

Mystery plays and miracle plays (they are distinguished as two different forms although the terms are often used interchangeably) are among the earliest formally developed plays in medieval Europe.

But calling "The Mystery Play" a "detective story" is a bit misleading. This is a dark tale about a man discovering the worst of Humanity and losing all hope in the process. The story is quite simple, actually: Meanwhile Annie Woolf, a reporter for a local newspaper, is also trying to find out the truth. I was amazed at how Morrison is able to make such a powerful, dark, disturbing, emotional and surprisingly beautiful story out of such a simple premise. If he does, why is there so much misery in the world? Did we kill him? Does the Devil rule the world? Is there even a Devil? Or is there no machine and we are alone wandering directionless? These are the questions writer Grant Morrison is interested in approaching in this story and are the ones that actually matter. Carpenter is trying to solve the actual crime and find out who was the person who killed not God but the person playing His role in the play. Morrison succeeds in making Carpenter an extremely likeable character. He strongly believes that there is an order to the universe and that everything is meant to be. That belief is severely challenged and maybe even destroyed over the course of this story and it has a very strong impact in his already vulnerable psyche. For me it was like "The Silence of the Lambs" in the way that Clarice Starling the protagonist of that book is also a very sympathetic and strong character, and one the reader is always invested in even without knowing her past tragedies. And just like Clarice, Frank Carpenter is confronted with both his own demons and the demons who inhabit the world around him. So you should believe me when I tell you that Carpenter is actually a very unique character, and his descent into hopelessness almost had me crying. His journey is incredibly emotional, touching, disturbing and depressing at the same time. The reader always hopes things will work out for the best and Carpenter will find his peace, and that makes the ending even more destructive to the reader. Almost everyone else has a chance to show their true nature whether through dialogue or through their actions. The Mayor and the Priest are both interesting characters in their own right. The Mayor in particular has a pretty disturbing scene midway through the book. But the most important side character is Annie Woolf, the reporter. She is also sympathetic and interesting and her actions, in spite of having disastrous consequences, are comprehensible and make complete sense. I think I would probably do what she does in the end if I was in her place. We never know what is real or what is not. The line between real and dream is almost non-existent. Muth reveals himself to be a master storyteller, and there is nothing to complain about in his art in this book. Also, many will pick up the book thinking of it as a murder mystery in which the criminal will eventually get caught in the end. In fact, the crime itself is unresolved. But, as I said, that will only disappoint readers expecting a regular murder mystery. Those inevitably will consider the ending to be anti-climactic. But those who see the story for what it is - the journey of a man into hopelessness and madness - will experience one hell of a ride no pun intended. Simply put, this is a hugely ambitious book that features some great character work, a brilliant and disturbing plot and a deep examination of the human condition, all this accompanied by rich, moody and beautiful artwork. A must-read by a masterful creative team.

Chapter 2 : Mystery | Definition of Mystery by Merriam-Webster

Mystery play: Mystery play, one of three principal kinds of vernacular drama in Europe during the Middle Ages (along with the miracle play and the morality play). The mystery plays, usually representing biblical subjects, developed from plays presented in Latin by churchmen on church premises and depicted such.

Origins[edit] Mystery play, Flanders , 15th century As early as the fifth century living tableaux were introduced into sacred services. At an early period chants from the service of the day were added to the prose dialogue. As these liturgical dramas increased in popularity, vernacular forms emerged, as travelling companies of actors and theatrical productions organized by local communities became more common in the later Middle Ages. Eventually the dramas moved from church to the exterior - the churchyard and the public marketplace. These early performances were given in Latin, and were preceded by a vernacular prologue spoken by a herald who gave a synopsis of the events. The writers and directors of the earliest plays were probably monks. Religious drama flourished from about the ninth century to the sixteenth. In , suspicious of the growing popularity of miracle plays, Pope Innocent III issued a papal edict forbidding clergy from acting on a public stage. This had the effect of transferring the organization of the dramas to town guilds, after which several changes followed. Vernacular texts replaced Latin, and non-Biblical passages were added along with comic scenes, for example in the *Secunda Pastorum* of the Wakefield Cycle. Acting and characterization became more elaborate. These vernacular religious performances were, in some of the larger cities in England such as York , performed and produced by guilds , with each guild taking responsibility for a particular piece of scriptural history. From the guild control originated the term mystery play or mysteries, from the Latin *ministerium* meaning "occupation" i. The genre was again banned, following the Reformation and the establishment of the Church of England in The mystery play developed, in some places, into a series of plays dealing with all the major events in the Christian calendar, from the Creation to the Day of Judgment. By the end of the 15th century, the practice of acting these plays in cycles on festival days was established in several parts of Europe. Sometimes, each play was performed on a decorated pageant cart that moved about the city to allow different crowds to watch each play as well as provided actors with a dressing room as well as a stage [7] The entire cycle could take up to twenty hours to perform and could be spread over a number of days. Taken as a whole, these are referred to as Corpus Christi cycles. The variety of theatrical and poetic styles, even in a single cycle of plays, could be remarkable. English mystery plays[edit] Actors portraying Adam and Eve are expelled from paradise in a performance by the Players of St Peter There are four complete or nearly complete extant English biblical collections of plays; [9] although these collections are sometimes referred to as "cycles," it is now believed that this term may attribute to these collections more coherence than they in fact possess. Also extant are two pageants from a New Testament cycle acted at Coventry and one pageant each from Norwich and Newcastle upon Tyne. Besides the Middle English drama, there are three surviving plays in Cornish known as the Ordinalia , and several cyclical plays survive from continental Europe. These biblical plays differ widely in content. In given cycles, the plays came to be sponsored by the newly emerging Medieval craft guilds. The York mercers , for example, sponsored the Doomsday pageant. Other guilds presented scenes appropriate to their trade: While the Chester pageants are associated with guilds, there is no indication that the N-Town plays are either associated with guilds or performed on pageant wagons. Perhaps the most famous of the mystery plays, at least to modern readers and audiences, are those of Wakefield. Edmund Bonner , Bishop of London c - stopped this in The epithet "Wakefield Master" was first applied to this individual by the literary historian Gayley. The Wakefield Master gets his name from the geographic location where he lived, the market-town of Wakefield in Yorkshire. He may have been a highly educated cleric there, or possibly a friar from a nearby monastery at Woodkirk, four miles north of Wakefield. It was once thought that this anonymous author wrote a series of 32 plays each averaging about lines called the Towneley Cycle. These works appear in a single manuscript, currently found in the Huntington Library of California. It shows signs of Protestant editing â€” references to the Pope and the sacraments are crossed out, for instance. Likewise, twelve manuscript leaves were ripped out between the two final plays because of

Catholic references. The Harrowing of Hell , derived from the apocryphal Acts of Pilate , was a popular part of the York and Wakefield cycles. The dramas of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods were developed out of mystery plays. The prohibition of theatrical plays in churches by the Council of Trent eventually threatened to interrupt the yearly performance of the Misteri, but in Pope Urban VIII issued a special permit for its continuation. The oldest liturgical drama 12th century written already in old Spanish language was a codex found in the library of the Toledo Cathedral. The Auto de los Reyes Magos belongs to the Christmas cycle. It is a play about the Biblical Magi , three wise men from the East who followed a star and visited the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. Mary , into the lives of ordinary people, rather than biblical events; [16] however both of these terms are more commonly used by modern scholars than they were by medieval people, who used a wide variety of terminology to refer to their dramatic performances. Robert Chambers , writing in the 19th century, notes that "especially in England, miracle [came] to stand for religious play in general". To capture the attention of the audience, "the plays were often noisy, bawdy and entertaining". The local cycles were revived in both York and Chester in as part of the Festival of Britain , and are still performed by the local guilds.

Chapter 3 : Mystery play - Wikipedia

The Mystery Plays were a great medieval tradition in York, a way of bringing religious messages to the streets of the City and a huge celebration. They were performed on the day of the great medieval festival of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Mercers Dealers in textiles – Judgement Day The York Realist[edit] The authorship of the plays is unknown, but analysis of the style allows scholars to recognise where authorship changes. One group of plays, concerned with the Passion has been attributed to a writer called "The York Realist" [4] and the name has come into general use. The distinctive feature, apart from the high quality of the writing, is the attention to incidental detail in the story-telling and in the subtle portrayal of the negative characters, Pilate, Herod, Annas and Caiaphas. The music, written for the occasion by James Brown , was directed by Allan Wicks. In the interests of comprehensibility, the text was abbreviated and modernised [11] by Canon Purvis who went on to lead the Borthwick Institute at the University of York, [12] and produced a modernisation of the complete text. They have aroused academic interest and publications. Some amateur actors such as Judi Dench became professionals. The production in the same place was all-amateur, with the part of Jesus played by local solicitor Rory Mulvihill, and the script shortened by Lochhead. For , the interest of the Dean of York , Very Rev Raymond Furnell , led him to offer the use of York Minster for the most ambitious production so far. The second half concentrated on the capture and trial of Christ, and his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. The production ended, as is traditional, with the Last Judgement. Aside from the professional director and actor, Ray Stevenson, the cast was made up of amateurs, mainly from the York area. More than fifty children also took part. Original music was written for the production by local composer Richard Shephard. The cast had about amateur actors and the sole professional, Philip McGinley , played Jesus [25] except for the last four performances, when owing to his sudden illness the role was taken by his understudy, Toby Gordon. The production involved nine amateur drama groups each taking one plays, and touring it to five playing stations in central York using pageant waggons. For the production management transferred to a committee of the Guilds of York: Ten plays were produced with the assistance of local drama groups. The performances on waggons were performed by the Guilds in continuing the established four-yearly cycle. An exception is the productions of the Lords of Misrule, a dramatic group [34] composed of students and recent graduates of the Department of Medieval Studies at the University of York. They have regularly contributed to one of the waggon play productions. A century later Richard Beadle felt the time was ripe for re-examination of the manuscript, and he published a facsimile edition. More recently Beadle has revised and enhanced his work into two volumes, the first containing an introduction, the text and musical settings accompanying the plays [39] and the second containing notes, glossary and discussion. This is not unambiguously a benign process; where the modernisation involves the loss of a syllable it has just been dropped, which in general damages the scansion, for example is the Middle English word "withouten", which in this edition appears as "without". The Middle English ending "-and" for the present participle has been changed to the modern equivalent "-ing", but retained where the "-and" was required for a rhyme. Modernised editions[edit] The first complete full modernisation was that of John Stanley Purvis, Canon of York, in Scoville and Kimberley M. Yates, in Toronto , in

Chapter 4 : Find a Play | Playscripts, Inc.

Published February 17th by Dramatists Play Service (first published October 30th).

Until the beginning of the thirteenth century, they were performed by priests and monks, but Pope Innocent III was threatened by their popularity and forbade any priest or monk from further acting. This decision by the Catholic Church made a lasting imprint on the history of the Western theater, as drama, which up until this time had been a mode of expression almost entirely used for religious purposes now fell into the hands of those outside the church. Historical origins Mystery plays originated as simple tropes, verbal embellishments of liturgical texts, and slowly became more elaborate. As these liturgical dramas increased in popularity, vernacular forms emerged, as traveling companies of actors and theatrical productions organized by local communities became more common in the later Middle Ages. They often interrupted religious festivals, in an attempt to vividly show what the service was intended to commemorate. For example, the Virgin Mary usually was represented with by a girl with a child in her arms. These primitive forms were later elaborated with dialogue and dramatic action. Eventually, the dramas moved from inside the church to outdoor settings—the churchyard and the public marketplace. These early performances were given in Latin, and were preceded by a vernacular prologue spoken by a herald who gave a synopsis of the events. The actors were priests or monks. The performances were stark, characterized by strict simplicity and earnest devotion. Non-Biblical passages were added along with comic scenes. Acting and characterization became more elaborate. These vernacular religious performances were, in some of the larger cities in England such as York, performed and produced by guilds, with each guild taking responsibility for a particular piece of scriptural history. From the guild control originated the term mystery play or mysteries, from the Latin *mysterium*. The mystery play developed, in some places, into a series of plays dealing with all the major events in the Christian calendar, from the Creation to the Day of Judgment. By the end of the fifteenth century, the practice of acting these plays in cycles on festival days was established in several parts of Europe. Sometimes, each play was performed on a decorated cart called a pageant that moved about the city to allow different crowds to watch each play. The entire cycle could take up to twenty hours to perform and could be spread over a number of days. Taken as a whole, these are referred to as Corpus Christi cycles. The plays were performed by a combination of professionals and amateurs and were written in highly elaborate stanza forms; they were often marked by the extravagance of the sets and "special effects," but could also be stark and intimate. The variety of theatrical and poetic styles, even in a single cycle of plays, could be remarkable. Mystery plays are now typically distinguished from Miracle plays, which specifically re-enacted episodes from the lives of the saints rather than from the Bible; however, it is also to be noted that both of these terms are more commonly used by modern scholars than they were by medieval people, who used a wide variety of terminology to refer to their dramatic performances. French mystery plays A statue of a mystery play. Mystery plays arose early in France, with French being used instead of Latin after It was performed on a large scale throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with plays in the fourteenth century focusing on the lives of saints. The shortest of these mystery plays was less than lines such as *Sainte Venice* and the longest was over 50, lines for example, *Les Actes des Apotres*. The average, however, was roughly 10, lines. Most performances were commissioned and organized by whole towns and governments, with a typical performance spread over three or four days. As there were no permanent theaters in France in the middle ages, mystery plays required the construction of stages in order to be performed. Stages were often built over wide open public spaces, such as town squares or cemeteries. They were promptly torn down at the conclusion of the performances. Around the beginning of the twelfth century, the play of St. Catharine was performed at Dunstable, and such plays were common in London by The oldest extant miracle play in English is the *Harrowing of Hell*, describing the descent of Christ to save the damned in Hell, belonging to the cycle of Easter plays. The most complete is the York Mystery Plays cycles of biblical dramas from Creation to Judgment were almost unique to York and Chester [5] of forty-eight pageants; there are also the Towneley plays of thirty-two pageants, once thought to have been a true "cycle" of plays acted at Wakefield; the N Town plays also called the *Ludus Coventriae* cycle or

Hegge cycle, now generally agreed to be an edited compilation of at least three older, unrelated plays, and the Chester Cycle of twenty-four pageants, now generally agreed to be an Elizabethan reconstruction of older medieval traditions. Also extant are two pageants from a New Testament cycle acted at Coventry and one pageant each from Norwich and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Additionally, a fifteenth century play of the life of Mary Magdalene and a sixteenth century play of the Conversion of Saint Paul exist, both hailing from East Anglia. Besides the Middle English drama, there are three surviving plays in Cornish, and several cyclical plays survive from continental Europe. These biblical cycles of plays differ widely in content. In given cycles, the plays came to be sponsored by the newly emerging Medieval craft guilds. The York mercers, for example, sponsored the Doomsday pageant. The guild associations are not, however, to be understood as the method of production for all towns. While the Chester pageants are associated with guilds, there is no indication that the N-Town plays are either associated with guilds or performed on pageant wagons. Perhaps the most famous of the mystery plays, at least to modern readers and audiences, are those of Wakefield. Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London c. 1530. Early scholars suggested that a man by the name of Gilbert Pilkington was the author, but this idea has been disproved by Craig and others. The epithet "Wakefield Master" was first applied to this individual by the literary historian Gayley. The Wakefield Master gets his name from the geographic location where he lived, the market-town of Wakefield in Yorkshire. He may have been a highly educated cleric there, or possibly a friar from a nearby monastery at Woodkirk, four miles north of Wakefield. It was once thought that this anonymous author wrote a series of 32 plays each averaging about 1000 lines called the Towneley Cycle. The collection appears to be a cycle of mystery plays performed during the Corpus Christi festival. These works appear in a single manuscript, which was kept for a number of years in Towneley Hall of the Towneley family. Thus, the plays are called the Towneley Cycle. The manuscript is currently found in the Huntington Library of California. It shows signs of Protestant editing—references to the Pope and the sacraments are crossed out, for instance. Likewise, twelve manuscript leaves were ripped out between the two final plays, apparently because of Catholic references. The Harrowing of Hell, derived from the apocryphal Acts of Pilate, was a popular part of the York and Wakefield cycles. The dramas of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods were developed out of mystery plays. A passion play taking place outside. Structure Mystery plays typically revolve around either the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the stories of saints. Unlike the farces or comedies of the time, they were viewed by audiences as nonfictional, historical tales. The plays began rather short, but grew in length over time. They were performed not by professionals, but by dramatic associations formed in all large towns for the express purpose of performing mystery plays. The scenes of a mystery play are not derived from one another—each scene is linked only by facilitating the ideas of eternal salvation. The plays could use as few as one or as many as five hundred characters, not counting the chorus. They typically ran over several days. Places were represented somewhat symbolically by vast scenery, rather than truly represented. For example, a forest could be presented by two or three trees. And although the action could change places, the scenery remained constant. There were no curtains or scene changes. Thus, audiences could see two or three sets of action going on at once, on different parts of the stage. The costumes, however, were often more beautiful than accurate, and actors paid for them personally. Some argue that performances took place on a circular stage, while others hold that a variety of shapes were used—round, square, horseshoe, and so on. It is known for certain, however, that at least some plays were performed on round stages. Characters could be famous saints and martyrs, pagans and devils, or even ordinary people, such as tradesmen, soldiers, peasants, wives, and even sots. Mystery plays were famous for being heavily religious, yet also exceptionally down to earth, and even comic. They were exceptionally popular in the fifteenth century, as they continue to be today, because of their fabulous pageantry, props, scenery, and spectacle. It was not uncommon for producers of passions to earn more than the writers or actors, mainly because producers provided the "special effects" of the time. The Lichfield Mysteries were revived in 1870. More recently, the N-Town cycle of touring plays have been revived as the Lincoln mystery plays. In 1990, two mystery plays—one focusing on the Creation and the other on the Passion—were performed at Canterbury Cathedral, with actor Edward Woodward in the role of the God. The performances commissioned a cast of over 100 local people and were produced by Kevin Wood.

Chapter 5 : The Mystery Play by Grant Morrison

Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye, He pleyeth Herodes upon a scaffold hye. (MIIIT I) The English mystery plays -- cyclic collections of short plays on incidents in biblical history from the Creation to the Last Judgement -- were truly popular dramas.

Chapter 6 : The Murder Mystery Co: Murder Mystery Dinner Theater Parties

Mystery plays, sometimes also called miracle plays (though these tended to focus more on the lives of saints), are among the earliest formally developed plays in medieval Europe. Medieval mystery plays focused on the representation of Bible stories in churches as tableaux with accompanying antiphonal song.

Chapter 7 : Home - York Mystery Plays

Chester Mystery Plays is an amazing and historic community theatre event which takes place every five years in and around Chester Cathedral. Through music, drama, laughter and tears, the Chester Mystery Plays bring medieval pageantry to an increasingly receptive audience from far and wide, telling the greatest stories ever told.

Chapter 8 : The mystery cycles :: Life and Times :: Internet Shakespeare Editions

The mystery plays. Based on the illustration for the Valenciennes Passion www.nxgvision.com original is in the Biblioth  que Nationale. Folk drama--mummers' plays, jugglers, ballad singers--had always flourished in the festivals and fairs of country and city.

Chapter 9 : The mystery plays :: Life and Times :: Internet Shakespeare Editions

Enter your mobile number or email address below and we'll send you a link to download the free Kindle App. Then you can start reading Kindle books on your smartphone, tablet, or computer - no Kindle device required.