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The Green Knight (2021)

The 2021 movie rendition of the anonymously-written Sir Gawain and The Green Knight serves in providing a profound take on an ancient tale, but falls short of keeping things interesting throughout. For the most part, it is able to tide you over with its impressive cinematography and score, but has trouble keeping tension without these elements. Many scenes, and even entire characters (did they even audibly say King Arthur's or Excalibur's name?), are needlessly vague, and going into the movie without context is bound to be confusing for the average viewer. The portrayal of the hero's journey in this movie is especially harsh, and only at the very end do we see any sort of change in the main character whatsoever.

After some research, I discovered this film removed some key aspects of the ending of the original tale. In the original, the theme of a knight's chivalry (doing the right thing, essentially) is emphasized through the cloth Sir Gawain receives being a fake magic item as opposed to a real one, and his reluctance to give it up despite promising to upon approaching the (in the original, fake) Green Knight. In this film, the Green Knight is an entirely real and supernatural entity, directly symbolizing nature. As such, the movie's environmental themes vastly overpower those of chivalry, and the changes to the ending essentially changes the message of the film from "do the right thing" to "nature will always catch up with you". I feel, however, it's not the strangest way they could have taken the film, especially considering Tolkein's environmentalist mindset.

Overall, and on a more personal note, I wouldn't say I particularly enjoyed the film. It was loaded with fun symbols, but beyond a couple key scenes, I found Gawain's tale to be a bit of a bore. He had little redeeming qualities to start with, and lusted over literally every woman he came across except for his own mother, a creepy old woman (who, strangely, wore the same blindfold as Gawain's mother wore during her sorcery), and Arthur's wife the queen. Only after envisioning a futile and depressing life did he aspire to do the right thing for the first time, and that "right thing" just so happened to be his death.