

BEOWULF

In epics, the main character is usually a hero. This is a person who expresses courage and superhuman strength. These people are recognized as the epitome of all people in this time. In Anglo-Saxon literature the role of a hero is to protect good.

There were many great pieces of literature during Anglo-Saxon times. Perhaps one of the best was Beowulf. In this story the main character is Beowulf, a man who protects the Herot from a terrible monster, and later on in his life protects his own castle. Beowulf is a hero who represents good in this story.

During Beowulf's time people spoke very highly of heroes. An example from the story of Beowulf protecting good is when the king is speaking of him. He says of Beowulf, "Until that curving prow carries/Across the sea to Geatland a chosen/warrior who bravely does battle with the/creature haunting our people, who survives/that horror unhurt, and goes home bearing/our love." (208-212) The king speaks of Beowulf as a great hero and hopes that he will be able to defeat Grendel, the monster that has been terrorizing Herot.

Before his confrontation with Grendel, he did many other things to assist his people. An example of him doing this is when he speaks of himself killing the giants and wiping them off the earth. He says, "They have seen my strength for themselves,/have watched me rise from the darkness/of war, dripping of my enemies' blood/I drove five great giants into chairs, chased/all of that race from the Earth." (246-250) Beowulf proves his strength to others and to himself.

In his fight with Grendel's mother Beowulf proves many things. An example of Beowulf's heroism is when he is battling her. "That mighty protector of men/meant to hold the monster 'till its life/leaped out ..." (366-367) Beowulf is described as the "protector" of his people and proves this by defeating Grendel's mother. She had recently killed a close friend of the king in defiance to the slaying of her son. To prevent further killing, Beowulf went to an arena under a lake and destroyed her.

Later on in his life he kills a fire-breathing dragon because he wants to protect his kingdom. He was king for over 40 years and had done all he could to protect his kingdom.

Beowulf's best asset is his strength. He uses his superhuman power to defeat any monster that stands in his way. He also possesses great courage, which allows him to face great dangers and peril, where other warriors would turn and go the other way.

The reasons for Beowulf helping his people are simple, fame and fortune. Grendel is loved by his people and collects great treasures from his battles. However, Beowulf is most admired because he is a hero and protects anyone in need. That is why Beowulf represents the hero portrayed in epics, as well as Anglo-Saxon literature, very well.

