عرض أهمية الفارس الأخضر في "السير جاوين والفارس الأخضر"

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الملخص:

تبحث هذه الورقة البحثية عن دور وأهمية شخصية الفارس الأخضر في العمل الأدبي "السير جاوين والفارس الأخضر". هذه القصيدة كتبها كاتب مجهول، يُعرف غالبًا باسم شاعر اللؤلؤ أو شاعر جاوين. ينتمي هذا العمل إلى أدب العصور الوسطى، وتحديدًا لأواخر القرن الرابع عشر. مخطوطة هذه القصيدة بقيت في نسخة واحدة، بعنوان "كوتون نيرو أ. س"، و محفوظة في الجامعة البريطانية. كما ورد في نيميكايوفا (26)، يشير نيتز إلى أن هذا العمل الأدبي هو "سرد معقد مليء بالعناصر الخيالية المثيرة، ولغة وصفية حية، وبنية شعرية مقنعة، وشخصيات معقدة ومثيرة للاهتمام، وعمق أخلاقي يجعله نادرا يُنسب إلى الرومانسية" (351). يعتبر "السير جاوين والفارس الأخضر" قصيدة روائية عن شهامة الفرسان، حيث إنها تنتمي إلى أسطورة الملك آرثر. يُقدم الشاعر المجهول خصمه، الفارس الأخضر، من خلال مفارقة ناول فيها الشخصية في قالب متناقض. في الأدب، عادةً ما يكون الفرسان المتميزون مثاليين، ولكن من خلال هذا العمل المُكلَّف به، يبدو أن بطل الرواية، السير جاوين، يرتكب الأخطاء كأي إنسان. لهذا يُمثِّل الفارس الأخضر اختبارًا لفضائل جاوين، وهو اختبار أخلاقي يكشف فيه عن عيوب هذه الشخصية. لذلك، يُقرّ الفارس الأخضر بأنه لا يوجد فارس كامل، فالرجال العظماء يخطئون أيضًا. باختصار، تُصوَّر علاقة الفارس الأخضر والسير جاوين كشخصين: المُختَبِر والمُختَبَر؛ علاوة على ذلك، يُجسّد الخصم انعكاسا لشخصية البطل، وكلاهما يكشفان عن التوترات الكامنة وراء مجد الملك آرثر.

The Presentation and the Importance of the Green Knight in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"

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This paper investigates the role and the significance of the Green Knight character in the literary work, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. This poem is written by anonymous author; he is often referred as Pearl Poet or Gawain Poet. This work belongs to the medieval literature, specifically the late 14th century. The manuscript of this poem is survived as a single copy, Cotton Nero A.x., housed in the British University. As cited in Nemeckayova (26), Nitze indicates that this literary work is a"complex narrative full of exciting fantastical elements, vivid descriptive language, compelling poetic structure, complex and interesting characters, and a moral depth rarely credited to romance" (351). However, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is considered as a chivalric romance which belongs to the Arthurian legend. The anonymous poet introduces his antagonist, the Green knight, through a paradox in which the character is portrayed in a contradictory mold. Generally; in literature, extraordinary knights are always tend to be perfect, but throughout the assigned work, the protagonist, Sir Gawain appears to commit mistakes as any human being. Thus, the Green Knight serves to test Gawain's virtues, a moral test in which he reveals the flaws of such a character. Therefore, the Green Knight would approve that approve that no knight is perfect, great men have sin too. In brief, the relationship between the Green Knight and Sir Gawain is brief shown as the tester and the tested; moreover, the antagonist mirrors the protagonist, they both reveal the tensions beneath Arthurian glory.

The hero of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* volunteers to challenge the Green Knight in order to save the life and the fame of King Arthur and his court. On one hand, the Green Knight plays a very important role in showing Gawain's character. As Stone mentions in his introduction

to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, "So it is worth emphasizing that the main reason for the existence of the Green Knight and all his works associates is that the hero may be tested, and he may reveal his true self in his behavior while under the threat of death" (19). On the other hand, the Green Knight shows to the reader that the knight, Gawain, is not always an ideal character. However, the Green Knight is presented as both a supernatural figure and a human. Throughout the poem, the poet shifts the character of the Green Knight: once as a green man, and the other as a normal person. Both of those characters share and differ from each other in terms of appearance and behavior.

In over ninety lines, the Gawain poet describes the action of the Green Knight's entrance into Camelot. The poet gives a carefully detailed portrait of the way the Green knight dressed and looked. On the contrary, Gawain is not presented in a very detailed description. Being a well-known figure in the medieval literature could be the reason for not describing him. Therefore, the poet only focuses on the creation of the Green Knight and there is no need to describe Gawain because he "came to him fully formed by the tradition" (Benson: 95). However, although the reader, King Arthur, and his knights are familiar with the Green Knight's features, his real identity is ambiguous and the reason could be, as Benson mentions, "the plot requires that the challenger be a mysterious character" (58-59).

The description of the Green Knight starts "as if it were to be the usual romance portrait," (Benson: 59) from head-to-toe:

> There hurtles in at the hall-door an unknown rider,
> One the greatest on ground in growth of his fame:
> From broad neck to buttocks so bulky and thick,
> And his loins and his legs so long and so great,
> Half a giant on earth I hold him to be, (136-40)

In these lines, the Green Knight is nearly a monster, but in the following lines the reader sees him as a handsome man:

> But believe him no less than the largest of men,

And that the seemliest in his stature to see, as he rides,
For in back and in breast though his body was grim,
His waist in its width was worthily small
And formed with every feature in fair accord
was he. (141-45)

This alternating between the ugliness and beauty continues throughout the description of the Green Knight. After these lines, the reader learns that the Green Knight is completely green. Then, the poet turns again to present him as an attractive figure, after that he describes the head of the Green Knight as a monstrously bearded person. Consequently, the poet shifts his focus from the description of the Green Knight to the description of his weapon, which is also described in two different ways: Once as a terrifying equipment, "a huge and immense" (208), and as a nice work of art, which is inscribed with "goodliest work" and decorated with lace (216). Also, the poet gives other contradictory signals when he says, "Half a giant on earth I hold him to be, / But believe him no less than the largest of men," so the reader, at first, does not know if the Green Knight is a human or a giant. Therefore, there is a contradiction in the presentation of the Green Knight's, so "it is impossible to visualize a coherent figure of the challenger" (Benson: 61).

The last item the poet describes regarding the Green Knight is his axe. The Green Knight gives his axe as a gift to the knight who will behead him. His offer meets silence. This reaction by the court, they "kept its counsel" (307), makes the Green Knight inquire about their fame:

"What, is this Arthur's house," said that horseman then,
"Whose fame is so fair in far realms and wide?
Where is now your arrogance and your awesome deeds,
Your valor and your victories and your vaunting words? (309-120)

The Green Knight claims that their failure to answer his questions proves them as cowards. Then, Gawain steps forth and accepts the Green Knight's challenge. By taking the axe and beheading the Green Knight,

King Arthur asks Gawain to "hang up your ax" (477), he wants the horrible object to be safely removed. Kathryn points out that, "metaphorically speaking" the axe "hangs over Gawain throughout the poem" (14). Wall in ""The Axe in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," clarifies that the only critic who discusses the axe's significance is Joseph Longo. In his interpretation of the poem focusing on Gawain as a Christian Everyman, he suggests that the axe echoes John the Baptist's words in Mathew 3.10: "And also the axe is laid to the root of the trees: every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down" (75). Unlike the girdle, the significance of the axe has not been interpreted by the poet. However, A. H. Krappe says that the appropriateness of axe to the Green Knight is "the only deathless executioner known, Death itself" (208). R. E. Shoaf notes that New Year's Day, the day of the Green Knight's arrival at the court of king Arthur, is the day of the Feast of the Circumcision, the association of the axe and the knife. But, as Kathryn notes, Krappe and Shoaf have been unable to illustrate "why the Green Knight's implement is not scythe" (14). Thus, the significance of the Green Knight's axe is ambiguous like his presentation at the beginning of the poem.

The strangest thing in the Green Knight's appearance is his greenness. The color green in medieval literature has many different interpretations. For example, Stone implies that the green man is a personification of spring. Also, it is a symbol of youth when it is linked to gold. Moreover, Benson in *Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, says that the Green Knight and the character, Youth, in *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, share the same features like their green appearance and their interest in fighting.

According to Benson, the color green represents five things: First, it could represent the "fiend" and Gawain's pentangle is evidence as a protection against the evil spirits. Moreover, Stone regards the Green Knight as 'the common enemy of man' because he thinks that he "resembles the kind of devil who tempts within the system and on behalf of God, like Satan in the Book of Job; he knows what good and evil are" (117).

Second, green is the color of death, so the Green Knight himself may signify death in terms of Gawain's fear to meet him. Third, it represents rebirth because in one later romance the hero is saved from death by green liquor that makes his complexion green. Forth, green is a symbol of love because of its association with spring. In the romances there are "Maying" knights and ladies who are dressed in green clothes, which are beautified with flowers. Fifth, it is the color of nature and vegetation, the poet emphasizes this relation throughout the poem. First by the description of the Green Knight: the beard like a bush, his movement like lightning, then by the accounts of Bertilak's interest in hunting and finally by the Green Chapel where Gawain says, "Well may the grim man mantled in green" (2191).

Another important medieval theological reference to green, according to Stone, is as the color of truth. He concludes this from the first great English morality play, *The Castle of Perseverance*, "The iiii daughters shall be clad in mantles, Mercy in white, Righteousness in red altogether. Truth in sad green…" (Eccles: 1). This play was written at the end of the Fourteen century, a few years after the poem: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Throughout the poem, Gawain's main concern is truth, although "pursuit of it naturally involves him in the defense of other virtues such as courtesy, generosity, loyalty, moderation, bravery, and chastity" (Stone: 131). Furthermore, the pentangle is also a sign of truth, "To be a token of truth, by its title of old" (626). Stone illustrates the connection between the pentangle and truth as following:

It is worth emphasizing the 'fiveness' of the multiple concept of 'truth': the five wits and five fingers make up the spiritual and physical human self which can practice virtue or vice; the five wounds of Christ and the five joys of the Virgin stand for heaven's grace and power in man's moral and spiritual life and the 'pure five' virtues make up the 'truth'…this complex 'truth' has the special significance of being established as the knight's symbol and motto immediately before he sets out on his quest. It will therefore remain the central concern of the adventures and of the poem itself. (Stone: 131)

In fact, the interpretations of the color green, which are mentioned above, are not connected. For example, death and love are completely different; hence, green as a symbol of truth seems the best signification in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. However, the Gawain poet is very clever in applying the color green, he makes the reader wonder whether green implies good or evil. It is a technique used in order to add suspense and pleasure to the poem. At the very beginning, Gawain thinks that the Green Knight is a fiend, "Now I feel it is the Fiend, in my five wits," but towards the end when the latter leans on his axe and chuckles at the former, Sir Gawain realizes that the Green Knight is a friend not a fiend (2193). Furthermore, Benson suggests that the green skin of the Green Knight helped the Gawain poet solve his most difficult problem in the creation of the Green Knight, who combines two different figures as the wild man and the green man.

The presentation of the Green Knight's appearance resembles the giant in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*. Like Gawain who describes the Green Knight as a fiend, King Arthur also characterizes the giant as a fiend, "The Fiend have your soul!" (1061). The following lines are the description of the giant in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure:*

> And darkly splotched as the skin of a frog:
> He was hooknosed as a hawk, with a hoary beard,
> Haired to the very eyeholes with hanging brows;
> Rough as a houndfish, as anyone could have seen,
> Was the whole dark hide of that hulk, from end to end.
> Enormous ears he had and ugly to view.
> His eyes were terrible and burned like fire; (1080-86)

Although the giant is not green, there is a reference to the color of his skin by mentioning the frog. He is also fierce in manner and crowned with the beard and hair, "His beard was bristly and black and stretched to his breast" (1089). Also, the eyes of the giant are compared to fire, which are similar to the red eyes of the Green Knight, "And roisterously his red eyes he rolled all

about" (304). Robert B. White in his "A Note on the Green Knight's Red Eyes", states that the Green Knight's red eyes have been traced back to any significant motifs in the folklore and mythology of prehistory. White explains further that the color red in the early literature was associated with blood, cruelty, and violence. He points out that all of the Green Knight's courage and manliness are indicated by his red eyes, which make the hesitation of Arthur and his knights even more understandable.

After Gawain's departure from Camelot, he arrives at the castle where the other identity of the Green Knight lives. During Gawain's journey, Benson thinks, he starts to act a bit more like the Gawain of tradition than the ideal knight of the Pentangle. Furthermore, Stone implies that Gawain perceives the castle as the direct result of a Christian prayer that he might do proper service to God on the following day, Christmas day. Bertilak, the host, has a fiery face with a thick, gray-black beard and solid, strong legs. But, his speech to Gawain reveals him as gracious and gentle; furthermore, his wife "embodies the beauty of the Green Knight's portrait" (Benson: 94). She is beautiful, but her husband is not. Hence, it is like the principle of alternation between the ugliness and the beauty of the Green Knight. Moreover, Prior in *The Pearl Poet Revisited*, says that the set of parallels and contrasts does not only apply to the figures and motif, but it also organizes the plot of the poem. However, the duality of the green man emphasizes his complexity in this poem by presenting him in two different personalities.

In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, there are three main themes: First, the beheading game, the main plot, depends on keeping their word ; second, the temptation where Bertilak's wife seduces Gawain in order for her husband may have power over him; and finally, the exchange of winnings, in which Bertilak gives Gawain what he hunts. Thus, all of these themes are connected to each other and "the framework of the whole poem becomes a game of truth" (Stone: 13). Both the temptations and the exchange of winnings function as humorous parallels, but the latter game contrasts with the former in terms of aggressiveness and intensity. Bertilak

hunts three different animals: deer, bear, and fox. These three victims represent, as Stone highlights, the Flesh, the Devil, and the World. However, "the animals hunted suggest those qualities which Gawain must conquer—timidity, ferocity, and cunning" (Howard: 171).

In addition to the Green Knight's role, the presentation of his wife and Morgan is also very important, as Fisher notes that the real power behind the romance is Morgan and its main active player is Bertilak's lady. Stone indicates that in romance, there are two kinds of woman who declare their desire openly. The first kind is the lady who falls in love with a knight and she vows service to him. The other one is the woman who wants to distract the knight from a quest in which "loss of his chastity would be fatal to success, and so appeals directly to his lust" (119). However, the presence of the two ladies' characters shows the reader that "a romance castle can be more complex place than the idyllic Camelot" (Benson: 101).

In the third part, the alternating hunting scenes and bedroom scenes parallel one another. For both Gawain and the hunters, the danger each day increases. Thus, the three days spent in the host's castle with the lady is the real test for Gawain. In fact, During Gawain's stay at Bertilak's castle, he feels secure in his reputation as a famous knight, even the lady acknowledges that, "Sir Gawain you are, / Whom all the world worships, whereso you ride; / Your honor, your courtesy are the highest acclaimed" (1226-28). Later on, he starts to feel less secure and the lady begins to doubt his identity, "But our guest is not Gawain" (1293). However, in the three hunting scenes, Bertilak seems to be very strong and fearless, whereas in his castle, he acts like a child. However, "without the haunting scenes, one might assume Bercilak to be merely some sort of a fool, a pawn in the hands of Morgan la Faye, to be lord of the castle in name only" (Roney: 33-34).

The third day seems very different from the other two days in terms of how the hostess behaves with Gawain and the host's final hunt. On this day, the temptation "shifts from a simple trial of continence to a more complex testing of Gawain's famous courtesy" (Benson: 220). Moreover,

the lady's flirtation has become morally dangerous and it resembles the scene of a hunter who chases his prey. Her husband hunts a fox, which is generally a decisive creature and this victims refers to Gawain's disloyalty to his host. Benson says that Bertilak's capture of the fox is related to his final capture of Gawain.

Stones compares this hunting scene to the last bedside conversations between the hostess and Gawain and "fox and knight seem like to have escaped…Bertilak's disgust with the fox's skin parallels the savour of Gawain's little deception in concealing the gift of the girdle" (17). Hence, by hiding the girdle under his armor, Gawain is no longer the perfect knight who "was Gawain in good works" (633).

In Gawain's journey to the Green Chapel, there is no hardship and danger from beasts, so his fear is not physical; rather, it is spiritual. The guide tries to persuade Gawain to flee from the Green Knight's land—Gawain does not actually flee. So, the guide is offering Gawain the chance to escape, "To conceal this day's deed, nor say to a soul / that ever you fled for fear from that I knew" (2124-25). This resembles the lady's offer when she asks him to hide the green girdle, "And besought him for her sake to conceal it well, / Lest the noble lord should know—and the knight agrees" (1862-63). The guide plays the role of a tester because he does his best to scare Gawain in order to make him fail another test, which is keeping his word to the Green Knight. Fortunately, Gawain does not pay attention to the guide's speech and insists to go to the Green Chapel. Benson points out that in order for Gawain to be completely tested, the plot needs an episode that has the same relation to the first agreement as the lady's temptation has to his bargain with the host. Thus, the scene between the Gawain and his guide is such an episode.

Many critics argue that the guide is really the Green Knight in disguise. Benson claims that the poet's later designation of the guide suggests that "Gawain's tempter is Bercilak in another shape" (230). In fact, the poem fails to explain his role, just like the ambiguity of Morgan le Fay's hatred for Guinevere. However, Delany indicates that both of the

Green Knight and the guide have the same manner of speech— "a mixture of boorishness and joviality—and both are dashing horsemen" (228). The following lines present the resemblance between the Green Knight and the guide. When the Green Knight leaves Arthur's court, he says:

With a roisterous rush he flings round the reins,
Hurtles out at the hall-door, his head in his hand,
That the flint-fire flew from the flashing hooves. (457-59)

When the guide abandons Sir Gawain, he says:

He tarried no more to talk, but turned his bridle,
Hit his horse with his heels as hard as he might,
Leaves the knight alone, and off like the wind
goes leaping. (2152-55)

However, the guide offers comedy in the poem. His temptation is insensitively humorous, "Go off by some other, in God's own name! / Leave by some land, for the love of Christ" (2118-19); on the other hand, Gawain ruins the guide's joke by replying in outraged tone:

Though he be a quarrelsome knave
With a cudgel great and grim,
The lord is strong to save:
His servants trust in Him. (2136-39)

After that, Gawain calls forth God's aid against the Green Knight. The real reason why the guide shows such scorn, as Delany assumes, is that he knows about Gawain's hidden girdle and "objects to Gawain's self-righteous invocation of Divine Providence" (233). But, does he really trust in God? Delany thinks that hiding the girdle does not make it wrong to invoke God's protection. Gawain does not consider himself as sinful because he does not admit his sin to the priest.

There is a parallel description of the castle and the Green Chapel and of Gawain's journey to those two places. In addition, when he leaves Camelot, the poet describes his armor and his shield. And, when he leaves

the castle and goes to the Green Chapel, the poet describes his armor and the green lace.

Again, the contradiction occurs. The alternation of ugliness and beauty is found in the poet's description of the castle and the Green chapel. The castle is very beautiful, whereas the Green chapel is not. When Gawain arrives at the Green Chapel, the Green Knight welcomes him as the host does in his castle. At this time the lady of the castle is not with them, but her presence is felt as long as Gawain wears the green girdle. However, the Green Knight heaves his axe and brings it down, but Gawain shrinks, so the blow is interrupted. His shrinking, as Benson notes, leads him to a new development. The Green Knight says:

You are not Gawain the glorious,
That never fell back on field in the face of the foe,
And now you flee for fear, and have felt no harm:
Such news of that knight I never heard yet! (2270-73)

Thus, Gawain is not the knight who the poet introduces at the beginning of the poem.

The Green Knight cuts Gawain's neck and he wants him to bear it bravely as he did at Camelot but our knight does not get that. As with other tests, Gawain does not realize the nature of his tests. Each test shifts from physical to "a more abstract plane" (Benson: 233). The second time, the Green Knight raises his axe and Gawain "stood still as a stone, or else a stout stump (2293), but the blow is withheld and the reason according to Benson is "to goad Gawain into the mode of conduct this natural imagery implies" (234). So, by doing this, Gawain passes the test of bravery. In the third time, the Green Knight hurts Gawain's neck. But, why does the former hit the latter for the third time? Maybe because Gawain in the third day cheats his host, so the Green Knight wants to punish him by nicking his neck.

Benson notes that Gawain's new personality becomes more obvious when the blow falls. When Gawain sees his blood on the snow, the poet switches the way of designing the hero that he has used in the guide's

episode. The poet starts to use the same vocabulary for Gawain as he uses for the Green Knight. As Benson mentions many critics have claimed that Gawain feels as if he has undergone a type of rebirth, a new beginning to life. Two of the green color's symbols are death and rebirth. Although those symbols are different from each other, they may imply that Gawain who commits a mistake, concealing the green girdle, has died not physically but he learns his lesson and of course he will not be that cunning Gawain again. As the Green Knight says, "As you had free of fault since first you were born" (2394). Thus, wearing the green girdle as a reminder of his sin shows the readers that we have a new Gawain as if he was born again. In other words, it is the death of his old personality and the birth of his new one.

The Green Knight tells Gawain that he knows about the girdle, its story, and the kisses. Then, the Green Knight excuses him for his fault and says:

> So is Gawain , in good faith, to other gay knights.
> Yet you lacked, sir, a little in loyalty there,
> But the cause was not cunning, nor courtship either,
> But that you loved your own life; the less, then, to blame. (2365-68)

Gawain confesses his fault to the Green Knight and tells him that he has learned from his cut, "Your cut taught me cowardice, care for my life" (2379). Gawain realizes that disloyalty and lying are not the traits of a good knight. So, he learns "something about the knighthood and himself. The "fol chevalier" has become wiser through the initiation into a broader life than knighthood comprehends" (Benson: 239).

The falling action of the poem is when the Green Knight reveals his real identity to Gawain. He tells Gawain that his name is Bertilak de Hautdester and Morgan le Fay, who is his aunt and Arthur's half-sister, is the one behind the entire story. Morgan is a complex character. Haines points out that neither Bertilak nor the poet himself knows if she is malevolent or benevolent. She is powerful and uses magic. Her role is

testing the knight's virtue by using both Bertilak and his wife. Moreover, his wife, as Haines notes, may not be that friendly with the old woman because she "led her by the left hand" (947), and "this side always associated with fairy powers in this poem" (148). So, the lady protects herself by using her left hand. However, Haines goes further and suggests that may be Gawain needs only to blame himself and Morgan is innocent.

At the end, both of the reader and Gawain realize that the Green Knight is gentle. He calls Gawain "good friend" and invites him to his house. Even Bertilak's manner of speech shifts to formal and he starts to call him sir after he gives him the girdle. However, Gawain refuses to Bertilak's invitation and then he adds:

> And commend me to that comely one, your courteous wife,
> Both herself and the other, my honored ladies,
> That have trapped their true knight in their trammels so quaint. (2411-13)

Gawain asks Bertilak to commend the lady, after that he includes the old woman. Kinney in "The Best Book of Romance: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," suggests that "the relative clause which qualifies 'both'makes the old lady and the young suddenly co-partners in the deceiving of Gawain" (460). Kinney goes further and explains that Gawain assumes that even the older woman is one of the Green Knight's tricks. After the Green Knight mentions his name, he introduces the name and the story of the old woman as if he wants to show Gawain that he is not guilty and it is all Morgan's trickery. However the syntax of lines (2446-62), as Kinney suggests, is clumsy and the narrative is not clear. Moreover, Bertilak begins to move into "a series of paratactic explanatory asides, and there is no real closure to the wheel of the stanza" (462). Although those lines add suspense to the poem, Gawain does not pay attention to what has been said by the Green Knight. In other words, the poet does not include Gawain's reaction after he hears the story oh his aunt. Also, when he goes back to the court, he tells

King Arthur and his knights what happens to him in the castle and the Green chapel, but he does not mention anything about Morgan.

Morgan's role helps the reader to know the identity and the role of the Green Knight and the motif of Gawain's test. Carson in "Morgain la Fée as the Principle of Unity in Gawain and the Green Knight," thinks that the lady is Morgan, and when the hostess offers her ring to Gawain, R.S Loomis suggests that Morgan is giving her magic ring, which depends on tradition. There is an indication that "in Celetic and Celtic-influenced folklore, those fees who derived from Morgain also give rings to their lovers" So the two roles are played by her. Thus, Morgan uses the Green Knight as a tool to get what she wants.

Benson indicates that, "the most trying of all Gawain's humiliations at the Green Chapel is the fact that the Green Knight refuses to take him seriously" (240). Gawain is the one who takes it seriously. When he comes back to Camelot with regret and tells his sad story to King Arthur and his knights, they start to laugh whereas he does not join in the laughter. Both of the Green Knight and the court's laughter show, as Benson says, that Gawain has learned from his adventure that chivalry takes itself a bit too seriously.

In conclusion, at the beginning of the poem Gawain has been presented as a superman, a knight of the pentangle, but at the end he turns out to be a human. Gawain is a man who has "his own weakness, but the poet is on his side" (Bloomfield: 50). However, Gawain's disloyalty towards his host, his confusion over whether to maintain his chastity and courtesy, and his shaking in the first blow of the Green Knight reveal him to be an imperfect knight. Benson suggests that Gawain "is the one hero in romance who is famous for his conventional faults as for his virtues and who comes near perfection but never attains it" (107). Additionally, the Green Knight plays an important role in revealing the personality of the hero of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. First, when the former comes to Arthurs's court and asks about who is going to behead him, Gawain accepts it. So, the reader believes that Gawain is brave. Second, when Gawain

stays in Bertilak's castle, Gawain appears to be loyal except the third day. Thus, Gawain commits a mistake as any human does. Third, in the first blow of the Green Knight, he shakes and is afraid and in the second blow, he does not move. Hence, he proves to the reader that he keeps his word as he does with his coming to the Green Chapel. So, it is through the Green Knight, we know who Gawain is.

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