

Example of beowulf literature review

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



Beowulf is an epic Greek poem based on a great hero named Beowulf. It is an epic poem because it emphasizes heroic actions of Beowulf who is the protagonist. The central character struggles between human feelings and heroic ethos in his adventures. It is a universal story of a life's journey from adolescence to adulthood and to old age. Beowulf who is the hero in the poem grows in wisdom through pain and at the end of the epic tale, he triumphs through personal experience. In the poem, Beowulf is portrayed as the hero of the people for saving them from the monster Grendel. He advances from adolescence to adulthood to old age through courage to fight the monster. Beowulf succeeded in taking on the monster Grendel and Grendel's mother in addition to the dragon. Through all of his pain and victory, Beowulf became a more heroic, courageous, and a respected person in the society.

The literary devices used in Beowulf are assonance, kenning, alliteration and caesura. These literary devices contribute to the passage of the poem. In Beowulf, there is a heavy usage of alliteration whereby it is used in almost every line. An example is "The harrowing history haunted the heroes" (Heatt78). This tries to explain how heroes were haunted by history when they were fighting for their people. Another example of alliteration used in Beowulf is "Marshes, and made his home in hell" (Heatt 92). This is used to describe Grendel's home. Grendel's house is described as a hellish place and this creates an image in the reader's mind that Grendel's home is a horrible, dreadful and frightening place. Furthermore, the use of the above alliteration makes Grendel look like a real monster because of the place he stays. The use of alliteration in this passage helps to emphasize what the writer is

trying to describe. Another form of alliteration used in Beowulf is " Bent back as Beowulf leaned up on one arm" (Streissguth, 272). This alliteration was used to show Beowulf's strength. Beowulf used all his strength and power so as to fight the monster Grendel and his mother so as to free the people and the King. He was determined and his courage and strength helped him in becoming victorious at the end even though he was killed by the dragon eventually. Another example of alliteration that is used to show Beowulf's strength is when Beowulf was fighting Grendel and clashes his claw with a one hand " Great bodies beating at its beautiful walls" (Streissguth, 295) Assonance is the other literary device used in Beowulf. An example of assonance in this poem is " By God, punished forever for the crime" (Heatt 103). The statement helps the reader or listener to know that Grendel was a cruel creature that was being punished by God. Moreover, the reader is able to understand why Grendel is always furious and running all over the city to destroy the humans because he feels that he is being punished for his cruel deeds. It gives the understanding that Grendel is being punished forever for the crime of killing humans as the text says. The assonance is significant to the passage because it shows how Grendel was perceived by the monk. The monk saw Grendel as a murderous creature that deserved to be punished by God forever for the crimes committed. Assonance in a passage helps in drawing connections to the words.

The central themes that encompass the epic of Beowulf are wyrd, strength, power, loyalty and heroism. The hero of the story, Beowulf demonstrates his phenomenal superhuman abilities throughout the epic as he conquers the monsters. Even though Beowulf is perceived as a superhero, he is still

advised by Hrothgar. He is warned of resenting tradition, dishonoring customs and overweening in order to become the hero he wants to be.

The theme of *wyrd* is one of the central themes in the Beowulf poem. Many of the warriors in Beowulf believed in fate of everything. The theme of *wyrd* is demonstrated by a constant reminder that destruction will most certainly take place. Nonetheless, its most important representation is when it is used to describe events that have been preordained by God. There are occasions when in Beowulf that illustrates the *wyrd* theme intensely. The instances takes place prior to, during and after Beowulf's fights with the fire breathing dragon in the end that killed him. Through these instances, the reader is able to have a glimpse of what the future holds for Beowulf in the entire story.

One of the instances is when Hrothgar was bestowing his advice upon Beowulf. The writer says " Then, when the ancestral possessions and the goods he hoarded are inherited by another". This clearly exemplifies a belief in eventual destruction after everything.

In these illustrations, the subject's *wyrd* has been encoded by the will of God. The *wyrd* concept or inevitable doom is demonstrated through the Heorot hall that was built by Hrothgar's men. It is described as the " the hall of halls" but later on, it is also stated that it is " awaiting a barbarous burning". The hall is well built according to them but there is no belief that it will last for long as it will be destroyed ultimately. There is lack of confidence and belief in the Heorot hall and Wethergeld's men when he dies. It is automatically presumed that since Wethergeld is dead, his men are going to die too and the people have no confidence in them. The theme of *wyrd* in Beowulf is very evident as no matter how someone or something seems to

be glorified, it is always undoubtedly presumed that there will be an inevitable end which is destruction.

Beowulf affirms that destiny saves a hero when he drives death away by himself and this spirit encourages him to fight Grendel with all his might without weapons. Beowulf believed that he had all it entailed to fight this monster and allows the supernatural take control of everything to help him defeat Grendel. Wyrd and fate helps a hero/man fight and win together with their courage and belief and if he is destined to but if he is cursed, not even his courage can help him stand against the outcome of a situation. In Beowulf, only a courageous hero can successfully win a battle if he is destined to win. Beowulf was denied victory at first when he was fighting against his fate because his actions were a determinant of his winning or losing. Beowulf's fate is pre-ordained by God and despite every effort he makes and everything he does, he cannot avoid his destiny. In Beowulf, the protagonist and the happenings in his encounter with the monsters is used to express the theme of wyrd.

Work Cited

Heatt, A. Kent . *Beowulf and Other Old English Poems*. New York: Bantam Books, 1983. Print.

Streissguth, Thomas. *Beowulf: Understanding Great Literature*. New York: Lucent Books, 2004. Print.