

Analysis of everyman as a medieval morality play and an allegory essay sample

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The mediaval English drama Everyman is an example of a morality play and a naïve allegory. The plays show the reckoning and judgement of the sinful main character, Everyman. Death is sent to him by God and he faces the task of a journey to save his immortal soul. The play effectively carries out the assumption that people are to be judged at the end of their lives through plot, teaches the lesson that a persons life must be devoted to God and good deeds in order to save his or her soul, and shows that Eveyman truly deserved to be saved due to his dramatic change.

Everyman fufills the assumption that people are judged at the end of life through its storyline. When God sends Death to Everyman, he does not decide whether or not Everyman will be accepted into Heaven. He does not mention what his judgement will be, but merely tells Death, Go thou to Everyman / And show him, in my name, / A pilgrimage he must on him take, (p. 246 ll. 66-68). While Everyman is still alive no judgement is made. He simply continues on his journey. It is not until he is in his grave that a judgement is made. Just after Everyman a Good Deeds enter the grave, an Angels tells Everyman he is to go into heaven (p. 250 ll. 888-901). With this as the resolution, the story shows Everymans judgement at the end of his life, fufilling the assumption as to when judgment will occur.

Everyman teaches the lesson that Life should be devoted to good works and God. The story displays this theme strongly in Everymans journey. The theme is highlighted as the main character is searching for company on his trek. He is deserted by the worthless things he valued. He is deserted by Beauty, saying as she leaves, Alas, whereto may I trust? / Beauty goeth fast

away from me / She promised with me to live and die! (p. 249 ll. 805-807). He is then refused by Strength, Discretion, the Five-Wits, and Knowledge as well. The only one that will accompany him is Good Deeds, telling Everyman, Fear not: I will speak for thee (p. 250 l. 876). With Good Deeds as the only one following Everyman into the grave, it is shown what earthly factors count for anything when a person is judged. Beauty, Strength, Knowledge, and the other deserters do not matter. Thus is shown that Good Deeds are the most valuable to admittance into Heaven.

Everyman deserves to be saved because he shows a dramatic change at the end of the excerpt. In the beginning, Everyman is scared and guilty. He doesn't want to face God. He begs Death for twelve years so that [his] counting book [he] would make so clear / That [his] reckoning [he] should not need to fear (p. 247, ll. 136-37). As Everyman realizes he has no choice but to go, he says to himself, How shall I do now for to excuse me? / I would to God I had never beget. / For now I fear pains huge and great (p. 248 ll. 188-191). Everyman is fearful because he is guilty. He knows he has lived sinfully. But as he comes to realize what truly matters and comes face to face with his own death, Everyman changes completely. He is willing to give his soul wholeheartedly to God. As he enters his grave, Everyman says, Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend: / Receive it, Lord, that it not be lost / As thou me boughtest, so me defend / That I may appear with that blessed host / That shall be saved at the day of doom (p. 250, ll. 880-885). His reckoning is clear. Everyman has come to respect and love God. By learning to be pious, Everyman deserved to be saved.

Everyman effectively carries out the assumption that people will be judged at death because that is precisely when Everyman receives judgement. He, as well as the readers, are taught the lesson that earthly values mean nothing in judgement, only Christian ideals such as good deeds. By learning this lesson and learning a love of God, Everyman deserved to be saved.