

Brittany Smith

Kaylee Graning

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### Beowulf as a Hero, Example, and Warrior

*Beowulf* is one of the oldest text structures in Old English and, perhaps, one of the most popular and valuable, as it describes the life and deeds of the true Anglo-Saxon hero. In the story, Beowulf is an average person, a man of outstanding character who represents his culture through his actions. In this sense, Beowulf exemplifies the Anglo-Saxon hero in his bravery, faithfulness, and noble behavior. Beowulf is an epic hero whose actions reflect the Anglo-Saxon's culture and demonstrate him as an outstanding warrior with great honor.

Beowulf travels to Denmark in an attempt to save the Danes from an evil monster named Grendel who has been terrorizing them for twelve years. Through this brave act, he presents himself as an epic hero who at the end of the battle defeats Grendel and saves the Danes. Beowulf's heroic strength is demonstrated through his barehanded victory against Grendel as well as Grendel's thoughts as soon as they began their battle. "His mind was flooded with fear / Grendel's one thought was to run / From Beowulf, flee back to his marsh and hide there:" (Lines 194-197). The writer uses descriptive words that show the fear Grendel has of Beowulf. Another example of his heroism would be him defeating Grendel's mother who, after Beowulf kills her son, comes searching for him seeking revenge. In this battle, he intends on using his sword, but Grendel's mother has skin that is impenetrable by any man-made weapon.

and swung his sword  
His ring-marked blade, straight at her head;  
The iron sang its fierce song,  
Sang Beowulf's strength. But her guest  
Discovered that no sword could slice her evil  
Skin (391-396).

Beowulf's intentions to use his sword quickly become unrealistic once he discovers that her skin is unable to be torn; he is still able to defeat her only with his bare hands. His brave actions show that he lives mostly to achieve victory and glory.

Beowulf lives his life in hope to achieve Lof the Anglo-Saxon virtue of fame after death.

Just before his battle with Grendel he allows one of his soldiers to be killed by Grendel.

Grendel snatched the first Gaet  
He came to, ripped him apart, cut  
His body to bits with powerful jaws,  
Drank the blood from his veins and bolted  
Him down, hands and feet; death (180-184).

This is a perfect example of wanting to achieve Lof; the sooner others die, the less time there is for that person to complete heroic actions in hopes of achieving this virtue. On the other hand, Beowulf's actions and Grendel's screams place fear in the Danes as explained here,

The sounds changed, the Danes started  
In new terror, cowering in their beds as the terrible  
Screams of the Almighty's enemy sang

In the darkness, the horrible shrieks of pain

And defeat, (224-228).

Although the Danes are now terribly afraid, they still are thankful that Beowulf saved them from the evil monster, Grendel. The strength he uses to end Grendel proves him to be an outstanding warrior capable of great things.

Beowulf is an outstanding warrior with great strength and a brave soul who always strives to save others. He is demonstrated as a great warrior through his several battles against Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon because he won against every one of them. He is named king after defeating Grendel and Grendel's mother which shows the respect the Danes have gained for him.

Beowulf ruled in Geatland,

Took the throne he'd refused, once,

And held it long and well. He was old

With years and wisdom, fifty winters

A king, (468-471)

His actions gained him the respect of everyone in Gaetland. Though he rules over the Danes for fifty years, he still has his bravery and strength. Another monster, a dragon, later comes and Beowulf decides this will be his final battle.

"I've never known fear; as a youth I fought

In endless battles. I am old, now,

But I will fight again, seek fame still,

If the dragon hiding in his tower dares

To face me.” (484-488)

Through his words he still does not show any fear and is still aiming to have the most fame in the afterlife. In the end, he defeats the dragon but suffers the consequences of his gloat and dies.

In *Beowulf*, Beowulf, whose character type is revealed throughout the story as an epic hero, possesses many characteristics of Anglo-Saxon culture that prove him to be an unbelievable warrior. His bravery, commitment, and loyalty to his tribe against all evils make him a real-life legend. Thus, all of Beowulf’s deeds, beginning with fights against Grendel and ending with the fight against beasts, make him a symbol of true heroism.

Works Cited

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