

# Heroism beowulf and sir garwain

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Beowulf and Gawain are both presented as heroic figures in their respective cultures. Beowulf, a hero of the Geats, comes to the aid of Hrothgar, who is the king of Danes. Beowulf explores his heroism in two separate phases- youth and age- and through three separate and increasingly difficult conflicts- with Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon. His youth heroism as an unfettered warrior and his mature heroism as a reliable king. In his youth, he is a great warrior, predominantly by his feats of strength and courage, which reflected by his fabled swimming match against Breca.

His defeat of Grendel and Grendel's mother validates his reputation for bravery and establishes him fully as a hero. In the combat with Grendel and Grendel's mother, Beowulf completely shows his fearless and bravery. He makes his battle with Grendel more than a simple slay-the-monster task. By announcing that it will be a hand-to-hand combat, he gains extra glory for himself and the Geatish king, Hygelac, turning the contest into a feat of strength as well as a fight against evil. He also perfectly embodies the manners and values dictated by the Germanic hero code, including loyalty, courtesy and pride.

He shows enough respect and loyalty to king which can be seen from the poem, " Let whoever can /win glory before death. When a warrior is gone/ that will be his best and only bulwark. " (1387-1389). In the second part of the poem, through a series of retrospectives, I can recover much about how Beowulf comports himself as a king and warrior. Instead of rushing for the throne himself, he does not do what Hrothulf did in Denmark, he supports Hygelac's son, the right heir, which proving his gesture of loyalty and respect. As Beowulf matures, becomes the king.

The poet reflects further on how the responsibilities of king, during the encounter with the dragon, he acts for the good of the people and not just for his own glory differ from those of the heroic warrior. Even through, Beowulf's moral status becomes somewhat ambiguous at the poem's end, he is still deserved as a great hero and leader. Sir Gawain is a humble knight of King Arthur's court, which can be indicated in the poem, " I am weakest of your warriors and feeblest of wit/ loss of my life would be least lamented" (354-355).

His modest claim to inferiority and his high status at court- he is Arthur's nephew and one of Camelot's most famous knights- testify to both his humility and his ambition. Loyalty and bravery are also the significant characteristic of Gawain, he is the only knight who steps out to save King Arthur, he takes the challenge from Green Knight, even though the Green knight essentially tricks Gawain by not telling him about his supernatural abilities before asking Gawain to agree to his terms, Gawain refuses to back off the deal.

He stands by his commitments absolutely, even when it means jeopardizing his own life. Honest is another valuable virtue of Gawain. In the part 3 of the poem, he conceals from host the magical green girdle that the host's wife gives him, revealing that, he values his own life more than his honest. He confesses his sin to the knight and begs to be pardoned and he voluntarily wears the green girdle as a symbol of sin which is a fully Christian idea. Beowulf and Sir Gawain are both very brave characters.

There are many similarities between the two, and the differences between the two characters are also like night and day. The most significant similar is <https://assignbuster.com/heroism-beowulf-and-sir-garwain/>

that both Beowulf and Sir Gawain are symbols of loyalty in their cultures. They also have their share of significant differences in this, but the theme of loyalty is so strong in both characters that it would be dishonest not to mention the similarities. Beowulf maintains his loyalty to his original leader, King Hygelac, while, at the same time, taking on another oath of loyalty to Hrothgar.

Similarly, Gawain takes on an additional oath of loyalty when stays with the lord. Sir Gawain also shows his loyalty by challenging the Green Knight in place of King Arthur. One contrasting quality that can also be considered a comparative quality is pride. Sir Gawain appears in the beginning of the story as a humble knight. Later in the story Gawain gains more pride as he strays from his faith. Beowulf, on the other hand, has pride in himself throughout his story.

In the story it is described how Beowulf makes boasts, and how in one occurrence, he has a swimming race with another man and has to stay in the water for seven full days, wearing his battle armor and fighting off water monsters. One of the biggest differences between Gawain and Beowulf are their faiths. Gawain is an obvious Christian. He celebrates Christmas and New Years. He also attends mass every morning, or so it seems. Conversely, In Beowulf s story, references to Christianity are made, but none of the characters seem to be tied to this faith.