

Grendel paper



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Introduction

Nihilism is a combination of philosophical concepts that are boldly analyzed in Grendel, a novel by John Gardner. Grendel walks on a path of self-discovery and finally becomes a nihilist only to be rescued by hero Beowulf. In the end, Gardner illustrates that the norms of individuality and meaning are powerful and need no violence and destruction. While Gardner shows numerous philosophical concepts and opinions in Grendel, the discussion revolves around nihilism and existentialism. In this interesting novel, the monster Grendel starts his life as an adamant existentialist. Upon coming out of his mother's cave, he is put into the dynamic and confusing world. To ensure that he adapts to the situation of the new world, Grendel embraces the concept of existentialism as his guiding philosophy. At the beginning, he is totally confused and perplexed about the phenomena and things around him, but he quickly meets human beings who turn out to share a common language and philosophy with him. He strives to understand the meaning of what is going on around him by looking what the human being are doing. Grendel saw the early establishment of Hrothgar's kingdom and how it progressed. He witnessed the beginning of the kingdom, how it continuously conquered others, and grew to become a big empire. Nihilism implies that all societal norms are meaningless, and there is nothing which can be communicated. Grendel uses the idea of nihilism. He believes that he, the community, and even priests are empty-hearted. This is because he believes that the shaper does not exist to guide and give meaning to the universe. Towards this despair is the order of the day, emptiness fills the air. Grendel's nihilism is illustrated by his belief that the god is dead. This paper makes a

critical analysis of sarcastic tone applied in the work of Grendel. It is sarcastic for Grendel to imply that with the demise of the Shaper, he lost the motivation and admiration he had for human artistic work. The nonexistence of the shaper has resulted into the lack of true creativity. In this regard, Grendel fears that a wrath may befall him as the next generation lacks the inspiration of the shaper. Gardner comments that “ I was Grendel, Ruiner of Meadhalls, Wrecker of Kings! But also, as never before, I was alone.” (p 80). He makes this sarcastic statement at the moment when he realizes that the dragon's fascination has made him unsusceptible to the danger coming from the wrath of Scylding. He adores his enormous power, but discovers that his unyielding hide from the reality separates him from the real world. In a moment, Grendel discovers that his mental situation still remains the same, and he tries to adapt to his world.

Gardner also uses sarcastic tone when he says, “ I was sure, going back to my cave (it was nearly dawn), that he wouldn't follow, they never did, but I was wrong; he was a new kind of Scylding” (p. 86). This statement proves that Unferth is a man who lives among men and who is a hero. Unferth enjoys living in his heroic ideal world. It is prudent to note that Grendel has not met a real hero in human flesh, he gets astonished at the determination of Unferth. It is unfortunate that Unferth struggled so much; this makes him ruined and he cannot fight any longer. It is quite sarcastic to learn that Grendel's superpower leaves Unferth helpless. It is also interesting to learn that no witness could announce Unferth's words in his quest to reach Grendel in the world of monsters. Another aspect of sarcastic tone comes out when Gardner says, " Why should'nt I have somebody to talk to?" he said.

The stars said nothing, but I pretended to ignore the rudeness. " The Shaper has people to talk to," he said. " Hrothgar has people to talk to" (p. 53).

Grendel's loneliness put him in petulant mood. He talks to the space for someone to engage with but gets no answer. This is an element of sarcasm. Even have not started talking, Grendel knows very well that there is no one, but he continue to make his comments. Despite Grendel's ambitions to engage in philosophical introspection, he, in essence, is a lost and lonely child searching for a companion. He secretly admires the Shaper and Hrothgar despite the fact that he occasionally complains about their self-illusion and ineffectiveness. Gardner notes that " I give you my sister," the king said. " Let her name from now on be Wealtheow, or holy servant of common good" (p. 100). It is sarcastic that people do not know the original name of Wealtheow. However, she is recognized by her actions, which involve doing the common good in the society. It is ironical that Wealtheow offered her service as a promise of peace for people in her society. It is sarcastic to note that Hrothgar and Grendel are amazed by the Wealtheow's dedication to the good of the society.

Gardner comments that " Something is coming, strange as spring, I am afraid, standing on an open hill, I imagine muffled footsteps overhead" (p. 126) are also sarcastic. It is evident that Grendel realizes a sign of the arrival of Beowulf. It sounds sarcastic that the future arrival of the hero should be abrupt as indicated by Grendel who is incapable of comprehending the life-giving element of the natural world. It is also sarcastic that Grendel can comprehend the nature of autumn as well as the end of winter, but he fails to understand spring. In addition, it is interesting to note that it was the first

time when Grendel was afraid of meeting Hrothgar. It is sarcastic that he sees boredom is the worst pain (p. 138). This is because Grendel's life is full of violence. Grendel's loneliness and boredom torture him so much. Since he is not vulnerable to weapons that disillusioned life, there are no good things for him. The challenging characteristics of Scylding community and the world and holds him in an endless, imaginary war against Hrothgar. It is also sarcastic that he achieves no specific goal in the imaginary war.

Conclusion

The element of sarcasm is powerful in the novel. It brings out the essence which makes the story interesting and captivating. For instance, in the entire novel, Grendel despises animals for their unthinking behavior in which they use mimic patterns. In his opinion, animals are just like automated machines; they follow tedious routines stipulated by outside forces and cannot attempt any innovative dives of their own. It is ironical and sarcastic that a bull goes ahead and attacks Grendel to authenticate animals' unthinking and imaginative actions. In addition, the same bull, which attacked Grendel, proceeds with its ineffective technique to bring down Grendel again, but he fails. However, it comes to lead the world in a similar way. Therefore, it, show that the world is ruled by bulls who are not innovative in their approach and action. Towards this, the human world is faced with many challenges. The irony and sarcastic tone give the novel an in-depth analysis of different concepts.