Everyman Study Guide

Everyman by Anonymous

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites".

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers".

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

Everyman was first published in England early in the sixteenth century. This English play is now thought to be based on an earlier Dutch play, Elckerlijc, published in 1495. It is unknown if *Everyman* was ever staged in the era in which it first appeared. The title page states "Here begynneth a treatyse." This implies that the text may have been intended as reading material. Frequently, authors composed a treatise containing dialogue to create an additional emphasis on an idea, in this case a preparation for God's judgment. Such works were often created without any intention of performance. This may be true for *Everyman;* however, even if it was not performed, it is clear that the text was very popular, since there are four separate editions from the first half of the sixteenth century that have survived to this day. Frequent reprintings indicate that the text was bought and read a great deal, if not performed.

Although none of the characters in *Everyman* have any depth, the influence on later drama is especially clear when readers compare the medieval character archetypes with those created for Elizabethan drama. Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* is often cited as an example of how the medieval morality play influenced later theatre. Marlowe's characters would be easily recognizable to anyone who had read *Everyman*. There is also the same emphasis on worldly goods and on knowledge. But Marlowe takes the ideas in *Everyman* even further and argues that even knowledge can be perverted. But the same idea that man can seek forgiveness and salvation through contrition still appears. *Everyman* is considered one of the most accessible of the medieval morality plays because the language is closer to modern English and the story is clearly told.

Author Biography

Everyman is a morality play that first appeared in England early in the sixteenth century. The author is unknown, but it has been speculated by scholars that the play was written by a cleric or under the direction of the church. It is now thought to be based upon a Dutch play, *Elckerlijk* ("Everyman"), written in 1495 by Petrus Dorlandus, a Carthusian monk. Four copies of the sixteenth century editions of *Everyman* still survive, with all four published between 1510 and 1535. Although the author is unknown, the play's content, themes, and ideology reflect those of Catholic Europe. The play's emphasis on good deeds as a mechanism for salvation reflects medieval Catholic ideology.

The use of Christianity as a topic and a force behind theatre reflects a significant change from Christian opposition to early drama. Traditionally, the Catholic Church opposed the theatre because it frequently included nudity, fights with wild beasts, and because Roman sacrifice of Christians was often included as a part of pagan spectacle. An additional reason for church opposition was the use of falsehood. In drama, an actor pretends to be someone else. Although modern audiences accept this as "acting," it was interpreted by the early church to be lying. By the tenth century, drama would again become acceptable to clergy when it was reborn as liturgical drama.

The earliest liturgical dramas were included as a part of the church service and frequently took the form of a simple dialogue, often sung, between two clerics. Eventually this exchange began to include additional participants and by the thirteenth century, these dramas became a means to educate an illiterate congregation. More elaborate staging of plays began to be included in feast day celebrations, and they eventually moved from the church to the town square, which accommodated a larger audience. Eventually plays were sponsored by various guilds or trades, and they became known as miracle or mystery plays, derived from the Latin word, *minister*. By the end of the fifteenth century, these early mystery plays evolved into morality plays, of which *Everyman*is the best known.

Plot Summary

Everyman is a one-act play that begins with a Messenger announcing the play's purpose: Everyman will be called before God, and thus every man should look to the end of his life even as he begins it. The sin that initially looks sweet will eventually cause the soul to weep. Then God appears and tells the audience that man has forgotten the sacrifice that God made for them at the crucifixion. God is angry and disappointed with man, who has embraced the seven deadly sins. Since man has turned to sin, God is demanding a reckoning. He calls for Death and instructs him to seek out every man who has lived outside God's law. Death is to bring forth these men for a final reckoning. Death promises to do so and seeing Everyman, Death asks him if he has forgotten his God. Everyman is unprepared for Death and is frightened at the journey Death proposes. After warning Everyman that his judgment is at hand, Everyman asks for time to find someone to accompany him in his pilgrimage.

Everyman first sees his friend, Fellowship, with whom he has spent so much time. Initially, Fellowship says he will accompany his friend wherever he is going, but when he hears of the destination, Fellowship declines. He will offer women and good times, but he will not go on a journey to face God's judgment. Everyman is disappointed in Fellowship's response but decides that family and blood ties might make stronger companions. With this thought in mind, he approaches Kindred. It initially seems that Kindred will accompany Everyman. But when Kindred learns of the destination, he also refuses to go. Everyman is feeling increasingly isolated.

Next, Everyman turns to Goods, for whom he committed so many of the sins that weigh heavily upon him. But Goods cannot leave earth's bounds; what man acquires on earth must be left behind when he dies. Goods's role is to tempt man to sin, and so Goods will go on to the next victim, since Everyman has no further use of Goods. The betrayal of these three□Fellowship, Kindred, and Goods□ makes Everyman aware that he has trusted in the wrong things.

Everyman next asks Good Deeds for help, but Good Deeds is collapsed at Everyman's feet. He is shackled by Everyman's sins and cannot help. But Good Deeds suggests that Knowledge can be of help. Knowledge takes Everyman to visit Confession, where Everyman learns that knowledge of his sins and his repentance of them is the means to find salvation. The recognition of Everyman's sins lifts the burden from Good Deeds, who can now help Everyman prepare for his journey. As he sets out on the final leg of his journey, Everyman has several additional companions to go with him. Discretion, Beauty, Strength, and the Five Wits are coming along with him, but they can only accompany Everyman for part of the distance.

Everyman receives last rites from a priest and prepares to meet Death. The audience is reminded that the priest is God's representative on earth and that man must turn to priests to help him prepare for death. As the journey continues, each of his companions leaves Everyman. Beauty is the first to go, since beauty fades quickly as man approaches death. Next Strength departs, for as man's health fades, physical strength

is also lost. Next Discretion leaves, and then Five Wits abandons Everyman. Finally, Knowledge departs, and only Good Deeds remains for the final journey. An Angel greets Everyman to escort him the remainder of the way, where only Good Deeds can speak for him. At the play's conclusion a Doctor of Theology appears to remind the audience that all men must make this journey and that only their good deeds will speak for them at God's final reckoning.

Detailed Summary & Analysis

Summary

Everyman is a one-act play written in the late 15th century. The play begins with a messenger calling on the audience to watch the play. The messenger relates to the audience that this play is a moral play about when Everyman is called in front of God. He explains that in the beginning of the Bible, God created man and everything was perfect. However man created sin and for that, Everyman is going to have to have a reckoning with God. The messenger warns that even though now the spectators think that sin is a good thing, when it comes to the end, it will make people sad. Those things which now make you happy will fade and it is then that Everyman will have to answer for his actions.

God is the next to speak. He begins with how upset he is at the people of the world because they forget him, live in sin, and only think about worldly riches. He continues with how he tried to save them by dying for them at the crucifixion but that the populations turn their backs on him. Everyman is living in sin; people are only out for themselves and they will prey upon each other. God reminds the audience that Everyman will have to answer for his sin. He expresses his hope that everyone will take the gift he has given but he realizes that few actually will ask for that forgiveness.

Therefore, he calls on Death.

Death comes and a conversation between Death and God begins. God tells Death that it is Everyman's time and asks Death to retrieve him. Death talks about how Everyman is going about his business living for himself, outside of the laws God has set up and in sin. Everyman hardly thinks about the time when Death will come and take him. That is of little concern to him. Death says that he will go get Everyman and bring him before the Lord.

Death comes to Everyman and asks him what is he doing. Has he forgotten his Maker? Everyman asks why he wants to know. Death replies that he has been sent by God to bring him. Everyman is shocked. Death goes on to say that though Everyman forgets about God, God never forgets about him. Everyman asks what God wants. Death replies that it is time for the reckoning. Everyman asks for more time. Death replies that he has had all the time he needs and is going to have to answer for what he has done in his life. Death believes that Everyman has done more bad deeds than good. He warns Everyman that he will have to answer for himself.

Everyman finally asks Death who he is and Death names himself. Everyman tries to bribe Death. Death says that there is nothing that can buy him nor can anyone stop him. Everyman pleads that he is not ready to go, he has not been warned, and he has not prepared for the reckoning. He asks for more time to change his ways before being taken. Death responds with saying that Everyman has no more time and he should try

to find friends whom can prove him worthy of heaven. He talks about how Everyman must die because of Adam's sin.

Everyman asks that he be allowed to come back and Death responds that no one can come back. Everyman then prays to God to save him from Death. Death asks why he is refusing to go when it is God whom has given him his life and all his goods. Death goes on to say that life was lent to Everyman and that Everyman was crazy not to live right because he never knew when Death was going to come.

Everyman again asks for a reprieve until he can mend his ways and Death again says no. Everyman worries about his life and how he has lived it. He begins to wonder whom he can turn to to help prove that he is worthy of God. He thinks of Fellowship.

Thus a conversation between Everyman and Fellowship begins.

Everyman asks Fellowship for help. Fellowship says that he is a good friend to Everyman and certainly he will help him and not forsake him. He goes on to say that he would even help seek revenge with Everyman and that he is willing to die for him. Everyman thanks Fellowship and Fellowship asks him what it is he is needed for. Everyman doubts his friend and makes that clear. Again Fellowship proclaims his friendship and his willingness to do anything for Everyman. Everyman tells him about having to go before God and needing him to come with him to prove to God that he is worthy to get into heaven.

Fellowship begins with saying that he should go and bear the pain too. However he is afraid and now needs to think about it. Everyman reminds him that he said he would go. Fellowship asks when they will be back and Everyman responds that they can never come back. It is then that Fellowship refuses. Everyman argues with him and says that Death is here to get him and Fellowship promised to help. Fellowship responds by saying that if Everyman wanted him to do lustful things that he would gladly do so. Everyman asks him if he would rather play than help. Fellowship responds with saying that he would also kill someone for him. In the end fellowship refuses to go.

Everyman is upset that Fellowship will make merry with him but will abandon him in his time of need. He begins to think about who else can help him. He thinks about Kindred and believes that he will help. Kindred does as Fellowship and vows to help. Then Kindred asks what he needs to do. When Everyman responds that he has to show God everything he has done both good and bad, Kindred refuses to go with him. Kindred does say that if Everyman needs money that Kindred is more than willing to help. Kindred also offers to send someone else with him if he wants.

Everyman is again upset and asks why he has been so foolish to have Fellowship and Kindred as his friends. He then thinks about his riches and hopes that maybe they will come with him. Goods replies that he can't take them with him. Goods says that though he can help Everyman in this world, he is no good to him in heaven. Everyman says that surely God will accept payment for the wrong deeds. Goods retaliates by saying that this is not true, in fact many of the sins he committed were because of Goods.

Everyman says that he had loved Goods and he had given him great pleasure. Goods responds that love of money is fleeting. Goods then tells him that he was actually sent to kill men's souls. For every good that Goods does, 1000 people are damned. Everyman is upset and accuses Goods of deceiving him. Goods replies that it was not him that did this, Everyman brought it on himself.

Everyman is upset that his friends have abandoned him. Everyman realizes his folly in relying on Fellowship, Kindred, and Goods. He is upset because he knows he has to rely on Good-Deeds but it is weak because he did not do many good deeds in his lifetime. He knows that Good-Deeds is his last hope so he asks if Good-Deeds will go with him. Good-Deeds responds by saying she would help if she were able but cannot because he didn't do enough and she is too weak to make a difference.

Everyman asks if there is anything he can do and Good-Deeds tells him to go to knowledge for help. Knowledge agrees to be his guide. Knowledge begins to explain the way to salvation. Knowledge takes Everyman to Confession, which is found in the church and Everyman asks Confession to help Good-Deeds with God. Confession gives Everyman penance and warns him that though Knowledge can help, it will be a long and difficult journey. If successful, Good-Deeds will be stronger and he will find forgiveness in the end. Everyman starts his penance although he knows that some things will be very painful.

Everyman starts to pray to God for forgiveness. This makes Good-Deeds stronger and now is strong enough to go with Everyman on his journey. Everyman is happy and prepared to enter heaven. Knowledge assures him of God's forgiveness and that he has a place in heaven. Again, the story of the crucifixion is referred to. Know that he is ready, instead of relying on Fellowship, Kindred, and Wealth; he must rely on Knowledge, Good-Deeds, Discretion (Five-Wits), Strength, and Beauty. All five of these agree to go with him on his journey.

Everyman realizes that now that he has these five friends, he no longer has any desire for his previous life and business. They advise him to lead the rest of his life with good judgment and deliberation. Knowledge directs him to go to the Priest and take the Holy Sacrament. Five-Wits lets him know that the lowliest Priest has greater power than an emperor or king because he will help him into heaven by giving him the seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Sacrament of the Blood and Flesh, Marriage, Holy Unction, and Penance.

Everyman is wary and asks if that is all he has to do. Five-Wits answers yes, it is because the priest has the highest power given to people because he teaches the Word and can give the Sacrament. Five-Wits makes the remark that if God gave them such dignity then they are above the angels.

Knowledge rebukes him by saying that Jesus died on the cross for the sake of all sinners and all humans are sinners. Priests are still humans and some set very bad examples for other sinners. Some have children which have been passed off as other men's and some lead lives of womanizing.

Five-Wits says that though this is true, Everyman has to trust that God will protect him from those types of priests and he needs to listen to the priest. Everyman finally feels that he is ready for his reckoning with God, and tells his five friends that he will go ahead and call them when he needs them. They say that they will not leave his side. Everyman again reiterates that he is ready to die and be put in the grave.

When Beauty realizes that she is going to be in the grave, she changes her mind and says that she will not go with him. Again Everyman is worried about whom to trust because Beauty has now left. Soon Strength, Discretion, and Five Wits follow suit and leave him. Everyman is in angst and asks Jesus for help because everyone is leaving him. Good-Deeds reassures him that he will not leave him. Knowledge will not leave until he finds out what will happen to Everyman.

Everyman is grateful that Good-Deeds will speak for him. Then Everyman dies. Knowledge hears the angels making way for Everyman. An angel comes and welcomes him into heaven. The play ends with the doctor reiterating the moral of the play, everyman needs to rely on Good-Deeds, Knowledge, and the forgiveness that the Lord can give and not on the more superficial things like, friends, family, wealth, beauty, or strength.

Analysis

This is a moral play that was written at the end of the 15th century. It was obviously written to be preformed for the common people. At the time, most people did not know how to read or write. Most of that knowledge was reserved for high positions and the Church. At the time, most of Europe followed the Roman Catholic Church. This play had a purpose to educate the people about salvation.

Following with the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church, the play describes the crucifixion of Jesus three times and also tells the story of the fall into sin. These are both found in the Bible. According to the scriptures, God created Adam. In the beginning everything was perfect but sin was created when Adam disobeyed God. Because of sin, Adam and his heirs would not be allowed into paradise and were cast out. Because God loved the people he created, he wanted to give them another chance. So, many years later, God sent his son, Jesus, to be crucified for the sins of the people. This is the repayment to God for the sin of Adam. Only those who acknowledge this and ask for forgiveness for his sins can enter heaven.

This play was certainly trying to get the point across that there is only one way to get into heaven and that is through the holy sacraments. These are again from the basic beliefs that the Roman Catholic Church had. The holy sacraments lead to forgiveness.

Everyman refers to everyone. Everyone will someday have to go before the Lord in the reckoning. It is the time when the Lord will judge whether or not the person before him is worthy enough to get into heaven.

In order for one to get into heaven, they have to make the right choices. The play clearly shows that friends, family, and wealth cannot help someone get into heaven. It is only through the knowledge of the Church and following that knowledge to salvation that one can be saved. After a person starts the journey, they will see their sins and will not want to sin anymore. They will want to be a good person and therefore there will be good deeds done for others which will please God.

There are a couple of warnings throughout the play. Beauty, strength, and your wits are all fleeting. No one can ever escape death and no one knows when they will die, so one should not put off salvation because it may be too late. The idea of reincarnation is also addressed briefly in this play. Roman Catholic religion does not believe in reincarnation. So when Everyman asks if there is any way he will ever be able to come back after death, he is told that there is no coming back.

There is also a point made that priests are human. Therefore since all humans are sinners, priests are not above sinning. It deals with the issue of priests that set bad examples. It says that yes, there are those priests whom are not the right role models for society, but that you have to trust in God; that he will make sure the priest that helps you is not one of those priests. This shows that at the time of this play being written, society seems to have lost the trust of the Church.

Obviously, the writer thought that there was a lot of sin going on in the world and that there was a need for a play to show what happens if one repents. This play does not focus on God as a vengeful, God. It focuses on how he is a loving God and though he is angry at the people for forgetting him, he is more than willing to forgive and wants to forgive.

The play begins by a messenger telling the audience that this is a moral play and also reiterates that at the end of the play, with the doctor warning the audience to take heed to what happened to Everyman because next time it could be them.

Characters

Angel

The Angel appears briefly at the play's conclusion to accept Everyman into God's domain. Because of his virtue, Everyman will be accepted immediately into heaven with God.

Beauty

Beauty is one of the companions that Everyman calls forth to accompany him for part of his journey to God. And while beauty can offer some comfort to Everyman, it is the first to depart when man begins the final journey to death. *Confession*

Knowledge leads Everyman to Confession. Confession represents man's best opportunity for salvation, since acknowledging Everyman's sins and asking God for forgiveness is an important element of Catholicism. Although Knowledge can accompany Everyman part way on his journey, Knowledge cannot complete the journey with him.

Cousin

When approached by Everyman, Cousin also declines to join his relative on his last journey. Instead, he states he would rather subsist on bread and water for five years than face God's judgment.

Death

Death is the means by which God will force Everyman to undertake a pilgrimage to God's forgiveness. He seeks out Everyman, whom he describes as only focused on earthly lusts and money. Death tells Everyman that he is to begin his final journey immediately and refuses an offer of riches, but Death finally allows Everyman an opportunity to prepare for his journey and to seek out a friend who might accompany him. Death is allegorical, as are all characters in this play.

Discretion

Discretion is one of the companions that Everyman calls forth to accompany him for part of his journey to God's final judgment. Discretion represents Everyman's ability to do the correct thing, to make the right choices in following God.

Doctor

A Doctor of Theology makes the final speech. He tells the audience to remember that all of Everyman's companions□Beauty, Strength, Discretion, and Five Wits□abandoned him on his final journey. It is only man's good deeds that will save him.

Everyman

Everyman is a wealthy man who is suddenly called by Death to begin his journey to God. Everyman is not ready to go, since he has not prepared for this day and has more sins than good deeds to his credit. He pleads with Death to give him a brief time to find friends who will be willing to accompany him on his pilgrimage. After being rejected by friends, family, and his own wealth, Everyman comes to realize that he has put his faith in the wrong things. Through the guidance of Knowledge and Good Deeds, Everyman is prepared to make a final appearance before God. In the end, after all his earthly friends and companions have abandoned him, it is only his Good Deeds that speak for Everyman's worth. Everyman is allegorical and represents the choices open to all men.

Fellowship

Fellowship is the first friend that Everyman greets. Initially Fellowship is willing to help Everyman in whatever way he needs, but upon learning of Everyman's request, Fellowship is forced to deny him. The journey to face God is not one he is willing to make. Like all the other characters, Fellowship is allegorical and represents man's reliance upon earthy, transient, and superficial friendships, which are not a part of man's heavenly life. While Fellowship is Everyman's friend in drinking and lusting after women, he will not face God's judgment with his friend.

Five Wits

Five Wits are the counselors that Everyman calls forth to accompany him for part of his journey to God. The Five Wits represent man's senses and the ability to understand God's commandments and the world around him. The senses lead to reason and a way in which Everyman is able to understand and appreciate the world he inhabits.

God

God is the first character to speak and tells the audience that man appears to have forgotten the sacrifice that God made at the crucifixion. Instead, man lives in wicked sin. God, who is angry, calls Death to bring forth a reckoning of those sinners who have ignored God's mercy.

Good Deeds

Good Deeds is at first very weak and cannot rise up from the ground, since Everyman's sin keeps her bound. But she instructs Everyman to seek out knowledge for help in preparing for his journey. After Everyman has done as Knowledge instructs, Good Deeds is ready to accompany Everyman before God. It is man's good deeds that will speak for his worth at God's final judgment. Good Deeds is the only character who can accompany Everyman the entire way and, as such, is representative of Catholic belief that it is a reliance on good deeds that will provide man with salvation before God.

Goods

Goods represents all the riches that Everyman has accumulated in his lifetime. Goods also declines to accompany Everyman on his pilgrimage, reminding him that Goods cannot leave the earthly realm (reinforcing the cliche "you can't take it with you"). Goods also reminds Everyman that it is because of his focus on material wealth that he is now at risk before God's judgment. Goods has been lent to Everyman for only a short period of time, he tells him, and now he will move on to deceive another man. Goods is another allegorical figure that represents man's interest in riches rather than prayer.

Kindred

Like Cousin, Kindred also forsakes Everyman's pleas. He tells him he would give him a wanton woman to enjoy, but he will not accompany Everyman to answer before God. Kindred and Cousin both indicate that man cannot trust upon family to intercede before God.

Knowledge

Knowledge leads to Everyman's redemption, because it is knowledge of his sins that leads Everyman to ask for God's forgiveness. Knowledge represents a consciousness of Christianity and God's will and is the fundamental tenet of salvation. While Knowledge can lead Everyman to Good Deeds, Knowledge cannot accompany him all the way on his journey before God, indicating that learning has only limited utility in saving one's soul.

Messenger

The Messenger appears in the prologue to introduce the play and its subject matter. Messenger reminds the audience that while sin may be enjoyed during life, by the end of life, it will cause the soul to weep. The Messenger also reminds the audience that the material, transient things that man values in his corporeal existence will be worthless in the next life.

Strength

Strength is one of the companions that Everyman calls forth to accompany him for part of his journey to God. Strength will make Everyman stronger for his journey, but as he prepares for death, the strength of the body also leaves, and finally Strength is forced to abandon the final journey.

Themes

Alienation and Loneliness

As Everyman is abandoned by Fellowship, Kindred, and Goods, he begins to feels increasingly isolated and alone. When his overtures to Fellowship are rejected, Everyman thinks that surely his family will stand by him as he faces his final judgment. Instead, what he discovers is that every man must face God's judgment alone. Earthly friendships and family are left behind in such a situation, and man is never more isolated than in facing death.

Atonement and Forgiveness

When Everyman is feeling most afraid and alone, he is given the opportunity to atone for his sins. The recognition of his sin, provided by Knowledge, leads to his meeting with Confession and to penance. The medieval Christian tradition is that man must seek atonement for earthly sins, but that God's forgiveness is always available to those who truly repent. At the end of *Everyman,* forgiveness is given freely and Everyman is prepared to meet God.

Betrayal

Everyman has placed his faith in friends and family. They have been his companions throughout life and each initially indicates their willingness to accompany him on a journey□Fellowship even vows to accompany his friend to Hell. But Fellowship and Kindred are both afraid of the real hell; both decline Everyman's invitation when they learn he is going to meet God's final judgement. This indicates that man will always be betrayed by earthly companions, since each man is ultimately selfish and must confront God alone. Their betrayal of Everyman serves a purpose, however, as their rejection forces him to search for greater truths.

Death

Death is the means by which man finally meets God. It is impending death that forces Everyman to consider his life and his accomplishments. Like most men, Everyman is unprepared for death and seeks extra time. In this respect he is like all men, who would plead for time to make final plans and, most importantly, to make peace with God. Generally, most Christian religions suggest that death is not to be feared, but that a better, eternal existence will be known as a result of death. Still, the approach of death is often the most frightening experience that man will face. Everyman is no exception to this idea.

God and Religion

Plays such as Everyman are intended to help reinforce the importance of God and religion in people's lives. In this play, God represents salvation, but it is religion that provides the means to achieve that salvation. Like most drama of the medieval period, the focus of this play is how religion and a belief in God will help man overcome any travail, including death. Although God appears as a character only at the beginning of the play, his presence is felt throughout as Everyman begins to recognize his need for help beyond the earthly realm.

Good Deeds

According to Catholic belief, it is man's accounting of himself and his good deeds that will provide admittance to heaven. Thus it is only Good Deeds who can accompany Everyman on his final journey. When faced with God's judgment, man's riches, the notoriety of his friends, and the importance of his family will not speak for his worth. Only the good deeds that a man does here on earth can speak for him before God. Accordingly, good deeds is more important than faith in achieving salvation.

Knowledge

When abandoned by his friends, it is Knowledge that leads Everyman to the help he needs. It is knowledge that helps man to recognize and understand how he has sinned. It is knowledge that permits him to recognize deception and falsehoods. And finally, it is knowledge that allows Everyman to find the way to Confession and penance. If it is only his good deeds that can save man, it is knowledge that allows man to recognize the importance of good deeds in finding salvation.

Sin

Sin is the reason for this play. It is sin that angers God in the opening lines. As a theme, sin is central, since it is Everymen's sins that force his final judgment. He has sinned much in his life, and the audience is told that his sins are so great that Good Deeds is immobile. Only when he can recognize and renounce his sins can Everyman be saved.

Style

Archetype

The word archetype is generally used to describe a character who represents a pattern from which all characters or "types" are derived. The term derives from the work of Carl Jung, who expressed the theory that behind every unconscious lies the collective memories of the past. In literature, the term is often applied to a character type or plot pattern that occurs frequently and is easily recognized. In Everyman, Death is such a character, and the audience would immediately recognize this character and his purpose in the plot.

Audience

Authors usually write with an audience in mind. Certainly the unknown author of Everyman intended this drama to instruct the audience. Since few people were literate, a medieval writer could use drama to tell a story or teach a moral. The lesson in this play is how to lead a proper religious life and prepare for death and God's judgement.

Character

The actions of each character are what constitute the story. Character can also include the idea of a particular individual's morality. Characters can range from simple stereotypical figures to more complex multi-faceted ones. Characters may also be defined by personality traits, such as the rogue or the damsel in distress. Characterization is the process of creating a life-like person from an author's imagination. To accomplish this the author provides the character with personality traits that help define who he will be and how he will behave in a given situation.

Everyman differs slightly from this definition, since each character is little more than a "type." The audience does not really know or understand the character as an individual. For instance, Fellowship represents little more than a quality, not anindividual. The audience understands that Fellowship signifies the friendships than men have while here on earth.

Drama

A drama is often defined as any work designed to be presented on the stage. It consists of a story, of actors portraying characters, and of action. But historically, drama can also consist of tragedy, comedy, religious pageant, and spectacle. In modern usage, drama explores serious topics and themes but does not achieve the same level as tragedy. In *Everyman,* drama is aligned with spectacle and is intended as a mechanism to instruct the audience on how to prepare for death.

Genre

Genres are a way of categorizing literature. Genre is a French term that means "kind" or "type." Genre can refer to both the category of literature such as tragedy, comedy, epic, poetry, or pastoral. It can also include modern forms of literature such as drama, novels, or short stories. This term can also refer to types of literature such as mystery, science fiction, comedy, or romance. *Everyman* is a morality play.

Morality Play

Following the revivial of theatre in the eleventh century, the Catholic Church began to introduce brief dramatized episodes into the mass on the occasion of major festivals. These gradually developed into complete plays, performed in public places by the trade guilds, and were known as mystery plays. In some towns, there was a cycle of dramatized stories from the Creation to the Last Judgement. These were succeeded in the fifteenth century by morality plays, allegorical presentations of human vices and virtues in conflict. Among these, *Everyman* is perhaps the best known.

Parable

A parable is a story intended to teach a moral lesson. The story in *Everyman* is designed to teach people to lead a good, religious life so that they may properly prepare for death and the afterlife. The Bible is one of the most obvious sources of parables, since religion traditionally relies upon stories to teach lessons. This tradition stems from a period in which most men and women could not read, and the clergy found that stories were the most effective way to instruct moral lessons.

Plot

This term refers to the pattern of events within a play. Generally plots should have a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion, but they may also be a series of episodes connected together. Basically, the plot provides the author with the means to explore primary themes. Students are often confused between the two terms; but themes explore ideas, and plots simply relate what happens in a very obvious manner. Thus the plot of *Everyman* is how a man searches for a friend to accompany him to his final judgment. But the theme is how man can find salvation in God and Good Deeds.

Historical Context

Cultural Changes in England

The end of the fifteenth century marked the end of the medieval period in England. The sixteenth century brought with it the first of the Tudor kings and a period of relative peace following the civil wars that had plagued England during much of the preceding century. And although it was still present in smaller, yearly outbreaks, the threat of the Black Death (a plague that had killed a large portion of the European population) had finally decreased. England at the beginning of a new century was becoming a good place to live. The first of the Tudors, King Henry VII, formed alliances with neighboring countries and trade flourished in London. The cloth made from the wool of English sheep became an important commodity in Europe trading.

The ascension of commerce, however, changed the face of England. Once a predominantly agrarian culture, the cities of England□especially London□ became more densely populated and urban. Farm lands were enclosed, and displaced rural families fled to the larger cities, where crowding, unemployment, and plague were a greater problem. The feudal order was ending, as well as the era of knights on horseback, who became obsolete after Henry V proved that there was a more efficient way to win a battle. Literacy increased, too, as moveable typesetting made books and other printed material more available.

Drama in the Fifteenth Century

The Renaissance began in Italy during the fifteenth century, but it did not begin in England until the early part of the sixteenth century; thus *Everyman* really represents one of the last medieval plays to be written. For the people of the medieval period, the Catholic church was the center of their lives. Its teaching guided all their actions, and its rules provided people with a pattern upon which to base all behaviors. The teachings of the church and its masses were in Latin, which few except the most learned could understand; the church held a position of authority that could not be challenged by the majority of those under its rule. Its representatives were charged with interpreting the word of God to the people, who trusted blindly in their clergy. The Catholic church still maintained a strong hold on England at the beginning of the sixteenth century. But the first stirrings of the Reformation were being felt in Europe, and by the last year that *Everyman* was reprinted, 1537, the Catholic church's rule in England had ceded to Protestantism.

Medieval drama was originally derived from church liturgy. In the ninth century, musical elaboration of the Latin liturgy began to appear as part of certain feasts. The purpose was to heighten and enhance the religious experience of the worshipers, and by the tenth century, brief enactments of biblical episodes were practiced at monasteries and abbeys. The most famous was an Easter morning re-enactment of the three Marys

asking for Jesus at his grave. Clerics dressed for the parts and sang the piece as dialogue, answering one another.

These "tropes," as they were called, were not plays exactly, but they contained elements of drama. They had progressive plots, brief development of character, conflict, resolution, and visual spectacle. Over a period of 100 years, tropes became more elaborate and more complicated. The topics were usually biblical and the actors were clerics, monks, and choirboys. But the language was Latin rather than native languages, and the audiences were almost exclusively limited to those living in monastic communities.

Widespread deaths from the plague changed the nature of medieval drama and opened the way for another type of drama. When labor became scarce and expensive, people moved into the cities, which became centers of economic and cultural growth. Cycle or mystery plays evolved in towns and cities and were sanctioned by the church. Vast productions that taught Christian history and values were produced in the towns with lay-people as actors and as a part of feast day celebrations. Each guild was assigned a story, from Creation to Judgment, and each guild produced a pageant that best fit the guild's purpose. A great many of the townspeople participated as stage crew, actors, managers, and supporting cast. The audiences were large, drawn from everyone within traveling distance. Eventually, morality plays grew from this beginning. However, with the coming of the great Elizabethan theatre (the works of Shakespeare and others), morality plays disappeared as the evolving society demanded more elaborate entertainments.

Critical Overview

There is no record of *Everyman* being produced on stage during the medieval period. The title page refers to the work as a treatise, and occasionally such works were fashioned as dialogues between characters. This was especially true when the author intended the work to provide a moral lesson. Whether *Everyman* was ever performed or not, it proved popular among readers, achieving four reprintings in the first years following its publication. But with the move to a Protestant religion in England□and the development of the more sophisticated Elizabethan theatre□the morality plays of the medieval period were forgotten. *Everyman* was not reprinted again until 1773 and was then regarded as an artifact of the ancient past. However, by the nineteenth century, medieval drama became an important topic of study, and eventually interest in *Everyman* surged enough to warrant a production in 1901.

In William Poel's 1901 staging in Canterbury, England, *Everyman* achieved dramatic success, according to a critic writing for the *Athenaeum,* because the play's "naive simplicity and uncompromising sincerity" had modern appeal. Although the reviewer referred to the play as primitive drama, he also found that this drama, "which seems so dull and didactic, may well have passioned our forefathers□this is, indeed, capable of passioning us." This acknowledgment of the play's strength after 500 years of dormancy must have been gratifying for the director.

Everyman, claimed the critic, had the possibility of becoming a sensation during the 1901 London theatre season. The review in the *Athenaeum* recognized that the play's focus on religion and salvation might appear quaint or dated, but the critic said that "Temptations to ridicule presented themselves, and the smile rose occasionally to the lips. It died there, and sank before the absolute sincerity of the whole. Amusement never degenerated into mockery." Accordingly, the ideas depicted in *Everyman* may have interest and application in a more modern world. Of the staging, this critic noted that Everyman was "admirably played by a woman," although the role of God was more traditionally cast as an elderly man. Interestingly, the role of Death was played without the traditional scythe.

A review of a 1902, Manchester, England, performance cited the "amazing ingenuity, judgment and care" of the production. C. E. Montague, writing for the Manchester *Guardian,* described in detail the stage settings, which more closely approximated fifteenth-century Italian design, rather than fifteenth-century English work. Montague opined that the staging more closely reflects the ideas that Englishmen have about the fifteenth century, rather than the reality. One area deserving of praise, according to Montague, were the performances. It was a "seriousness and simplicity of method" that made the cast stand out. In dealing with such a serious topic, the cast was able to achieve "the right tragic effect of outward expression" so necessary to play the parts. Calling attention to one actor's performance, Montague noted that "the set and immobile face, level delivery, and almost unchanged position of Death were curiously effective in enhancing the solemnity of his first message to Everyman."

One negative observation in the *Guardian* review concerned the performance of Good Deeds, who Montague felt had a "rather overdone plaintiveness" and whose dialogue was sometimes not audible. In summary, however, Montague declared that the stage management was "masterly."

A New York production was also the subject of positive reviews in 1903. Elizabeth Luther Cary, writing for the *Critic,* acknowledged American audiences might be confused by a play so removed from traditional drama, but she stated that the play "seems to have aroused among its audiences a feeling in which admiration, interest, curiosity, and bewilderment are more or less evenly blended." Cary found that this production of *Everyman* was "so consistent, so simple, so genuine, so moving, and so entirely outside the bounds of modern convention [that it] is disturbing unless the tradition to which it conforms is clearly in mind." Cary pointed out that audiences must understand the play within its literary tradition.

In appraising the performances, it was the role of Everyman that earned the greatest praise from Cary. Of the actress who assumed the role, Cary said, "her interpretation is the fire of life to the *naïve* little play which, with all its qualities, could very easily be made an affair of external and merely archaeological interest. Subtle feeling for the psychological situation raises her performance to a very high level of modern dramatic art, while the simplicity and frankness of the allegory are not sacrificed in the least degree." In the end, stated Cary, the "power and charm of the acting" dominate the performance.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, *Everyman* has achieved a level of popularity as a subject for study, particularly as interest in England' s medieval period has increased. Often cited as the best representation of morality plays and of medieval drama in general, *Everyman* appears in many anthologies of drama. The play continues to be taught in college English courses and occasional productions can be found at universities.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Metzger is a Ph.D. specializing in literature and drama at the University of New Mexico. In this essay, she discusses how theme and character development can be employed to stage Everyman *in a manner that appeals to modern audiences*.

One of the significant problems with any modern staging of *Everyman* is that contemporary audiences have trouble appreciating the play on the same level that medieval viewers would have. The play's original audiences understood the role of religion in their lives. They believed in the reality of death, the afterlife, heaven and hell. In a period where the plague was likely to cut short life, where infant mortality was so high that people expected their children to die, and where the church could dictate behavior, the fear of death, of hell, and of Satan assumed a much larger role in life. Those factors are all much more abstract now, and modern audiences would find that fear, which Everyman experiences when faced with an unprepared death, very foreign. But the play has modern appeal, according to several writers who argue that with the correct emphasis, *Everyman* can transcend 600 years of cultural history to find a modern audience.

A successful contemporary staging of *Everyman* is possible, according to Ron Tanner in the *Philological Quarterly,* especially if the production emphasizes the irony that is present in the plot. In his essay, Tanner argued that one important key to appreciating the irony in *Everyman* is in visualizing the presentation of death. The medieval audience, Tanner noted, would have been horrified at seeing Death's approach on stage, and when Everyman attempts to bargain with or bribe Satan, the audience would have been shocked but also "tickled" at Everyman's nerve. Tanner argued that Everyman's "gall is almost admirable." When confronted by death, Everyman says, "thou comest when I had thee least in mind." This bit of irony is common to all humans, and most can appreciate Everyman's next words: "a thousand pound shalt thou have, / And defer this matter to another day." To bargain with death, to attempt a bribe is what all men would have liked to do but what few would have even considered. When Everyman observes, "I may say Death giveth no warning," the audience once again can laugh at Everyman's foolishness. Death gives no warning and Death takes no bribes. Every member of the medieval audience would recognize the foolishness of Everyman's words. Tanner pointed out that this irony is more evident in production than in simply reading the text, but even absent a staging, the play's humor is clearly evident in the text.

A second place where irony or humor might be emphasized in production is in the first half of the play when Everyman is searching for someone to accompany him in his journey to meet God. Certainly the play ceases to be humorous once Everyman falls victim to despair and Knowledge enters the play, but while Everyman is seeking the help of Fellowship, Kindred, and Goods, there is humor in their exchanges, humor that a modern audience can appreciate. When Fellowship offers to accompany his good friend, saying that even if "thou go to hell, /I will not forsake thee," the audience understands the irony in those words.

Fellowship, who easily promises to go "to hell" with his friend, has in mind a more decadent location on earth. Fellowship suggests a more localized hell, one where women and drink occupy their attention. In fact, when he learns of Everyman's true destination, Fellowship admits that he is afraid of having to give an accounting to God. And when reminded by Everyman that he promised to accompany him to hell, Fellowship admits to having made that promise, and says, "but such pleasures be set aside." The use of "pleasures" makes it clear that Fellowship intended his own definition of hell. As Tanner noted, Fellowship makes seven promises to help, each one equally elaborate, before he learns Everyman's destination.

Everyman's interview with Kindred and Cousin also fails to advance his need for company on his journey. When apprised of the nature of his pilgrimage, Kindred states that he would rather exist only on bread and water for five years than face God. The speed with which he chooses a fast over facing God is humorous, since he wasted no time in making such idle promises. When faced with more pleadings from Everyman, Cousin claims to have a "cramp in my toe." His evasiveness is funny, although the audience understands that Everyman's plight is very serious. This intermingling of brief humor in the face of tragedy portends the formula that William Shakespeare would later adopt for his tragedies one hundred years later. The audience needs a few brief moments of laughter to recover from the tragedy unfolding on stage.

Another moment of laughter occurs when Everyman seeks help from Goods. By now it is clear to the audience the direction the play is taking, and the only surprise remains the means that Goods will take to avoid helping Everyman. Goods is very direct in his refusal to help; the irony comes near the end of their exchange. Goods, having told Everyman that he should have used his money to help the poor, completes his task by saying that he must be off to deceive another just as he has deceived Everyman. He exits the stage, saying, "Have good day," as if Everyman was not facing imminent death and final judgment. Since the very next scene is an encounter with Good Deeds and a shift to more serious ideas, the audience needs this last little ironic reminder from Goods.

Another view of the play's adaptability to modern theatre is suggested by Carolynn Van Dyke in *Acts of Interpretation, The Texts in Its Contexts 700-1600,* who focused on allegory in her argument that Everyman can find an audience in today's students. Van Dyke pointed out that allegory offers opportunities for actors to transcend the time period in which the play is written to create a more modern and more easily appreciated representation of the central characters. She argued that the characters in *Everyman* are realistic, that "they behave like familiar individuals."

This characterization takes the characters beyond the limitations of pure allegory. Fellowship is not simply an abstract representation of Everyman's friends. He is a real character with whom the audience may identity. Friends often promise what they cannot deliver; students and audiences will recognize that reality. Van Dyke maintained that "those characters' material forms not only represent but also redefine their names." Each character has a distinct personality or at least has the promise of a distinct personality, if given the opportunity in performance. It is actors who infuse personality

into these abstract characters. "As categories and abstractions," Van Dyke noted, "they cannot be fully realized by any creature." But, she continued, "their embodiment in individual actors . . . must call upon the techniques of realistic characterization." With a skillful actor, the relationship between text, ideas, and audience can become clearer. The actor is infused with identity, and the audience has a practical application of the ideas.

Writing in *Studies in Philology,* Stanton Garner also argued that medieval morality plays must be viewed within their medium to be fully appreciated and that thus far, plays such as *Everyman* have not been valued as theatre pieces because modern audience fail to understand their correct role within the genre of drama. Although Garner was not focusing on humor, he was arguing that the visualization of characters, such as Death, is crucial to appreciating the play. Garner noted that "in performance, a stage devil is physically *there,* in real proximity to the audience, and with every gesture and movement he draws attention to his immediacy. The audience is forced to acknowledge and be aware of Death because he is not an abstract character drawn on the page. Instead, he becomes a personification of the Death that threatens all men."

Garner pointed out that this living embodiment of Death helps to suggest a world beyond the limited locations created by the words of the text. Instead of Death as an abstract concept representing a world beyond the audience's imagining, there appears on stage a form that suggests reality. Salvation ceases to be an abstract promise of the church and becomes instead, the "presence of the here-and-now." Garner made the additional observation that the audience can only understand Everyman's aloneness by seeing the play in performance. The reader understands that Everyman becomes increasingly isolated as Fellowship, Kindred, and Goods abandon him. But the audience actually sees these characters leave the stage never to return, and with each departure, Everyman becomes increasingly isolated.

Although *Everyman* proved very popular with medieval readers, there is no evidence that it was staged during that period, and records citing performance after 1600 make no mention of the play's staging. There have been, however, a number of successful productions in the twentieth century. In 1901, William Poel's staging of *Everyman* was so successful that he took it on the road in England, Scotland, and Ireland. He eventually brought the play to the United States. Its United States tour was successful enough that British productions of the play returned several more times in the next thirty years. Today, *Everyman* is occasionally staged at colleges and universities, as well as by church organizations. But these productions are either academic in nature or focused on religious ideology. Tanner, Van Dyke, and Garner have all argued that this play has value beyond such limited focus. A closer evaluation of the plot and characters would support such a move.

Source: Sheri E. Metzger, for *Drama for Students,* Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, Kaula, a specialist in Elizabethan literature, compares and contrasts Everyman *and Christopher Marlowe's* Dr. Faustus, *examining how well the plays translate to modern theatre and readership*.

In his recent study, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (1958), Professor Bernard Spivack points out two related trends in the development of the English morality play during the sixteenth century: the first a change from a hero who represents all humanity to one who embodies only an aspect of humanity; the second a change from a comic to a tragic ending. Behind these changes lay the general shift from a Catholic to a Protestant theological perspective. One of the chief purposes of the older plays was to demonstrate the possibility of salvation for *all* humanity: hence the generalized hero and the happy ending. The later plays, on the other hand, were more concerned with the exceptional individual and the dilemmas he must cope with in this life rather than the next.

The various implications of this development may be seen very clearly, I think, in two plays written about a century apart, *Everyman* and Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. A comparison between the two is a natural, even an inevitable one to make, since both plays have as their main theme the eschatological predicament confronting every Christian individual, the choice whether to be damned or saved. Futhermore, both plays are basically concerned with only one character and his spiritual destiny; the other characters either symbolize various facets of the hero's personal conflict or are limited to strictly subsidiary roles. *Everyman* is undoubtedly the most skillful example of the morality play that has survived. T. S. Eliot claims (in "Four Elizabethan Dramatists") that it is perhaps the one play in which "we have a drama within the limitations of art"□ meaning, I gather, that nothing in the play is extraneous to the central homiletic purpose, that all elements of style, structure, and theme are governed by the conventions of allegory. The consistency of the form reflects the perfect clarity and oneness of belief in the playwright and his audience. By comparison, *Dr. Faustus* is an impure, hybrid play, not merely because of the revisions inflicted on it by later playwrights, but because it is transitional: it both harks back to the older drama in its use of the devices of homiletic allegory, and anticipates the fully developed tragedy of the later Elizabethans, especially in its conception of the hero.

It is in their protagonists that the two plays differ, perhaps, most obviously. Since Everyman is supposed to represent all humanity he is given no social or political identity, no attributes which would suggest that his predicament is more common to one class of humanity than another. (The only political references in the play occur in the repeated designation of God as "Heuen Kynge" or "Chefe Lorde of paradyse," the implication being that all men, whatever their earthly status, are democratically equal before the one true monarch of the universe.) This is not to say that Everyman is merely an abstract figure, a type. He is, rather, a complete individual whose feelings as he faces death and yearns for salvation are to be understood as those of any human being caught in the same universal situation. In *Everyman* the soul, or that which unites the

hero with the rest of his kind, is treated as incomparably more significant than character, or that which sets him apart. In *Dr. Faustus,* on the other hand, these two aspects of the hero receive a more equal emphasis, and as the play develops a growing tension may be observed between them. As early as the opening chorus Faustus is presented as an individual set apart by the circumstances of his birth, education, and scholarly career. As he shows so clearly in his initial monologue, he is one who craves uniqueness, who longs to "gain a deity" and "reign sole king of all the Provinces." But whatever Faustus eventually gains in distinction as a character he loses as a soul, for however cavalierly he tries to dismiss it at first he cannot escape the predicament of Everyman. All the high honor he receives for his learning and necromantic skill is ironically replaced in the end by the terrifying isolation of the final hour, when under the pressure of imminent damnation he yearns to lose all identity whatsoever and become as indistinguishable as waterdrops blended with the ocean.

The fact that Everyman, the representative individual, is saved, and Faustus, the exceptional individualist, is damned, has significant theological implications. Between the two plays falls the Reformation. Despite its several severe warnings, *Everyman* is essentially reassuring in its estimation of man's chances for salvation. Its purpose is not to terrify but to edify. "This mater is wonderous precyous," says the Prologue; "But the entent of it is more gracyous, and swete to bere awaye." God at the beginning speaks ruefully of His love for mankind, the sacrifice He made for them in the Crucifixion ("I coude do no more than I dyde, truely"), and His original intention that they should all be saved and share His glory. It is only because mankind is "Drowned in synne" that God is obliged to command Death to summon Everyman to his final reckoning. Once Everyman appears, however, he hardly bears the marks of a deep-dyed sinner. He is more like the anxious, baffled, and painfully well-intentioned hero of modern existentialist fiction. Except for the momentary truculence he shows at the outset when he asks Death what God wants with him, he never betrays any sign of wishing to resist God or question His ways, let alone aspire to a Faustian divinity. Once he realizes his spiritual danger, his faith, his will to be saved, is beyond question; and after he turns to Good Deeds and is joined by Knowledge the way to his salvation is clear.

One reason the process of redemption for Everyman seems relatively easy is that positive evil does not appear as a serious impediment. Unlike most of the other mortality plays, the world of *Everyman* is not invaded by the Devil and his ministers, the personified vices. The only obstacle to the hero's redemption is his own blindness to the true good, represented by his over-reliance on Fellowship, Kindred and Cousin, and Goods. These are not vices but mutable goods, dangerous only when their value is overestimated. (As Goods explains to Everyman, had he loved his possessions moderately and distributed alms his spiritual prospects would have been much brighter.) Death, too, is depicted as God's dignified and business-like subordinate□not the sadistic antic of the medieval *danse macabre*. The universe of *Everyman* in general is one thoroughly under the control of a benevolent deity who sees to it that the normal, repentant sinner has more than a fair chance to save himself: a universe in which the demonic is kept at a thoroughly safe distance.

Moving to *Dr. Faustus,* we are immediately impressed by the remoteness of the divine, the omnipresence of the demonic. Not only does God's benevolent protection fail to show itself as a visible reality (even the impeccably virtuous Old Man is tormented by the fiends), but God's representatives, the Good Angel and the Old Man, are heavily outnumbered by Mephistophilis, Lucifer, the Bad Angel, the Seven Deadly Sins, and an indefinite number of minor devils. The magnitude of evil represented in Faustus is far greater than it is in Everyman, for Faustus consciously wills to surmount his human limitations and rival God. This deep concern with the demonic makes Marlowe's play seem at once more primitive and more sophisticated than *Everyman:* more primitive in that it reflects that original fear of darkness and chaos which is at the core of the tragic experience; more sophisticated in that it sees the exceptionally gifted individual, the man who believes he has mastered all the known fields of human learning, as precisely the one who is most lacking in genuine self-knowledge, the most vulnerable to illicit temptation. This concern with the potency of evil also appears in the hero's inability to repent despite his urgent desire to. Before he signs the bond Faustus suffers momentary pangs of conscience, and periodically thereafter he is moved to repent. Clearly, he is damned in the end not because of what he actually does, for his deeds are merely frivolous and self-indulgent rather than vicious, but because he despairs, because he is *convinced* that he is damned. Even as he calls on Christ in the agony of his final hour he sees only the heavy wrath of God; the one drop of blood that would save his soul unavailable to him. *Dr. Faustus* is a distinctly post-Reformation play because the hero's destiny hinges entirely on the question of faith, a question which does not enter into *Everyman* at all. This is not to say that the play is Calvinistic in its implied theology; the opportunity to renounce his bond and repent is genuinely available to Faustus to the very end, as the Old Man indicates. Nevertheless, a heavy element of spiritual predeterminism does appear in Faustus's conviction that even God's mercy is not so capacious as to embrace such a sinner as himself. Although the conviction may be illusory, it is still one of the most powerfully felt ingredients in the play.

Another significant feature of the two plays which serves to distinguish them is their treatment of time. In both plays time is to be conceived in two basic senses. First, it is a mechanically regular process, a ceaseless, irreversible flow which determines the limits of human experience but remains unaffected by it. In the second sense, it is a flexible medium which may be manipulated by man to attain his ends. The first is clock or astronomical time, the second moral time. The first is deterministic; the second involves opportunity, or man's freedom to control his own destiny.

In Everyman's progress, time in the first sense prevails momentarily but is superseded by the second. Since the play deals with the general experience of mankind, history, in the sense of what particular individuals do at a particular time and place, is almost but not entirely excluded. Only three historical events are mentioned: the Fall, the Crucifixion, and the Last Judgment□the three events which in the medieval Christian view determined the entire course of human history. The first event began history by binding man to time and mortality, the second offered him the opportunity to escape this bondage and decide his own destiny in the hereafter, the third will end all possibility of choice and so end history. Time in the first, or mechanistic, sense enters the play when Death summonsEveryman. Once the latter is fully aware of the fact that he must die, his

first response is to beg for more leeway: "Ye, a thousande pounde shalt thou haue, And thou dyfferre this mater tyll an other daye." But Death, immune to bribery, insists that he die that very day. After Death leaves, Everyman, alone and desperate, wishes he had never been born and shudders to think what little time he has left: "The day passeth, and is almost ago. I wote not well what for to do." It is here that Everyman most closely resembles the Faustus who in his final hour curses his existence and helplessly endures the ticking away of his small stock of remaining time. After discovering the hypocrisy of Fellowship and the other worldly goods, Everyman realizes that all his life he had wasted time, that is, had misused his opportunity to prepare for the hereafter: "Lo! now was I deceyued or I was ware; And all, I may wyte, my spendynge of tyme." At this point time for Everyman means finitude and the horrifying prospect of damnation.

But once he discovers a true companion in Good Deeds and receives instruction from Knowledge, Everyman is no longer obsessed with time in the negative sense. His passive waiting for death changes into a voluntary pilgrimage, a journey in which he sets his own pace and hopefully anticipates a benevolent end. What he must do is undergo the established rituals of purification: confession, penance, and the receiving of the sacraments of the eucharist and last annointing. These are rituals of renewal: they counteract the deleterious effect of time by relieving man of his bondage to his sinful past and enabling him to be "reborn." The sacrament which receives the greatest emphasis in the digression on the priesthood, the eucharist, is the one which in Catholic doctrine testifies to the continual, revivifying presence of the sacred in the profane, the eternal in the temporal. Time in the latter part of *Everyman* is not negated; instead it becomes the medium of spiritual regeneration and fulfillment.

Nevertheless, as he approaches the grave Everyman is still not fully prepared to meet death. He must undergo the actual process of aging and dying, must suffer the desertion of Strength, Beauty, and his other natural attributes. In his momentary disillusionment he shows that even the penitent finds it difficult to divorce himself from the temporal and face death with equanimity. Even as he enters the grave time does not wholly cease for Everyman: he must passively but hopefully await the final event of history, the day of doom. But as the singing of the angels indicates, his ultimate redemption is no longer in doubt.

In *Dr. Faustus* references to time and eternity occur much more frequently than they do in *Everyman,* and Marlowe's treatment of time in general is more deliberate and complex. One good reason for this is that the time element is heavily stressed in the plot. Faustus has precisely twenty-four years in which to live "in all voluptuousness." As his end draws nearer his obsession with time grows more intense, until at last it reaches the extremes of spiritual agony. One of the intolerable ironies which forces itself on Faustus near the end is that he has gained a limited quantity of pleasure at the cost of an eternity of pain. Another, counterbalancing irony which he fails to realize is that, given the necessary faith, he could at any moment escape his bondage to mechanistic time and enter the realm of moral time, to his ultimate redemption.

Before and during the signing of the bond Faustus naturally shows no more concern for time than he does for the spiritual consequences of his act. With what appears to be

forced bravado he announces to Mephistophilis, "Faustus hath incurred eternal death by desperate thoughts against Jove's deity"—speaking in the past tense as though the matter were final, unalterable. Having signed the pact with Lucifer, Faustus suffers his first serious misgivings after a time lapse of indefinite length, during which he has amused himself with a variety of exotic diversions. Already he has begun to despair, so profoundly that he would have killed himself "Had not sweet pleasure conquered deep despair." The form his pleasure takes is significant: he has had Homer sing to him of Alexander and Oenone, and Dardanus perform duets with Mephistophilis. Faustus, in other words, seeks to escape the present with its constant flowing away of his limited stock of time by projecting himself into a remote and changeless past. The classical figures he conjures up seem seductively real at the moment, like those in a dream, but as the anachronism of Homer's singing of Alexander suggests, they are illusory; Faustus himself later admits they are not "true substantial bodies." Later in this scene (II. ii in Boas's edition) Faustus again reveals his inclination to evade the present reality, together with his nostalgia for an idyllic beauty near the beginning of time, just before he is to see the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins: "This sight will be pleasing unto me, As Paradise was to Adam." The same impulse reappears with special poignancy near the end of Faustus's twenty-four years, when he tries to find heaven and immortality in Helen's lips.

Meanwhile, the fact that time, clocktime, does flow on ceaselessly is made unmistakably clear to Faustus in the same scene in which he speaks of Homer and Alexander. When he questions Mephistophilis about the movement of the heavenly bodies the latter replies: "All move from east to west in four and twenty hours upon the poles of the world; but differ in their motions upon the poles of the zodiac." The number twenty-four should serve as an ominous reminder to Faustus, but he complacently dismisses the explanation as old hat: "These slender trifles Wagner can decide." Once the clock has announced the beginning of his final hour, however, Faustus's astronomical awareness becomes painfully acute: "Stand still, you evermoving spheres of heaven, That time may cease, and midnight never come." Looking skywards, Faustus also sees Christ's redeeming blood streaming in the firmament, but the vision is momentary. In his despair he equates the ceaseless movement of the spheres with the certainty of his damnation: "The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike, The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd."

Two other significant variations on the time theme may be observed in the play. The first is the changeless state of damnation tangibly represented in Mephistophilis, who as a spirit is incapable of repentance. In his description of the nature of hell Mephistophilis indicates that while the state of damnation has no future, it does look back to a past. His greatest torment, in fact, lies in his memory of the joys of heaven and his knowledge that he will never see them again. Although Faustus at first makes light of Mephistophilis's suffering, he also realizes at the end what it means to exist without hope, without the expectation of future change. Any finite period of suffering, even ten thousand years, would be preferable to permanent exclusion from the company of the saved. As long as Faustus exists in time, however, the possibility of change is continually available to him. This is made clear through the periodic reappearance of the two angels, the first counselling hope, the other despair. When Faustus asks whether

enough time remains to escape damnation, the Bad Angel answers, "Too late," the Good Angel, "Never too late, if Faustus can repent." Faustus never avails himself of the latter alternative because he cannot believe that his repentance would ever be acceptable to a deity he has so grievously affronted. He is a moral determinist who, unlike Everyman, can think of time only as binding, not as liberating.

If time assumes a more problematic significance in Dr. Faustus than it does in *Everyman,* this is merely one symptom of the play's having been written in an age which was becoming increasingly sensitive to the radical distinction between the eternal and the temporal, the sacred and the profane. The distinction is most sharply focused, perhaps, in the Calvinistic conception of faith and works, which sees all of man's temporal activities as spiritually worthless, his whole salvation depending on his absolute commitment to a time-transcending deity. In less explicitly theological fashion, Marlowe and his contemporaries habitually interpreted time as a strictly negative process, the implacable destroyer of whatever man values most highly in this life beauty, love, fame, honor. Such hostility toward the universal principle of change could arise only in a period of transition, when the medieval hunger for the changeless was still a very real and potent impulse, but when confidence in the divine was no longer firm enough to satisfy that hunger. Not that all the Elizabethans saw time as a purely negative force. A few amplified the conception of it implicit in *Everyman,* as the necessary medium or moral growth and fulfillment, the dimension through which the underlying logic of man's spiritual experience is progressively revealed and his final deliverance achieved.

O Time, thou must untangle this, not I: It is too hard a knot for me to untie.

For the most profound interpretation of time in all its aspects among the Elizabethans we must look, of course, to Shakespeare.

Source: David Kaula, "Time and Timeless in *Everyman* and *Dr. Faustus*" in *College English,* Vol. 22, No. 1, October, 1960, pp. 9-14.

Critical Essay #3

In this 1901 anonymous review, the critic offers a mixed appraisal of a production ofEveryman *by the Elizabethan Stage Society*.

To Mr. William Poel, the secretary and originator of the Elizabethan Stage Society, we are indebted for some quaint and edifying illustrations of our early stage. None of the previous experiments has had quite the value and interest of the performance given last Saturday afternoon under the shade of the venerable walls of the Charterhouse. The place was admirably suited to the entertainment, which consisted of the anonymous morality of 'Everyman' and the scene of the interrupted 'Sacrifice of Isaac' from the 'Histories of Lot and Abraham,' which is the fourth of the Chester miracle plays. That the scene was better suited than the court of Fulham Palace, which witnessed Ben Jonson's 'Sad Shepherd,' or than the halls of the various Inns of Court which have been placed at the Society's disposal, may not perhaps be said. The environment was, however, in keeping with the action, and the two were so harmonious that it became easy to conceive the mimic performance real, and to believe that we were spectators of, and almost participants in, a great historical tragedy. Tragedy indeed, in its naive simplicity and uncompromising sincerity, *'Everyman'* is□that "tragedy to those who feel" which is our general lot, the great unending problem of life, responsibility, and death. There are many points from which the entertainment may be regarded, and from all it is significant. The first thing that strikes one is that the primitive drama, which seems so dull and didactic, may well have passioned our forefathers□is, indeed, capable of passioning us; the second that this particular piece, played no better and no worse than on the occasion it was, is capable, when its merits are known, of attracting all London and becoming the "sensation" of a season. Temptations to ridicule presented themselves, and the smile rose occasionally to the lips. It died there, and sank before the absolute sincerity of the whole. Amusement never degenerated into mockery.

What are the obligations of the English dramatist to the 'Elckerlijk' assigned to Peter Dorland of Diest, the Belgian mystic, the author of the 'Viola Animæ,' or to the 'Barlaam and Josaphat' of John of Damascus, we are unable to say. After the delivery of a species of prologue by a messenger, the scene, like that of' Festus' or of one of Goethe's prologues to ' Faust,' opens in heaven with a speech from God, described in the programme by the Hebrew name Adonai, complaining of the lewdness of life of men and their neglect of His worship. Death then approaches, and is told to bid Everyman to his final pilgrimage. Everyman comes capering to his lute in festive garb and singing to his mistress. Having received from Death his instruction to prepare for immediate departure, he seeks by bribery to obtain a respite. When this effort is vain he summons Fellowship, Kindred, and Goods or Wealth; but though ready enough to accompany him to scenes of debauch or even aid him in a murder, they refuse to accompany him on so grievous a journey. Good Deeds is so weak she can neither stand nor crawl. She is none the less helpful, and brings to him her sister Knowledge, by whom he is led to Confession. By means of penance he is then prepared for death; and after he has received the sacraments he dies penitent and pardoned, deserted by his former

associates Strength, Beauty, Discretion, and Five Wits, but supported by Good Deeds, whose strength and stature are augmented, and by Knowledge.

The presentation was naturally naïve. Adonai was shown as an elderly man with a curling grey beard. Death had no scythe, but had, as in some illustrations we recall, a drum and a trumpet. He had also, it may incidentally be mentioned, a strong Scotch accent. Everyman, who was admirably played by a woman, was a bright and dapper youth in the opening scenes, and in the later presented a tragic figure. Designs for the dresses are supplied on the title-page of an edition of the morality printed by Skot, and are given in facsimile in the first volume of Hazlitt's 'Dodsley.' In preference to these, Mr. Poel has taken others from Flemish tapestries of the early fifteenth century. Whencesoever obtained, they were admirable, and the entertainment was lifelike and impressive.

No less interesting was the short scene of the attempted sacrifice of Isaac, the rhymed verses of which were well delivered. In short, we may say that a performance casting a welcome light upon the conduct of the liturgical drama is this day repeated in the court of the Charterhouse, and those who care to witness an entertainment unique in its kind are counselled to take an opportunity that most probably will not recur.

Source: Anonymous, review of *Everyman* in the *Athenaeum,* July 20, 1901, pp. 103.

Topics for Further Study

Everyman is an morality play. Discuss how morality plays influenced Renaissance dramas, especially those of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare. You might consider either *Dr. Faustus* or *Macbeth* as examples of later morality plays.

In what way are all the characters of *Everyman* allegorical?

If you were staging this play, how would you costume the characters? Would you consider modern dress, something from science fiction, or do you think medieval costuming would work best? Be prepared to defend your choice as important to increasing the audience's understanding of the play.

Research the development of medieval morality plays in England.

Considering the roots of medieval morality plays like *Everyman,* why do you think they remain popular today? How or why does sixteenth-century religious drama speak to a modern need for religion in man's life?

Compare *Everyman* to another readily available morality play like *The Second Shepherd's Play*. What can such plays tell us about medieval life?

It is thought that the tenets of modern civilization have their roots in early drama. What modern values and beliefs can you identify in the ideas presented in *Everyman?*

Compare and Contrast

1495: Henry VII is king of England. Catholicism is still the religion of the country and will remain so for the next thirty years.

Today: Because of a bloody history of oppression and suppression, anti-Catholic feelings in Great Britain have remained high since the mid-sixteenth century when Mary I had Protestants burned at the stake.

1495: The Black Death (also known as the Plague), continues to claim lives. The death toll has decreased from the fourteenth century, when one-third of Europe's population died from the disease. Still, thousands will die from the Plague over the next few years.

Today: The Plague is almost non-existent in England, although it still exists in some areas of the world. Even the American Southwest records deaths from the disease each year.

1495: The Spanish Inquisition continues to persecute all "heretics" (those who disagree with Catholic doctrine) with religious zeal. Many are put to death for questioning the church.

Today: Religious belief is still a significant cause of warfare and death in many countries. In Ireland, Protestants and Catholics have begun a fragile peace. In the Middle East, religious zealotry continues to fuel terrorist actions.

1495: Exploration of the New World has continued since Christopher Columbus's voyages in 1492. In the next year, England will send the first of its explorers, John Cabot, to claim land in England's name.

Today: Modern explorers are now heading into space. Often dubbed "the final frontier," space is now the region humankind is examining for possible habitation and resources.

1495: A year earlier, the first English paper mills opened. This, combined, with the new moveable type presses, means that more books can be printed for at a significantly reduced cost. The movement toward literacy in England has begun.

Today: Although it was earlier prophesied that computers and the Internet would mean the end of printed materials, books, magazines, and newspapers continue to enjoy a huge audience. Many publications are flourishing as both print and electronic media.

What Do I Read Next?

The Second Shepherd's Play is one of two nativity plays that has survived from the medieval period. Both the author and the exact date of publication are unknown, but this mystery play is thought to date from the mid-fifteenth century. Like *Everyman,* it is a good example of the religious influence on early European drama.

The Chester Pageant of Noah's Flood is another early English mystery play. It dates from the mid-fifteenth century and was so popular that it was still being performed late into the sixteenth century.

The York Cycle of the Creation and the Fall of Lucifer is one of the earliest mystery plays. Like many other medieval dramas, the author is unknown and the exact date of publication is also undiscovered.

Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* is an Elizabethan example of how morality plays influenced the drama of the late-sixteenth century. Archetype characters, though more developed than in morality plays, are still easily recognizable in this play.

The Chester Pageant of the Harrowing of Hell could easily serve as a model for the last scene in *Dr. Faustus*. The descent of Christ into hell was a popular medieval legend that appeared in many of the mystery plays.

Further Study

Fifield, Merle. *The Castle in the Circle,* Ball State University Press, 1967.

Fifield studies the staging of morality plays. He also offers a staging of the play using medieval production information.

Munson, William. "Knowing and Doing in *Everyman"* in the *Chaucer Review,* Vol. 19, no. 3, 1985, pp. 252-71.

Munson argues that one of *Everyman's* primary points is the assertion that struggle is as important to man as knowledge.

Speaight, Robert. *"Everyman* and Euripides" in his *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival,* Heinemann, 1954.

Speaight describes Poel's production of *Everyman* and discusses his problems with the play's theology.

Thomas, Helen S. "The Meaning of the Character Knowledge in *Everyman"* in the *Mississippi Quarterly,* Vol. XIV, no. 1, Winter, 1960-61, pp. 3-13.

Thomas argues that Knowledge is a "wisdom figure whose function it was to counsel Everyman wisely."

Van Dyke, Carolyn. "The Intangible and Its Image: Allegorical Discourse and the Cast of Everyman" in *Acts of Interpretation, The Texts in Its Contexts 700-1600: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Literature in Honor ofE. Talbot Donaldson,* edited by Mary J. Carruthers and Elizabeth D. Kirk, Pilgrim, 1982, pp. 311-24.

Going against the majority opinion, Van Dyke argues that the characters in *Everyman* go beyond simple archetypes to create realistic, individual characters.

Bibliography

Anonymous. Review of *Everyman* in the *Athenaeum,* July 20, 1901, p. 103.

Barnet, Sylvan, editor. *Types of Drama: Plays and Contexts,* Longman, 1997, pp. 149-51, 182-85.

Cary, Elizabeth Luther. Review of *Everyman* in the *Critic,* January, 1903. pp. 43-45.

Garner, Stan ton B. Jr. "Theatricality in *Mankind* and *Everyman"* in *Studies in Philology,* Vol. 84, no. 3, Summer, 1987, pp. 277-85.

Montague, C. E. Review of *Everyman* in the *Manchester Guardian,* November 1, 1902; reprinted in *William Poel andthe Elizabethan Revival,* by Robert Speaight, Heinemann, 1954. pp. 162-63.

Peek, George S. "Sermon Themes and Sermons Structure in *Everyman"* in the *South Central Bulletin,* Vol. 40, no. 4, Winter, 1980, pp. 159-60.

Tanner, Ron. "Humor in *Everyman* and the Middle English Morality Play" in *Philological Quarterly,* Vol. 70, no. 2, Spring, 1991, pp. 149-61.

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Drama for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Drama for Students (DfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, DfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of DfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of DfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in DfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by DfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

DfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Drama for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Drama for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Drama for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from DfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from DfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Drama for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Drama for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Drama for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535