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## Milestones in the English Literature: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Literature in British has been used to shape society for over one thousand and five hundred years ago. The literature has involved different styles of presentation ranging from poems to modern best-selling books. The British Literature study is a journey that starts with a battle on an Anglo-Saxon and is continued by modern writers as they tackle contemporary issues that affect the society. Along the course of the study, one interacts with the works of legendary writers like Robin Hood and King Arthur who are an important part of the British culture due to their power to captivate. A variety of literature pieces have changed the perspective of society and left an influence on the readers. Beowulf, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and Chaucer's Tales are such works that have shaped literature with their unique style where the various audience has been the target and has been used to guide society.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight has participated in literary traditions in a unique manner where most audience would recognize the work instantly. The authors of the middle age used to apply established materials for their work (Joseph, p. 259). This tale can be read as a story of adventures and magic or as a teaching of morals. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight literature is classified into a genre known as romance. The context is not related to love stories as it does in various European languages in Latin especially the Roman Empire. Popular tales have applied romance languages, especially French. Therefore, romance is a tale of adventure that involves knights on a journey to pursue a particular goal. This tale has employed the use of fantasy and magic to bring out different characters and meanings to society. Hardships are represented by battles with monsters and dragons, visits to mysterious places, and trials to break curses and spells. The literature has also used symbolism where beautiful women are used as initiators of an adventure for them to be rescued or be won over by men.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight have used the old English where the alliteration and repetition of consonants have been used to connect the two halves in the poetic lines. The level of sophistication can be overlooked since the poem has structured the stanzas using rhyming words (Joseph, p. 261). The conclusion of alliterative lines is marked with a word or a phrase that comprises two syllables as well as a quatrain which when combined are known as "the bob and wheel". This technique helps to spin the content and the narrative in a complex manner. A sense of suspense is created by this technique that leaves the readers guessing of what will happen in the next episode.

The poem Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is told in four parts. A feature used in ancient folklore and romance, where three narrative strings are connected to bring out a collective meaning. The first narrative is found in the ancient folklore derived from pagan myths that involve agricultural seasons of crop planting and harvesting (Armitage, n.p). The heroes are tempted of their loyalty, honesty, and chastity in the second and third narrative which is a style found in the romance of middle ages. All these three plotlines are separate but connected and intertwine amazingly.

The subject matter used in this poem cuts across society's beliefs and practices that are experienced in everyday life. For instance, we find that there is a narrative of hatred that is

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expressed by Morgan le Fayes towards Arthur and Camelot which is his court (Armitage, n.p). The enemy of the round table who appears as a legend and a sorceress is Arthur's half-sister. Ancient readers knew the role Morgan played in the fall of Camelot. A depiction of the social model of operation is brought out portraying how hatred can result in jealousy and falling of kingdoms.

A historical frame is seen in the second frame of the poem. The myth of Britain's lineage that is found in the city of Troy is used to begin and end the references through Brutus who was the founder of the Trojans (Joseph, p. 269). From these references, we see the root of the Arthurian romance as traditional literature which is old and more elevated as compared to courtly literature where England and Rome were linked in the fourteenth literature. Thus, we can conclude that Sir Gawain and the Green Knight poem presents to us the transfer of culture from classical antiquity to mid-age England. An ironic tone is applied in the poem as well as elevation of the legends that hail from his country and its history, in particular, the Arthurian romance.

The theme of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight comprises an open-ended poem where relativism is its character that allows the reader to enjoy the freedom of choice. This is found from the argument "it is not firmly placed in the perspective of the perspective of absolute values". The argument points out the poem to be transgressive writing in that it counter runs the expectations that stem from pervasive mid-age philosophies in art. Interpretations of the Green Knight are critical and divergent which is interesting to support the reading. John Speirs explains that he saw Green Knight as a god's descendant while L.D Benson describing the same character as a combination of a Green Man and woodwose. The Green Knight is a center of controversy and different people interpret differently the exact meaning of this character. Death, devil, and Christ are all interpretations from different people, hence the theme of the poem has been designed to include all the societal superpower beings where humans have minimal or no power. The knights of Camelot are challenged for a beheading game by the Green Knight. This character can be described as ambivalent. The character is represented as half-giant even though he does not share traits that are associated with giants described in medieval romance. His body is well proportioned and his dress code suggests he belongs to the courtly culture.

In a recap, the poem Sir Gawain and the Green Knight has been used to transfer the culture from classical antiquity to medieval England. British literature has been used to study literature where it has it started with Anglo-Saxon to modern literature. The story has also used adventures and characters with unique characteristics in a creative way. Fantasy in the poem is seen in that the characters do not resemble the normal known giants where they are green in appearance- the Green Knight- while others are a sorceress. The poem structure has been built with alliteration and repetition of consonants to connect the two lines of the poem. Agricultural seasons have been incorporated and mixed with the context to bring out the bigger picture of the social setting. Heroes pass through hardship by having to win battles and adverse adventures to become victors. These are the same hardship that is associated with humans in their struggle to survive. Sir Gawain and the Green Night poem has been a piece that has revealed diverse writing styles that employs different tools in literature in expressing societies' problems.

## Works Cited

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