

# Fate or providence in beowulf essay



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Fate or Providence In Beowulf there is a constant struggle. It may be a physical struggle, psychological struggle, or a struggle between people and beasts. Beowulf is a Geatish hero, warrior, and an emotional being that stands up for and defends the weak or needy. Beowulf has a constant struggle with what seems to be pride, or questions why he does these heroic acts. He questions whether he does these acts for the reason of fate or the reason of providence. Some people believe fate and providence can essentially mean the same thing. But fate cannot occur without some kind of a series of events that God creates to decide someone's fate.

In lines 440-479 Beowulf is speaking about what would happen if he were to lose his battle with Grendel. He is questioning whether the fight would be worth it because as the battle draws near, he begins to worry. He starts to think if it is really his battle to fight. Hrothgar spoke to Beowulf and stated that he came there to defend his people. He said that he came there because it was the right thing to do. He used an example of a debt that is father owed to his people and that somewhat convicted Beowulf into doing it. The act of Hrothgar using this tactic was an essential turning point in the story because it convinced Beowulf to fight.

After Beowulf decided to fight Grendel he begins to think of ways that it would benefit him. Beowulf kept these secrets to himself and he let them influence his decision to fight the beast. As he does this, it is then he becomes very prideful. When he prepares to fight Grendel he is conversing with his men about what is to come as the battle draws near. In lines 677-685 he says, " When it comes to fighting, I count myself as dangerous any day as Grendel. So it won't be a cutting edge I'll wield to mow him down,

easily as I might. He has no idea of the arts of war, of shield or sword play, although he does possess a wild strength.

No weapons, therefore, for either this night: unarmed he hall face me if face me he dares. And may the Divine Lord in his wisdom grant the glory of victory to whichever side he sees fit. ” As he states this he is meaning that he has the strength, the knowledge and skills to overcome the beast. He does however mention God; he asks that the “ Divine Lord” will grant wisdom to whoever happens to win. He does not ask for the wisdom to go to him, he says it is God’s decision who comes out victorious. Some people see this as being prideful but he does not ask specifically to be victorious which means that he understands God’s is in control.

By him understanding he may lose it brings up the argument of whether he fights these battles as matter of fate or a matter of providence for God. It helps support the decision of an act of providence because he gives God the glory and respect that he trust in him and for understand that his will will done in the situation. In the first battle I think he fights it as a matter of defending his family name and repaying the debt of his father. Some people may think it is providential because it keeps peace between people but in the times of Beowulf that was part of social expectancies if a wrong doing had occurred.

But, the method of payment was never against a mighty beast that had been terrorizing a group of people. When the opportunity came up, it worked out that since Beowulf had the strength, he had the power, he had the wisdom of fighting and above all else, he had the skills, it was up to him to defeat the

beast and that would clear up the wrong doing. It is an act of providence because God graced him with the gift of strength and power in battle. This battle does have a Christian attitude about because Beowulf agrees to help the needy and believe that God will give be there and support him for doing this deed.

There were a few reasons that somewhat helped Beowulf make his decision of fighting the beast that didn't seem as Christian. These reasons did not become as important to Beowulf until his later battles but this was the start of it all. He wanted to prove things not only to himself but prove things to the world and people around him. He wanted to prove that he was the strongest man alive, prove that he was the bravest man alive and also that if does come out victorious he will prove to people he is worth to become king. These reasons are not the main reasons he decides to fight Grendel.

They do however become main reasons he decides to fight other battles later in the story. In lines 1055-1061 the chieftain, a powerful leader of a people, came to pay Beowulf and his men for the deed he had done for him and his people. Payment was not just in a monetary manner, it was paid in pieces of gold, processions, honor and the gift of life from God. The chieftain stated that God's will prevails in all circumstances and that people should always be mindful of that. He also says whoever remains long here in this earthly life and believes him will enjoy and endure more than enough.

By this he means Beowulf and his men will enjoy the splendors of life God graces them with. He says this because he is a God-fearing man and tries not only thanking Beowulf and his men for doing this act of kindness but to

say it was the right thing to do. Since it was the right thing they will receive more payment than just the payment they give them. Some people say that Beowulf was a powerful, cocky and arrogant hero. They say he only did acts of kindness to only boast about his victories. But in the instance of him fighting Grendel, I believe it was an act of providence.

God decides what happens to people, what happens to the world and what will happen in the future. It is the way he designed is world to be like. Fate is how things turn out in certain circumstances. There was some kind of debt incurred by Beowulf's father that had to be repaid. It just so happened to be a debt that could be paid back in the form of fighting a terrible beast that was attacking the people in which the debt was to. God planned for Beowulf to be a powerful warrior that was strong enough to be able to defeat the beast.

I think the struggle between Beowulf and Grendel did have Christian attitude to it. Yes, it did have a few questionable complications but they didn't affect Beowulf until later because this was the first battle that really proved Beowulf's power. There are constant struggles in life, Beowulf deals with the struggle with Grendel with an attitude of repaying a debt incurred by his father but also looks to God for help and support. That makes the case of this particular struggle an act of providence because he thanks God wants his will be to be done in the situation.