

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE PERIOD

The middle ages starts from the 5th century marked by the collapse of the Roman Empire. With the decline of Rome, drama also experience a decline too as power is vested with the church. Thus the church has a strong influence on the lives of individuals because the power of the church is at its peak. This leads to the abolition of drama and characters are seen as pagans and should be discouraged. The pope is seen as “the supreme authority and whatever he says obtains. The medieval period has been termed the dark phase because insight in knowledge (secular) and scientific discoveries are forbidden. Knowledge only resides with the monks in monasteries and other elite group called the papacy. This period is a period when knowledge is hidden by the few whose hands it falls into and plays were discouraged. The drama suffers beyond recognition. Only that minstrels performs mostly moving from place to place not without facing attack from the church.

Though drama declines but a kind of quasi-theatrical activities is seen such as the interlude, Quem Quaeritis which makes events which are symbolic to be dramatized such as morality, private and mystery plays. In this era, religious philosophies and human beauty are predominant.

Renaissance period is a period of great intellectual and artistic achievements. “Renaissance” literally means “awakening” or “rebirth”. It is an European cultural movement that started between the 14th and 16th centuries. It is characterized by renewal of learning development of infrastructure and a gradual reform in education. It may be considered as a sort of a bridge between the middle ages and the modern age. Thus one can say that renaissance is the younger sister of medieval age.

The periods are somewhat closely related that scholars find it difficult to decipher the actual century one ends and the other begins because in the medieval period, there is still this interest in drama which the renaissance shows with it. One can see morality plays in the medieval period such as Everyman which focuses on man and the renaissance’s humanist drama which also has man at the center though man developed than that found in the middle age. This one can say that renaissance is the age where drama leaves the church. This further means that it is medieval drama that paves way for renaissance drama to develop.

Also in the area of art one can see that in medieval period there is also paintings and gothic arts, the use of parchment papers by authors and this is obtainable in renaissance in that art, painting and development is there too, one finds the drawings of Michelangelo’s David, Da Vinci, also the invention of the printing press which is in contrast to the painstakingly handwritten text by a trained

scribe. Thus one visualizes the medieval period as the child while renaissance is the period when the child has grown and capable of exploiting ideas.

Some contrastive relationships exist between them. In renaissance there is a rediscovery of the more classical form of art while medieval period deviates and seeks to propound religious theories. While knowledge during the medieval is cancelled and the church has a high influence in the lives of people, the renaissance is marked by knowledge conspicuous act and the power of the church declines as scientific discoveries and realism counters those prescriptive knowledge in the medieval.

Also drama and literature becomes more developed and secularized. With the advent of printing machines, authors are encouraged to write while the medieval tends to discourage authors of the hand written text and the abolition of drama. Generally, one can say that in medieval while knowledge is concealed and not tempered with, the renaissance age explores, touches, and plays with knowledge as the quest for knowledge increases. This point is proved using Everyman and Marlowe's Doctor Faustus for the law period respectively. In everyman death comes to take everyman and he agrees with little resistance without trying to play a trick on death. Because we see how everyman tries to purify his life and balance his accounts with good deeds but in Doctor Faustus, Faustus sells his soul to the devil without any recourse to God. He even goes ahead

to play with the pope by removing his seat and so many tricks which symbolizes the renaissance's satire or criticism of the Christian faith. Doctor Faustus gets knowledge and uses to excessively even as a play thing which is not obtainable in the medieval age.