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**COURSE: ELS 140 (INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA) RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA**

The medieval drama 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 refer to a variety of genres, including liturgical drama, mystery plays, morality plays, farces and masques. Beginning with Hrosvitha of Gandersheim in the 10th century, medieval drama was for the most part very religious and moral in its themes, staging and traditions. The most famous example of medieval plays is the English cycle dramas, “the Wakefield mystery plays and the N-Town play, as well as the morality play, Everyman. One of the earliest surviving secular plays in English is “the interlude of the student and the aril” (c. 1300).

Due to a lack of surviving records, and texts, a low literacy rate of the general population, and the opposition of the clergy to some types of performance, there are few surviving sources on medieval drama of the early and high medieval periods. However by the late period, drama and theatre began to become more

background image secularized and a larger number of records survive documenting plays and performances faced with the problem of explaining a new religion to a largely illiterate population, churches in the early middle ages began staging dramatized versions of particular biblical events on specific days of the year. Medieval theatre differed from the classical theatre for it emphasized spectacle. In addition, it persecuted various actions on stage in time and space and presented a combination of the sublime with detailed realism, the dramas were performed with spectacle; on longer dependent exclusively on the spoken word, but incorporating music, dance, costume and set design. The spectacle of the later medieval theatre made it necessary to have detailed stage directions. The drama that emerged after this 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, dramaturgy and service along ecclesiastical lines for the propagation of the Christian faith. The beginning of the medieval drama is, therefore traceable to medieval church sermon and mass which had some dramatic characteristic. Renaissance drama on the other hand is used to describe a period of great intellectual and artistic achievements, Renaissance is a French word which means "rebirth". The Renaissance period means the period of rebirth, it was a period that marked the rediscovery of past heritage, an age which epitomized in the background image rediscovery of Greek and Roman civilizations. The Renaissance age is marked with a number of inventions. The invention of printing press, the establishments

of universities, and the fall of Constantinople which caused scholars of classical literature to spread all over Europe. Renaissance drama also known as early modern theatre, or commonly as Elizabethan theatre, refers to the theatre of England between 1562 and 1642. The acting companies functioned on a repertory system; unlike modern productions that can run for months or years on end. The troupes of this era rarely acted the same play two days in a row. The majority of plays written in this era were collaborations, and the solo artists who generally eschewed collaboration efforts, like Jonson and Shakespeare, were the exception to the rule. In the Renaissance power shifted from Rome, the Popes and Bishops were disregarded, it established the emergence of individualism, the broke down boundaries, there was limitations in the medieval period which the Renaissance broke the power of love broke out, the centre of literature move from society to the individual. The year 1576 was a key date in this subject since that is when the first permanent theatre building was built in London; it was called simply the theatre, because it was the only place of its kind in England at the time, before 1576, plays were acted in public squares and courtyards and other open spaces, by troupes of background image actors that mostly travelled around the country side between cities and towns, once the actors had a permanent place to act plays, they could develop their art without the constant need to travel. The theatre was followed by other theatres in the London area; there were the curtain, the Rose, the swan, the globe, and others too, more plays were written by more play wrights to fill these theatres.

Playwrights worked in both the classic types of drama, tragedy and comedy. They also began their own type of history play, mainly about earlier English Kings and the events of their reigns. The word neoclassical was also used to depict the Renaissance Age, especially in France; the neoclassical age went back to the ancients, particularly Greece and Rome, to revive or adapt their practices. This gave rise to the use of perspective scenery, the introduction of the neoclassical ideal, and the birth of the comic form. *Commedia dell'arte*, in short the Renaissance period was a period of the re-examination of life, it was this state of affairs that gave rise to the spirit of humanism which is usually associated with the renaissance age. Renaissance drama grew and developed until 1642, when it suddenly stopped. This essay discusses the relationship between the medieval drama and Renaissance drama. The major relationship between medieval and Renaissance drama was that medieval drama gave birth to Renaissance drama, Renaissance rise to replace the medieval background image. The medieval was considered a period of ignorance, barbarism and superstition (Hana Walt 1998) this period was called dark age due to the negative practices involved, but scholars saw the period differently stating that the history was a continuous process from biblical times to their time; most of them wrote about battles, feudalism, crusades, manorialism, kings and emperors, rise of towns, universities and church. Representation of art during this period were modestly sealed with little creativity, because artist did their work collectively and mainly for religious purposes. There was no competition

in the art industry and traditional techniques were used to design objects, art was used to spread religion in Europe and throughout other parts of the world and was viewed as a mere utilitarian object which did not have much value. The Renaissance was a historical art period that led to the abandonment of medieval ages practice (Zippolo, 2008). The artists abandoned the medieval period representation which were modestly scaled for monumental images that reflect their abilities back to classical writing (Renaissance also looked back to medieval writing) and tried to synthesize them with other writing. In the middle age; people had a sense of place, community. Renaissance people wanted more of life, individualism was emphasized but in both periods social class existed background image Middle ages; feudalism; Renaissance; rise of towns and cities but both established universities the only different being the curriculum. The religious was still recognizable and important, the main different being how God was viewed in both Latin continued to be the language of choice for scholars; Both; Even after the Ref, religion (whether it be Catholic or protestant) was a major thing in the lives of most people. Educated people were looked upon, favourable and while in the Ren more people read than in Ma, it mostly the wealthy citizens who learn. The major similarity is that for most people, everyone except the rich ... life did not change very much.. in both most people in Europe were subsistence farmers who grew their own food and usually had barely enough to eat. Few people except the rich could read and write,

especially if they lived outside the city as most people did. Transportation did not significantly improve, so most people died without traveled further than a 2 days walk from where they were born. Poor sanitation and disease were still widespread and few people lived to be over 40 days of age, so their perspective about life was that it was hard, and that they could not do much to change it. In conclusion, without medieval drama theatre will be no renaissance drama. Renaissance was a reaction against medieval drama the former was for the most party very religious and moral in its themes, staging and tradition while the later background image broke down boundaries, the power of love broke out, they individuals industrialization. Both medieval and Renaissance writings looks back to classical writing. In addition it was the medieval that gave birth to Renaissance