

A circular wreath of various botanical illustrations surrounds a central white circle. The plants include green ferns, red and orange flowers, purple flowers, and various green leaves and stems. The background is a solid light blue color.

Nilanjana Chatterjee

Evolution of British English Drama



Agenda

- Introduction
- Brief Sketch of
Development of the
Native Drama
- Areas of Growth
- Summary



Introduction

The latter Middle Ages bring a rapid growth in the native drama, a preparation for the great age of Elizabeth

<https://youtu.be/TjIYxlsVAOw>





Medieval English Drama

- a) The Miracle-Play
- b) The Morality-Play
- c) The Interlude
- d) The Earliest Dramas: i) Tragedies ii) Histories iii) Comedies



10th century: Easter Representations



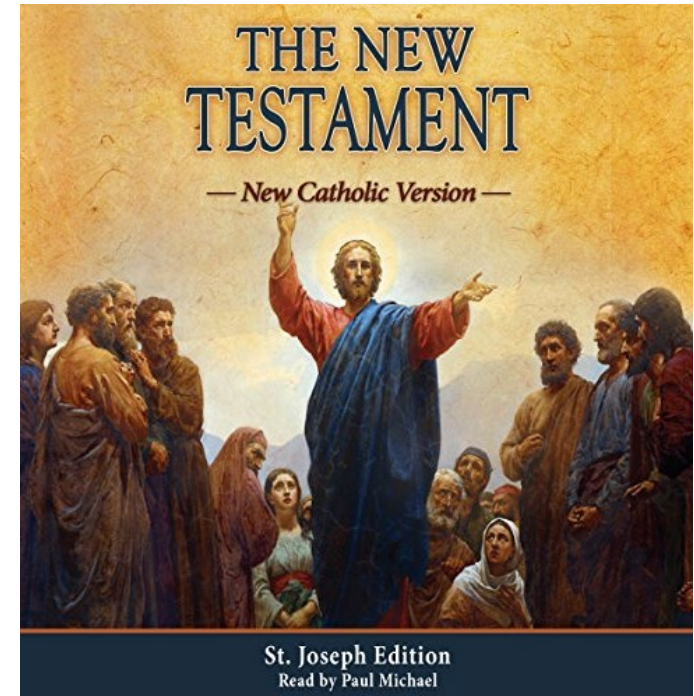
The New Testament



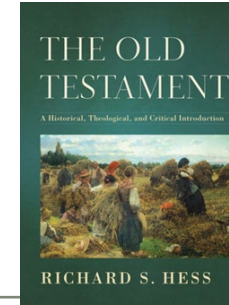
<https://youtu.be/PW-Pzi5Gs7g>



<https://youtu.be/jbQmsIxbx5U>



The Old Testament



<https://youtu.be/wpS19OJojO0>

Noah



<https://youtu.be/pv6VKLhuLX0>

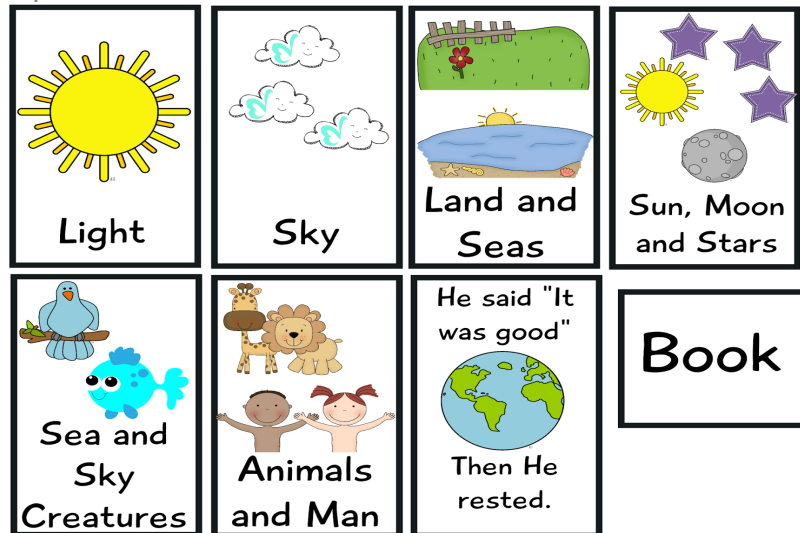
Daniel





Evolution of Complete Plays by the 14th Century: Creation to the Day of Judgement

<https://youtu.be/jEQpPbG55Kc>



Secularization of Drama



1. Performances part of the liturgy, spoken in Latin by clerics
2. Vernacular crept in
3. Laymen were introduced as actors
4. Numerous performances in single episodes

From the Choir to the Open: From Clergy to the Religious & Social Guilds to the Trade Guilds



The Guilds

<https://youtu.be/Mfe0f2tMhCk>



1. Two-decked Cart, or Pageant
2. One enclosed room as Hell and as tiring room
3. Second storey open to the sky, action performed here
4. Towed round the towns to perform at fixed points
5. Began at 4:30 A.M. and went on until light failed
6. Only Summer festivals, feast of Corpus Christi in May or June
7. Strong ecclesiastical opposition
8. Three Complete Cycles: Chester, York, and Wakefield

The Morality Play

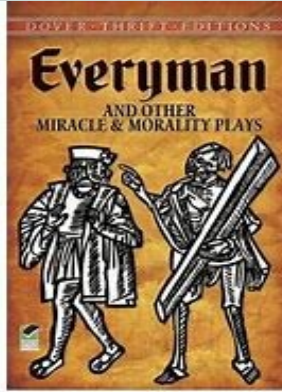
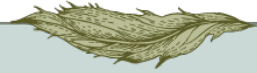


- A Further Advance
- Virtues and Vices on Stage as Allegorical Creations
- Abstractions: Justice, Mercy, Gluttony, Vice



Everyman (1490): Characters

<https://youtu.be/OEp2ktec8ww>



- **Messenger**

The first character to appear. The Messenger has no role within the story of the play itself, but simply speaks the prologue outlining what the play will be like.

- **God**

Appears only at the very beginning of the play. Angry with the way humans are behaving on Earth, God summons Death to visit Everyman and call him to account.

- **Death**

God's "mighty messenger", who visits Everyman at the very start of the play to inform him that he is going to die and be judged by God.

- **Everyman**

The representative of "every man" - of mankind in general. He dresses in fine clothes, and seems to have had led a wild and sinful life. Throughout the course of the play, he is told that he is going to die (and therefore be judged) and undergoes a pilgrimage in which he absolves himself of sin, is deserted by all of his friends apart from good deeds, and dies.

- **Fellowship**

Represents friendship. Everyman's friend and the very first one to forsake him. Fellowship suggests going drinking or consorting with women rather than going on a pilgrimage to death.

- **Kindred**

A friend of Everyman's, who deserts him along with Cousin. 'Kindred' means 'of the same family', so when Kindred forsakes Everyman, it represents family members deserting him.

- **Cousin**

A friend of Everyman's, who deserts him along with Kindred. 'Cousin' means 'related', so when Kindred forsakes Everyman, it represents family members - and perhaps close friends - deserting him.

- **Goods**

Goods represents objects - goods, stuff, belongings - and when Everyman's goods forsake him, the play is hammering home the fact that you can't take belongings with you to the grave.

- **Good Deeds**

Good Deeds is the only character who does not forsake Everyman - and at the end of the play, accompanies him to his grave. Good Deeds represents Everyman's good actions - nice things that he does for other people.

- **Knowledge**

Guides Everyman from around the middle of the play, and leads him to Confession. 'Knowledge' is perhaps best defined as 'acknowledgement of sin'.

- **Confession**

Allows Everyman to confess and repent for his sins. There is some confusion in the text about whether Confession is male or female.



- **Beauty**

One of the second group of characters who deserts Everyman in the second half of the play.

- **Strength**

One of the second group of characters who deserts Everyman in the second half of the play.

- **Discretion**

One of the second group of characters who deserts Everyman in the second half of the play.

- **Five Wits**

Represents the Five Senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell. One of the second group of characters who deserts Everyman in the second half of the play.

- **Angel**

Appears at the very end of the play with Everyman's Book of Reckoning to receive Everyman's soul.

- **Doctor**

A generic character who only appears to speak the epilogue at the very end of the play. His equivalent in the Dutch play *Elckerlijc* is simply called 'Epilogue'.



Thank you



Nilanjana Chatterjee

Assistant Professor of English

Durgapur Government College