

**UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA**

**FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY  
STUDIES**

**TOPIC:  
DISCUSS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA**

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INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA (ELS 140)**

**BY**

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

Medieval and renaissance are both epoch of drama. Medieval is otherwise known as the middle age while renaissance is the rebirth. however, their relationships are not co-related.

the medieval drama arose from the ashes of roman drama of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.it was precede by Greek and Roman drama followed by Elizabethan drama. Medieval drama was a product of the church, its desire was to suppress the certain infamous elements of past dramatic traditions and out of the desire to fashion drama,dramaturgy and service along ecclesiastical line for the propagation of the Christian faith.

The beginning of medieval drama is traceable to medieval church sermon and mass which had some dramatic characteristics. The human impulse to indulge in mimesis,which received the impetus from the religious tropes, gave birth to the new form of drama prevalent during the medieval era.medieval got established as secular entertainment through organized groups called mystery cycles. There were two most popular vernacular dramas that sprang during this period; the

mystery plays which dramatized biblical events celebrated specific doctrinal traditions within Christian church and the miracle plays which were based on the life of saints. The morality plays were also introduced to teach important moral lessons through allegorical characters.

Farcial interlude, short dramas that were presented between events at entertainments and feasts were also developed during this period. Medieval stage was wholly devoted to expounding religious philosophy and nothing else. It was replete with thrones, scaffolds, trolleys, and other contrivances used in staging plays having to do with annunciation and the ascension. Stage music and lighting equally became sophisticated and medieval authors were not familiar with classical tragedies or dramatic theories Aristotle or Plato as well as Christian orthodoxy. Medieval stage specifically rose out of the desire propagate faith through drama, thus all the titles of the play were derived from popular biblical episodes.

Renaissance period which is also the period of cultural rebirth is described as a period of re-examination of live. A period of great intellectual and artistic achievements. Its period marked the rediscovery of past heritage which epitomized the rediscovery of Greek and Roman civilizations. It is marked with number of inventions. The invention of printing press made it possible for classical literature to be printed and taken to western Europe.it led to the establishment of universities and the fall of

Constantinople which caused scholars of classical literature all over Europe.

The Italian renaissance period dates back to 14<sup>th</sup> century. It was a period of that declined the beliefs that characterized the medieval society. They refused to accept the artistic standards of the previous age and began to look for new ways of thought that would be appropriate to the thinking of the age. The Italian renaissance had two distinct dramatic forms; the humanist and the commedia.

The humanist play stressed secular activity and spiritual compliance to the church. Their main subject matter was romance though the treatment to this subject was obscene. Their comedies were mainly those of mistaken identity and disguise. The Italian renaissance theatre were rich and highly decorative and was very much a part of the setting as any piece of scenery.

The commedia was another type of Italian renaissance drama. All aspect of the plays was dominated by the court and their performance were essentially coterie and were neither public nor truly professional interest in the commedia covered all categories of people in the society.

However, medieval period was basically about religion and Christianity while renaissance period had to do with secularism, humanism, less focus on religion, more on materialistic things like art and ordinary human beings.