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## **The Relationship between Medieval drama and Renaissance drama.**

### **ABSTRACT.**

The medieval drama and renaissance drama are definitely not the same thing but even among the discrepancies, one is likely to see one or two things that connects them, that is what this thesis is set to accomplish.As the renaissance drama is more artistic than the medieval drama, they still relate to each other in the aspect of interlude, impersonation, stageability and in quest sequence. Medieval drama emerged out of the desire to suppress certain infamous elements of past dramatic traditions and out of the desire to fashion drama and service along ecclesiastical lines for the propagation of the Christian faith. Renaissance is a French word which means "rebirth",this is a period of cultural rebirth, it marked the rediscovery of past heritage, both Greek and Roman civilization. Renaissance drama can be said to be a departure or rejection of medieval drama.

### **MEDIEVAL DRAMA :**

The beginning of medieval drama is traceable to 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. The Medieval drama lasted from 5th to 15th century. Medieval drama is also known as the "Middle Age". The medieval drama begins with the fall of Roman Empire and the eventual ascension of the Christian church into power. Medieval drama precedes from Greek and Roman drama followed by Elizabethan drama. Medieval drama arose from the ashes of Roman drama.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church took over. Drama was banned and theater were closed. The church felt theatre as they knew it during the Roman Empire was barbaric and evil. They categorised actors with prostitutes, thieves and other undesirable elements in the society. Hence, this period signifies the fall of the theatre. The only people that keeps theatre alive during this period were wandering minstrels, mimes and jugglers.

During this period church service were held in Latin, which majority of the congregation don't understand. By the ninth century trope, the celebration of mass was added. One of this tropes is the Quem quantities trope which was introduced to the Ester Sunday mass. This addiction is made in 925 AD. Quem is a Latin word for "whom do you seek?". By 975 AD, this trope becomes a tiny play. This transition was fostered by Ethelwood, the Bishop of Winchester England, who wrote stage direction for tiny play.

Medieval drama continued to grow with the addition of many scenes to the church service. Sometimes, it becomes necessary for the Medieval church to look for what will be regarded as setting.

The church facade became converted as setting. Also Medieval drama was forced to leave the church and seek existence outside it.

Again, in Medieval drama the power of the church is at the peak. The church has a strong influence on the lives of the individuals. Also Medieval drama has two most popular vernacular drama that springs up during this period, these were the Mystery play, which dramatizes Biblical events and Miracle plays, which were based on the lives of saints. For example, "Everyman" which is a typical morality play.

In conclusion, Medieval drama is very religious and teaches moral. It is mostly controlled by the church.

## **RENAISSANCE DRAMA :**

After Medieval drama, the Renaissance drama is introduced.

The Renaissance drama is the period between 14th to 17th century, considered the between Middle Ages and Modern History. It started as a culture movement in Italy in the late Medieval period and later spread to the rest of Europe.

Renaissance is also used to describe a period of great intellectual and artistic achievement. Renaissance is a French word which means "**rebirth**". The period therefore, means the period of **cultural rebirth**. Renaissance period is also seen as a period of re-examination of life. It also a period that marked the rediscovery of past heritage, an age which epitomized in the rediscovery of Greek and

Roman

civilization.

Renaissance drama can be referred to as European drama which began from about the 15th to the 17th centuries. During this period the rediscovery and imitation of classical work established the foundation of the modern theatre.

Renaissance drama begins in Italy with scholars initially attempting to recreate the original stagings of Greek and Roman play. Renaissance drama is divided into **Italian, English and French Renaissance**. Italian Renaissance dates back to 14th century. During this period people began to shed themselves of the belief that characterized the Medieval society. They began to look around for new ways of thought that would be appropriate to the thinking of the age. Also we have **English Renaissance** which started with Christopher Marlow's Tamburlaine(1587)and terminated with that of William Shakespeare in 1616. It is divided into Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline drama.

Renaissance did not dominate until the 16th century. A number of things brought about the Renaissance. Firstly, the lessening influence of the church over learning and life. Secondly, the invention of the movable type printing press, the increase in growth of cities, the decline in feudalism and finally the increase of princes/ruler.

#### **RELATIONSHIP.**

These two dramas relate to each other in the aspect of interlude, impersonation, stageability and in quest sequence. The renaissance drama which started with Christopher Marlowe was staged in the queens court while that of the medieval drama was in the church and when the audience grew, they changed the setting in other to accommodate the growing audience. Both has the quest sequence, in

medieval drama, it draws its theme from the Bible where we see Eve in quest for knowledge the same thing is applicable to the renaissance drama as is seen in Christopher Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus " where Faustus seeks knowledge to the extent of selling his soul to the devil.

The connection between Renaissance drama to Medieval drama is that Renaissance seems much more abrupt. The theatre's transition from the Medieval to the Renaissance is more readily apparent in English than Italy or France.....in those countries, the shift from Medievalism to Neoclassical. Also as time goes on the Medieval drama is seen as amateur actor and the new professional actor which stimulates interest in the act of acting. In the 16th century, the Renaissance stage becomes almost wholly professional and public. Secondly, Renaissance age is marked with a number of inventions, the invention of printing, the establishment of universities and the fall of constantinople which causes scholars in classical literature to spread all over Europe. Based on logistics, it is the medieval drama and what is considered to be its flaw that prompted the emergence of renaissance drama.