
Beowulf Final Writing Essay

In Beowulf, we see a clash between Christianity and Paganism often. Considering it was written to show how Christian beliefs are superior to Pagan beliefs, it would be strange if this wasn't seen. When Beowulf was written, Christians believed they were better than everyone else and they frowned upon people with different ideas than them. Christians believe that there is only one God and they think Jesus was put on this planet to save us. Pagans believe that there are many gods, but they typically pick a specific one to worship and praise. Due to this difference, the two religions do not really like each other. In the poem, we see the divide between Christianity and Paganism through comparisons like light versus dark and good versus evil. Obviously, in this case, the Christians are light and the good and the Pagans are the evil and the dark. Throughout this essay, I will take a deeper look into this divide and explain it. The divide between Christianity and Paganism is more apparent with the comparison between good and evil.

The first villain readers come across is Grendel, the terrifying beast who has been attacking Herot hall for 12 years. "So times were pleasant for the people there until finally one, a fiend out of hell, began to work his evil in the world"(Heaney 9, Lines 99-101). We see the good, happy Danish people are being terrorized by Grendel. Words like hell and evil both evoke negative emotions towards this monster. Eventually, when the brave, strong Beowulf appears, Hrothgar is so thankful because Beowulf is going to try to help his people. Beowulf immediately proves in the fight that he is going to win. "The captain of evil discovered himself in a handgrip harder than anything he had ever encountered in any man on the face of the earth"(Heaney 51, Lines 749-752). Readers see that Beowulf is going to be the hero, or the good, that is going to save the Danish people from the evil monster.

Grendel is destroyed in an extremely quick fight and it appears that Christianity has won, but another Pagan threat is lurking. Grendel's mother is the next monster Beowulf must fight and she is described as, "a monstrous hell-bride," (Heaney 89, 1259). With words like these, we know she is going to be evil and she is. She murders one of Hrothgar's trusted advisors, so Beowulf goes to her home in a haunted mere, to seek revenge. After a more difficult, fight Beowulf wins, showing that Christianity is still supreme. The last battle Beowulf fights in is the most difficult one. After we read the sentence, "for the vile sky-winger would leave nothing alive in his wake," (Heaney 157, Lines 2314-2315), we know this villain is the worst yet. After the fight is over, we see that both Beowulf and the dragon have been mortally injured. It seems like it is the end for both Christianity and Paganism, however suddenly Beowulf gives his torque to Wiglaf. Not only does this symbolize a new King of Geatland, but it shows that Christianity lives on and Paganism is defeated. The other comparison that is seen in this poem is that of light and dark. Usually, while fighting the monster, the scene is dark, but right after they are killed there is light. For example, "A light appeared and the place brightened the way the sky does when heaven's candle is shining clearly."(Lines 1570-1572). This sentence is seen right after Grendel's mother is killed and beheaded. It almost seems like God has sent down light in the gloomiest of places to show that Christianity has won there.

Before Beowulf killed Grendel's mom, the mere was dark and scary, but right after she is killed this light appears. Another example can be seen after the last battle, "It glowed with light so he

could make out the ground at his feet and inspect the valuables” (Heaney 187, Lines 2769-2771). Right after Beowulf kills the dragon, his dying wish is to see the treasure he died for. When it is brought to him, light enters the dark cave and allows Beowulf to see it. God has sent his light once again to show another win for the Christians. There are more examples throughout the book also. For example, Grendel only attacks at night and all the monsters live in dark environments. Whenever there is a win for Christianity, light always appears.

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