

Introduction instances
feature beowulf
striving to seek



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Introduction

Every character in a play, poem or a film has a strategic role to play allocated to him/her by the playwright or the filmmaker. Therefore, it is upon the novelists or poets to feature a variety of traits to the characters to ensure the manifestation of the intended roles, which on the other hand make the work vivid appearing like a real life situation. In many occasions, readers have identified characters as Heroes, Kings, and pessimists among others, based on the way they stand out in the different works. Sometimes, poets feature more than one trait in the characters, a case that has often made it difficult for readers to identify either or both of the traits. Beowulf is such a character in the poem ' Beowulf', whom the reader might fail to identify whether he passes for an ideal king, hero or probably both or none. Such a case may result depending on the reader's interpretation of the terms hero and king.

According to Arnold, the term hero refers to "...a person noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose, especially one who has risked or sacrificed his or her life" (Para. 1). In addition, any leader will pass for an ideal king based on how well he/she handles the people he/she leads. As the paper unfolds, Beowulf depicts all the aforementioned qualifications of both an ideal king and a hero.

Beowulf: Ideal Hero

The fact that Beowulf values the welfare of his people more than his own passes him for an ideal hero. The opening of the poem confirms this when Beowulf has to travel all the way to Denmark to set the Danes free of the

monster. He sacrifices, not only his time, energy and money, but also his own self only to ensure the safety of the Danes whom he views as his own people. In addition, after having served for fifty years as the Geats' king, the retired old Beowulf realizes that there is a dragon upsetting his people.

Disregarding his age, Beowulf decides to fight the dragon for the sake of his people's security, a job that he successfully does. Further, Beowulf has his people at heart. For instance, despite living in his final days in the deathbed, the man longs for seeing the Geats enjoy safety and hence providing the reason behind the erection of the tall lighthouse that purposely assists the group in locating its way back from the sea.

The achievement of personal magnificence is a sign of an ideal heroism.

Many instances feature Beowulf striving to seek for such an achievement.

For instance, the noise that comes from the drinking spree erected by Hrothgar, the king of Denmark, becomes a tragic disaster to the Danes following the interference it poses to Grendel, the demon. Since none has managed to settle down the problem, Beowulf, as young as he is, believes that he can fight and defeat the demon and thereby gain fame and glory (“Beowulf” Lines 392-393). He does exactly as he says, as he gathers men and targets to sail up to Denmark purposely to fight the demon. The news of this bold step alone gathers him all the splendor and hence a qualified hero. In fact, Gerhard observes, “Beowulf is a Geatish hero who fights monsters, kills dragons, and is said to be the strongest and smartest warrior around” (Para.

1). Another instance that clearly depicts him as an ideal hero is his

inexplicable bravery. Even after realizing that a demon has attacked the

Danes, he sets off fearlessly to fight it with his fellow men. The outcome of <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-instances-feature-beowulf-striving-to-see/>

the fight does not matter much to him. Therefore, whether he will lose, win or die is none of his business. He has all the determination to face the ghost at whichever cost and thus an ideal hero. Beowulf too passes for an ideal hero based on his overwhelming physical strength. He says, " The strength of my body.

Themselves they beheld me when I came from the contest" (" Beowulf" Line 786). His fight with the ghost is just one among the many he has involved himself. As a man of amazing strength, he wins all but the last one. The response from his people as he gathers them to go for the fight clearly depicts him as a hero because they accept with no doubt to follow him since they know very well that he must win the fight.

In addition, the way he kills the demon qualifies him as an ideal hero. He employs no weaponry but rather uses bare hands. In fact, he kills it by ripping off his hands. Further, upon the death of Grendel's mother son, Beowulf fights with the mother who seeks revenge for her son's death and slashes her using a huge sword that can only be lifted by physically strong men like him. Funny enough, the monster's head alone proves too heavy for four men to carry while Beowulf lifts it up and carries it like a light load thus passing for an ideal hero. Another character that qualifies him for ideal hero is his lack of the fear of death. Before going for any war, Beowulf talks about his wishes concerning death. For instance, he wishes to see his assets given to his people if death meets him in the fight.

In fact, he says, " And if death takes me, send the hammered mail of my armor to Higlac and return the inheritance I had from Hrehtel, and from

Wayland. Fate will unwind, as it must” (Garnett 18). He knows the paradox behind heroes that glory has to go to them in their life or in their death, based on their deeds. Therefore, either way is not a worry to him. On their way to fight, he declares that he will either win or die for his people (Arnold Para. 10).

In every encounter with a tough situation, he understands the two possible outcomes: doom or good will.

Beowulf: An Ideal King

Besides being an ideal hero, Beowulf too is an ideal king. One expects an ideal king to ensure the welfare of his people. The entire poem features Beowulf accomplishing this task right from his youth age to his old age. Referring to Beowulf, Gerhard observes, “ His ideal kingship was apparent by his excellent fighting skills as a warrior, his perseverance, leadership, loyalty, and generosity” (Para. 6). In fact, the king received many honors during his kingship, providing the reason as to why he was a king for fifty years.

The poem depicts him as worrier based on the mission he embarks on, of fighting the demon that has attacked the Danes. “ Now Holy God has, in his goodness, guided him here to the West-Danes to defend us from Grendel” (Gerhard Para. 5).

The reader, overwhelmed by his exceptional fighting tactics, will definitely declare him an ideal king. The author, despite his/her concealed identity, makes the reader realize the Beowulf’s strength following his fight with the monster. In fact, he claims to be as dangerous as the demon. Moreover, the issue of imperial munificence held a vital position in the Anglo-Saxon society, <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-instances-feature-beowulf-striving-to-see/>

Beowulf, a member, stands out as devastatingly generous based on his evident sacrifices he offers for his people.

He respects king Hrothgar and even advises him on how he can fight his enemy, Grendel. When kings approach their retiring periods, they concentrate much on issues concerning themselves, leave alone those of others. However, Beowulf is not as such. He has his people at his heart to the level of forgetting his situation. He wishes to die assured of the security of the Danes and hence an ideal king.

Conclusion

The epic poem presents Beowulf as both an ideal king and a hero. He bears all the qualifications of ideal heroes and kings. For instance, as an ideal hero, Beowulf involves himself in fights, all of which he wins apart from one. He has the guts to face and fight a monster that has defeated all the other people who in turn fear it. In addition, he fears nothing including death.

Further, he possesses an extraordinary physical strength that enables him to lift a load that, even four men cannot manage. As an ideal king, Beowulf always has the welfare of his people at his heart. He is quite generous to his people in that he sacrifices to assist them even after retiring despite his old age. The poem, despite its unknown authorship passes for an informative piece of work through the way it exemplifies Beowulf as both an ideal king and a hero.

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