

Sir gawain essay

People



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

11-1-11 Chivalric But Still Human “ The motto of chivalry is also the motto of wisdom; to serve all, but love only one. ” (Honore de Balzac). The Chivalric code is a clutter of rules that contradict each other and challenge normal human behavior. These rules of chivalry are predominantly concerned with courage, honor and gentlemen- like- behavior, which play an important role in proving one’s faithfulness to the King. In the poem, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Sir Gawain proves to be a hero because he continually struggles against his human flaws to act in a heroic manner.

Sir Gawain is acknowledged as a chivalric human because he is a courageous man who perseveres through difficult events and faces both human temptation and terror. Throughout Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Gawain constantly battles to uphold the chivalric code, and in the end one can determine that Gawain did in fact uphold the chivalric code. To begin, Gawain upholds the law to be a courageous man in all circumstances. Near the end of the poem Gawain reaches the Green Knight’s castle to uphold his promise that they made a year and a day before.

When Gawain arrives, he and the knight begin conversation and form an agreement to follow through with the terms. As the Green Knight describes what he shall do, Gawain says, “ Never fear... I’ll stand still and allow you to work as you like and not oppose/ you here” (91-95). At this point within the poem, Gawain has done everything to follow the code of chivalry. True bravery and courage is not found in many men, but Gawain is able to conquer this obstacle and prove that he is brave. In this instance, Gawain is allowing the knight to do as he pleases, which is to cut off his head.

This demonstrates that he is a fearless man awaiting his death. Additionally, he does not choose to resist the punishment and run for his life, he takes in the punishment because he has the strength to accept his fate. Many men in this situation could not demonstrate this action, allowing the reader to conclude that Gawain has a strong sense of bravery, which is an important and crucial characteristic needed to uphold the chivalric code. As the story progresses, so does Gawain following and upholding the Chivalric code.

The code, furthermore, includes such as acts of honor and noble behavior towards women. After the Green Knight has given his punishment to Gawain, he speaks words of truth to him saying, “ A man who’s true to his word should have nothing to fear” (195-196). The Knight know that Gawain did nothing wrong the first two days, because he returned what he had received. Since he did not try to take her seductive kisses to the next level while being chaste towards the mistress, shows that he respects women. Respectand love towards women is an important contribution to the chivalric code.

Furthermore, the demonstration of returning what was received for the two of the days shows that Sir Gawain was an honorable man to his host, by staying true to his vows exchanged three days earlier. Overall, Sir Gawain is shown to maintain the chivalric code by following four critical laws within the code of chivalry, yet still struggling with his many human weaknesses throughout the course of his journey. Despite the fact that Gawain upheld most of the chivalric code, some may think that he failed to uphold the code because of human mistakes.

As the story begins, the Green Knight comes inside the castle, gets his head sliced off and then is miraculously fine, and he walks out telling Sir Gawain to

find him in a year and a day. This series of events exemplifies to Gawain that he, himself, is not immortal and he should fear for his own life. When Gawain finally arrives at the Knight's castle on the dreadful day, the knight explains, " But you have lacked a little, sir; you were less that loyal;/ But since it was not the sash itself or lust/ But because you loved your life, I blame you less" (207-209).

All humans have, in some way, a in fear of death. This was the feeling that overcomes Sir Gawain, causing him to keep the sash that was given to him on the third day by the mistress. This action caused Gawain to fail to uphold the chivalric code because he was disloyal to the host. No other knight would be chivalrous enough to pass up a chance to save his life; each one is human which means they ultimately fear their own death.

In the end, some would consider Gawain a failure, but in logical terms it was an opportunity too difficult to pass up by any human, showing that human flaws have interfered with Gawain's journey to uphold the chivalric code. The knight agrees with this and understands that even though Gawain should uphold the code, he has to go through some loopholes. This understanding by the Green Knight later comes about in the conversation between Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the Knight states, " You are the finest man that ever walked this earth... so Gawain indeed stands ut above all other Knights" (204-206). Even though Gawain has showed disloyalty to the Knight, or at the time his host, the Green Knight is still able to state that he is a heroic knight. Gawain is considered one of the greatest knights, because he knows that he is only making mistakes due to human flaws in his judgments, which difficult to overcome. But the Knight knows that he has the

ability to recognize his mistakes and fix them. Overall, this shows that Gawain is trusted and trusted not to repeat his mistakes, revealing him to be chivalrous by then end of the poem.

In conclusion, some may think that Gawain was not able to uphold the Chivalric code, but this is a false accusation, because he struggled due to his human flaws that would be impossible to overcome for any living being. Sir Gawain is able to uphold the chivalric code by conquering difficult tasks while following the rulebook. The Chivalric Code is a complex system that goes against many human flaws and behaviors. Gawain stays courageous, honorable and gentlemen-like through out his journey, even tough he has many battles with temptation and fear.

Gawain tries with extreme patience to overcome his errors, but sometimes fails to do so, which shows that he is only human and that everyone makes mistakes but they have the ability to fix them. As Sir Gawain and The Green Knight ends, the reader concludes that even though Gawain did have some failures in meeting all of the exact laws the chivalric code, he is still able to uphold a majority the code of chivalry with prominence and pride.