“Beowulf” is considered an **epic** poem -

An epic tale is a long narrative poem telling about the deeds of a great hero and reflecting the values of the society from which it originated.

Epics were drawn from oral traditions handed down over many generations - these stories/poems were often recited or sung by professional chroniclers - in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, these men were known as **scops**.

Always, the epic has, as its primary focus, the universal struggle between good and evil - its hero represents all that is pure, noble, and righteous - he is godlike in his strength, status, and courage - his deeds are often superhuman,and his deeds are important in the history or legend of his nation’s people.

Not surprisingly, his adversary is generally also “larger than life” as well!

Beowulf is a member of a tribal group known as the **Geats**, who originated in an area of what is now southern Sweden (refer to the .pdf map shared in class). He is assisting King Hrothgar, a Dane, whose kingdom is located in the Jutish peninsula - an area now known as Denmark. The peoples whom these characters represent are all members of a tribal culture that we usually associate with the Germanic tradition celebrating aggressiveness, warfare, bravery in battle, loyalty to one's chieftain, and a belief in the power of fate, which, in the Anglo-Saxon tradition is called **wyrd**.