Beowulf and Grendel

The text is an extract from the epic poem “Beowulf” a superb example of Anglo-Saxon literature.

In the present work a structural analysis of the text will be carried out followed by a linguistic scrutiny of the use of the language mode by the composer in order to find out how literally language conveys the idea of what made a hero in Anglo-Saxon culture. The text communicates the nature of the fight between Beowulf and the monster Grendel. It consists of four component parts having different functions.

The first section immediately sets the atmosphere pervading the setting and right from the start displays the typical features of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Indeed, alliterative verse and the use of caning contribute to help the reader make up a mental image of the fight and, last but not least, to characterize the actors of the fight.

From the first line “moors” and “the mist bands” contribute to the idea of a dark environment where finding directions is hard. In addition the repetition of sound “s” seems to invoke silence from the reader as if were in front of a difficult, hard and tragic event. The scenery is suitable to introduce the monster, one that scares human beings because he is, as the caning suggests (ll 2), “God cursed”. Not only does the caning great suspense and mystery, it also plays on the level of sound when the intelligent reader can perceive the harsh sound of his name “Grendel” that is in alliteration with “God cursed” in addition the effect is high- by the following adverb “Greeding” that adds to greeding nature of the first character introduced. It goes without seeing that the phrase “God cursed” hints at the religious code as well as the caning “the bane of the race of men” and just from its very first appearance in the present text the reader cannot create a negative idea of the monster. But what does “the monster” show? His nature is very convened by the semantic choices of the composition. He is “god cursed”, “greeding”, he lopes and he must be hunch, besides he is the bane of a race and definitely is desperately looking for a prey. As a result Grendel is characterized as half-man and half-animal, the narrator tells the reader all he does and the fore Grendel’s characterization is made up through action verbs. He rounds for, he hunts for a prey, he moves in search of a prey, in a few words he shows the same behaver of a predator. The setting he moves around is a gloomy dark one, it is full of cloud murk, but where does Grendel had for? He wants to reach the high all, a place differently from his environment “shone above him”. Further more it is “a sheer keep of fortified gold” as the run-on-line displays. Again, the intelligent reader may easily realize that the composer of the poem probably wanted to create a contrast between the place of the monster, a dark moor and the light of the high-all(ll 4) where human beings are peacefully spending their time. Evidently black and dark colours are associated with negative debilished values the ones that imply damnation, on the contrary the fortress not only is sheer but it shines and it is golden. It follows that the forest, the moor and the cloud murk are associated with hell while the golden hall is high, shining and full of light as is paradise. But one additional/more features adds to the monster making of him a character of exceptional creature: this is not the first time he aproachise dwellings where he goes scouting he is, therefore, hunch strong, fairless an exceptional predator.

The second section makes the reader become gradually aware of the qualities that make of Grendel the exceptional monster he is. In this section he is refeared to as the “creature” that has become the monster is thanks to instinct tiveness. He did not leave any time to his preys. Indeed, he “stuck suddenly” (ll10) and therefore his preys were taken by surprise and had no escape.

The verbs chosen had concretness and realizen to Grendel’s actions: “grabbed and mauled” (ll 11), “ bit into his bone lappings” (ll 12), bolted down” (ll 12), “gorged on him in lumps “(ll 13) and “eaten up”(ll 14). The monster’s hunger comes to surface and conveys to the reader all its strength fast action and desired to his preys.

But when it comes to Beowulf the devilish creature that composer calls “Captain of Evil”(ll 20) resorting a caning once again is taken by surprise by a handgrip harder than anything yet ever encountered in any man on the face of the Earth (ll21-22).

It is worth underlining the use not only of run-on-line that adds a franty reedom to the description of the light but also the way Beowulf is characterized by the composer” any man on the face of the Earth”. The phrase makes of Beowulf the hero he is distinguished from the rest of man kind and this is why he becomes the legendary hero and the protagonist of epic poem itself, it stands for the man of courage, brave and ready to defend his race from any enemy. Beowulf’s features are well expressed in lines 23-24 where the monster’s reactions are conveyned in a visit way. “His boy wailed and recoiled (ll 24) and he could not escape” (ll 24).

Once and again Beowulf outstanding personality comes to surface as well as the values of mutual help and solidarity of his men as best as it could. Beowulf’s warriors display their head’s qualities through their actions ”laying about them” (ll27), “with ancestral blades” (ll28) and they reveal to be stalwart in action and kept striking out in view of the objective of cutting straight to the soul. The composer insists on the extraordinary quality features of Beowulf and his warriors as the repetition of expressions that underline their singularity well example that not blade at the Earth, no blacksmith’s art could ever damage their demon opponent (ll32-33).

Time and again the monster is compared to a devilish creature almost closed to one with supernatural power. He had conjured the harm from the cutting edge of every weapon.

The readers can surely understand that Grendel is been portrayed with words and expressions that belong to the religious code and he or she rightly think the composer of the poem might be a Christian, an example is offered by “straight to the soul”, one more is “demon opponent” and last but not least also the phrase he had conjured hints at supernatural power. But on the same (ll 37-38) the monster’s whole body was in pain. The wound is tremendous and his sinerous split and “ the bone lappings burst “ (ll 40).

Beowulf’s victory appears to be therefore not only one that highlights strength more it is also the victotry of Good over the Evil, according to a m a vision of the world.

The composer hands image of the light reinforcing the idea of Grendel’s defeat some that he is “fatally hurt” (ll 42) and the use of the adverb “fatally” brings to surface the supernatural nature of the vision of the light. The monster is sent back under “the fenbanks” (ll42) and to his “desolate loir”(ll43) the reader’s sensibility brings home the image of Beowulf’s winning glory but the solitude of the monster is well.

The monster is alone while the protagonist of the epic deeds is supported by the solidarity of his warriors this explains for the relevance solidarity unity and community in winning the fight, this providing the information about the values of Anglo-Saxon civilization.