnyfycence (1515), also included political satire. The early plays of the era also included history and set the stage (literally) for the later history plays of Shakespeare and other playwrights. As the reformation reintroduced European audiences to the Latin classics, much of the material of classical human is me as adapted into Renaissance drama.

For example, Shakespeare included storylines from an English translation of Ovid's Metamorphosis in plays such as midsummer night's dream (particularly the story of pyramid and

this be). In addition, the traditional Latin structure of the five-act play was introduced into English drama as Seneca influenced renaissance playwrights. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* included elements such as ghosts and violence.

Renaissance means rebirth of knowledge. The knowledge was only possessed by the clerks and a book was found in the masses. Renaissance, one can note numerous significant changes, mainly those pertaining to art and religion. In general, ideals and subjects during the Renaissance became more secular. In Medieval times, people seemed to focus mainly on the church, God, and the afterlife; whereas during the Renaissance, the focus was more secular: humans and life on earth.