BEOWULF LITERARY ANALYSIS PAPER

(Wally--rev. term 3 '05-'06)

1. IN GENERAL

For this paper you must develop a three to five page literary analysis illuminating significant themes, patterns, images, or relationships in Beowulf. To prepare your analysis, you should think deeply about Beowulf in standard areas of analysis such as: characterization, imagery, theme, content and context (as well as other related elements).

This analysis should be based on your own deep reading and analysis of Beowulf. This is NOT a research paper.

Some reminders:
- Literary analysis writing is persuasive writing. It supports YOUR opinion about the literature--an informed opinion based on the text.
- Your opinion should be about the THEME or some interpretive or stylistic aspect(s) of the literature.
- Always make clear references to Beowulf to prove that your point really is found in the text. Your writing should, of course, reflect careful thinking, analysis, and support of your thesis.
- Only a small portion of literary analysis may be summary, and summary must NEVER be the main aspect of the essay--nor does literary analysis consist of making critical judgments of the works. That falls under the area of "critical review." Your primary job is arguing for a particular interpretation. Assume that the reader is undeniably familiar with the text.
- Length is not the key; the paper needs to be sufficiently developed to prove your thesis.
- READ THE GRADING SHEET CAREFULLY WELL IN ADVANCE OF WRITING THE PAPER.

2. TOPIC CHOICE AND PRELIMINARY PLANNING

After carefully considering an array of possible thesis topics, select ONE upon which to base your paper. As soon as possible, write a thesis statement that clearly reflects what you are intending to prove. Do not use words in your thesis statement that refer to the paper such as: "The purpose of this paper is to prove . . . ." Also, carefully choose a verb in your thesis statement which effectively conveys what you are attempting to do in the paper.

To do literary analysis, the first and most important thing is to carefully reread and review Beowulf. As you do this, you should take notes recording your questions and ideas. You may wish to consult some critical essays on the text, but that is not necessarily needed. You shouldn't rely heavily upon others' ideas. If you are planning to measure or compare Beowulf or the text to something, however, it is critical that you use supplementary materials for verification of whatever it is you are comparing Beowulf to.

As you reread the text carefully, look for situations, quotations, and other applicable examples which would support your thesis. I cannot stress enough how important it is to make as many notes and find as many examples BEFORE YOU WRITE. Many students think that they can easily plug in the examples later but are often mistaken about how difficult this really might be. As you look for examples, keep the Beowulf text close beside you. In addition, refer to the "Helpful Hints" hand-outs you were given as well as the "Significant Quotations in Beowulf" hand-out and even the lays may be of some help to you here.

Direct quotations are valuable--as long as you insert the quotation with adequate explanation of it. DO NOT ASSUME THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE INCLUDED AN IMPORTANT QUOTATION THAT THE READER KNOWS WHY IT'S THERE AND HOW IT SUPPORTS THE THESIS. ALWAYS DISCUSS THE QUOTATIONS! Remember to seamlessly integrate a quotation into your text with a preface or lead or explanation of why the quote was included. Direct quotations must never stand alone!

Careful preliminary planning and a rough outline will help you immensely before you begin drafting. Once you start drafting, is strongly advised that you find the textual support and document it correctly parenthetically as you write.

Because this is a paper of formal analysis, ACADEMIC VOICE must be used. This means that the use of these personal pronouns--I, me, my, mine, you, your, yours, we, us, our, and ours --and other informalities and colloquialisms are not permitted (unless they appear in direct quotations).
3. PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION

If you cite any lines of poetry from the Burton Raffel translation of Beowulf, your first parenthetical documentation of cited lines from the poem would look like this:

(Beowulf lines 103-108)

NOTE: After the first citation, you can simply do this for line 2041: (Beowulf 2041).

If you use more than one translation, you will need to differentiate the one translation from the other by also including the translator’s name. It would look like this for line 896 in the Seamus Heaney translation:

(Heaney, Beowulf 896)

When you switch to another translation, you will do this: (Donaldson, Beowulf 60).

Here is an example of a possible section of your paper (quoting from the text for the first time—lines 103-108):

It is clear that Grendel is more than a monster. His mission comes from the devil himself.

This is clear when the poet says, "He [Grendel] was spawned in that slime, / Conceived by a pair of those monsters born / Of Cain, murderous creatures banished / By God, punished forever for the crime/Of Abel's death" (Beowulf lines 103-108).

NOTE: the next time you cite quoted lines, omit the word “lines” from the parenthetical documentation.

4. MSF FOR LINES OF POETRY

For more information on how to cite lines of poetry, see Hubbard's Writing Research Papers Across the Curriculum, pp. 191-192, Joseph Gibaldi’s MLA Handbook, 6th ed., and/or our Survival Packet.

Basically, here is what you do:

When you cite lines of poetry, put the lines in quotation marks within your text. You may also incorporate two or three lines in this way, but use a slash with a space on each side to separate the lines.

The MLA Handbook states, “If you are citing only line numbers do not use the abbreviation l. or ll., which can be confused with numerals. To avoid initial confusion, you may use the word line or lines and then, having established that the numbers designate lines, give the numbers alone. In general, use arabic numerals rather than roman numerals for division and page numbers” (Gibaldi 253-254).

Example (a poem): When Keats concludes “Beauty is truth, truth beauty” (line 49), the reader is reminded of the same message he presents in “Ode to a Nightingale,” another of his famous poems. So important is beauty to Keats that it “is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know” (49-50).

To reiterate,

•USE A SLASH (called a "virgule") / TO DIVIDE LINES OF POETRY.

•PUT A SPACE BEFORE AND AFTER THE SLASH.
QUESTION 1:  Do I put the poet’s name in the parenthetical documentation if the name is included in the lead-in to the quote (thus making the “authorship” of the poem you’re discussing obvious)?

NO!  You do not need to put the poet's name in the parenthetical documentation IF THE POET’S NAME IS INCLUDED IN THE LEAD-IN TO THE QUOTE.

Example: Reflecting on the "incident" in Baltimore, Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all that I remember" (11-12).

(Note! The reason the "T" is capitalized in the word "that" in the example above is because it was capitalized in the original poem in line 12.)

NOTE: NEVER refer to the poet or the translator by his/her first name. For example, do not call Shakespeare “William” or Seamus Heaney “Seamus.”

QUESTION 2:  Do I put the poet’s name in the parenthetical documentation if the name is NOT included in the lead-in to the quote?

YES!  In this case, you MUST put the poet's name in the parenthetical documentation.

Example: Reflecting on the "incident" in Baltimore, it is concluded, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all that I remember" (Cullen 11-12).

QUESTION 3:  What do I do about subsequent quotations from the same poem?

The first time you quote from the poem, the parenthetical documentation for lines 7-8 cited in Eavan Boland's poem, "It's a Woman's World," would look like this: (Boland 7-8).

After the first citation, you can simply do this: (12-15) as long it is very clear this is the SAME Eavan Boland poem you have been discussing.

QUESTION 4:  What do I do when I switch discussion to a different poem?

If you switch to discussion of another poem by another poet, be sure to included the poet's name again for the parenthetical documentation: (Cullen 19-21)

NOTE:  Keep this very clear for the ease of the reader! This may mean continuing to use the author name and poem title and line numbers for the rest of the paper.

If you were discussing Eavan Boland's poem, "It's a Woman's World," and now want to switch to discussing another Eavan Boland poem, "Outside History," you will now need to also cite the name of the poem to distinguish these two poems.

The first citation would like this: (Boland, "It's a Woman's World" 8-10)

The next citation would like this: (Boland, "Outside History" 3-4)
QUESTION 5: How do I do BLOCK QUOTATIONS for poetry? 
Gibaldi says, “Verse quotations of MORE THAN 3 LINES should begin on a NEW LINE. Unless the quotation involves unusual spacing, indent each line one inch [. . .] from the left margin and double-space between lines, adding NO QUOTATION MARKS that do not appear in the original. A parenthetical reference for a verse quotation set off from the text follows the last line of the quotation (as in quotations of prose); a parenthetical reference that will not fit on the line should appear on a new line, flush with the right margin of the page” (112).

EXAMPLE:

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" in rich in evocative detail:

It was winter. It got dark early.  
The waiting room  
was full of grown-up people, arctics and  
overcoats,  
amps and magazines. (6-10)

NOTE: A line that is too long to fit within the right margin should be continued on the next line and the continuation indented an additional quarter inch (approx. 3 spaces). You may reduce the indentation of the quotation to less than one inch from the left margin if doing so will eliminate the need for such continuations (Gibaldi 112).

Gibaldi recommends, “If the spatial arrangement of the original lines, including indentation and spacing within and between them, is unusual, reproduce it as accurately as possible. [. . .] When a verse quotation begins in the middle of a line, the partial line should be positioned where it is in the original and NOT SHIFTED TO THE LEFT MARGIN” (112-113).

EXAMPLE:

In a poem on Thomas Hardy ("T.H."), Molly Holden recalls her encounter with a "young dog fox" (40) one morning:

I remember  
he glanced at me in just that way, independent  
and unabashed, the handsome sidelong look  
that went round and about but never directly  
met my eyes, for that would betray his soul.  
He was not being sly, only careful. (43-48)
QUESTION 6: What do I do if I want to omit word or phrases from quotations of poetry?

Indicate omissions with three or four spaced ellipsis points (as for prose).

Example:

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" in rich in evocative detail:

*It was winter. It got dark early.*

*The waiting room*

*was full of grown-up people [. . .]. (6-8)*

Gibaldi suggests what to do if a line or more is omitted: “The omission of a line or more in the middle of a poetry quotation that is set off from the text is indicated by a line of spaced periods approximately the length of a complete line of the quoted poem” (117).

Example:

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" in rich in evocative detail:

*It was winter. It got dark early. The waiting room was full of grown-up people,*

*........................*

*lamps and magazines. (6-8, 9)*

5. WORKS CITED PAGE FOR THE BEOWULF TEXT?

• for the paperback Burton Raffel translation, use this format:


  or

• for the Seamus Heaney translation, use this format:


  or

• If you found the text of *Beowulf* in an anthology, you would need more information (such as the page numbers where you found the translation in the anthology. For example, for the Norton Anthology, vol. 1, 6th ed., Donaldson translation:

6. USE OF SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL OTHER THAN A BEOWULF TEXT

If you use any supplementary material other than the text itself for your essay, use the parenthetical documentation and the Works Cited section of the Survival Packet for assistance. When in doubt, consult your teacher. For the paper topic on heroes, consider using the supplementary information from newspaper/magazine articles or chapters on heroes that were given to you. Make sure the article has all the bibliographic information you need. Consult your teacher for assistance.

NOTE: Any pages from where you found material in supplementary sources must be photocopied and attached to your paper. Please highlight the actual sections on the photocopies that you used.

Examples of supplementary material from the Norton Anthology of English Literature:
• from the introductory chapter, "The Middle Ages," in the Norton, vol. 1, either the 5th or the 6th edition

Let's say you want to include information on the heroic ideal found in the introductory chapter, "The Middle Ages" in the Norton, vol. 1, 6th edition. This was written by E. Talbot Donaldson and Alfred David. (They were also given credit for the same revised chapter in the 6th edition.)

Here's what the parenthetical documentation would look like:
(Donaldson and David, "The Middle Ages" 8).

After the first citation, you can simply do this: (Donaldson and David 9).

Your works cited entry for this introductory chapter, "The Middle Ages," would look like this:


7. ABOUT THE REQUIRED OUTLINE

You must turn in a properly formatted outline for organizational purposes and the teacher's convenience.

The outline should become a "road map" of the essay. Make sure that it follows the main points of the paper exactly and in order.

Consult your Survival Packet for the proper MLA format for an OUTLINE. Outlines can be quite tricky to format correctly. You may even have to find out how to turn off your auto-formatting feature to get it right!

WARNING: You will lose points for not turning in an outline!

8. ADDITIONAL IN-CLASS NOTES AND REMINDERS
STUDENT COMMENTS ON DOING THIS PAPER:
What worked? What didn't? What challenged you? Of what are you proud? What might you have done differently? What have you learned? Share what you'd like. WRITE YOUR RESPONSE BELOW:

CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION/OPENING COMMENTS
   - Overall effectiveness of the intro/opening remarks
     - interesting, engaging, unique, attention-getting, draws reader in
   - Thesis statement identifies a clear line of analysis connected to the text(s)
     - effective, clear, uses appropriate verb, no use of phrases such as "this paper," follows order of paper, etc.
   - Overview of three main areas of analysis is clear and concise

2. ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH
   - Areas of analysis are put into a coherent and "motivated" order
     - 1 to -2
   - Organization intrinsically contributes to and complements the analysis
     - 1 to -2

3. AREA OF ANALYSIS #1
   - Statement of the area of analysis is clear and coherently linked to the thesis
     - 1
   - Analysis is well-developed and in-depth, effective, convincing, accurate
     - 1 to -3
   - Area of analysis is significant and logically connected to the line of reasoning
4. AREA OF ANALYSIS #2

_____ Statement of the area of analysis is clear and coherently linked to the thesis
-1

_____ Analysis is well-developed and in-depth, effective, convincing, accurate
-1 to - 3

_____ Area of analysis is significant and logically connected to the line of reasoning
-1 to - 2

_____ Sufficient, focused support from the appropriate text(s) is provided
-1 to - 3

_____ Unity is present: All material present contributes effectively to the analysis.
-1

_____ This section is organized logically and is balanced.
-1

_____ This section is coherent; transitions are used effectively both between and
-1 within paragraphs to promote coherence.

5. AREA OF ANALYSIS #3

_____ Statement of the area of analysis is clear and coherently linked to the thesis
-1

_____ Analysis is well-developed and in-depth, effective, convincing, accurate
-1 to - 3

_____ Area of analysis is significant and logically connected to the line of reasoning
-1 to - 2
Sufficient, focused support from the appropriate text(s) is provided
-1 to -3

Unity is present: All material present contributes effectively to the analysis.
-1

This section is organized logically and is balanced.
-1

This section is coherent; transitions are used effectively both between and within paragraphs to promote coherence.

6. CONCLUSION

Paper transitions smoothly into conclusion
-1

Reviews fully the major significance of the analysis of the text(s).
-1 to -2

Closing statements logical and conclusive
-1 Sense of closure present (beyond summarizing) with interesting, finalizing "closing statement/discussion"

Conclusion is organized logically. Summary is balanced.
-1

7. CORRECT DOCUMENTATION/CITATIONS

• CREDIBILITY OF SOURCES

Other than the Beowulf text, if sources are used, they must be credible.
-2 Circle problems:
  • Authoritative sources must used.
  • Credibility of authors/sources is well-established in the paper.
  • No use of print or online encyclopedias
  • Use of sources (besides Beowulf) is valid and enhances the argument.

• CORRECT DOCUMENTATION/CITATIONS

Documentation/Citations are provided for virtually all material that needs to be cited. In other words, credit is given where credit is due.

All direct quotations are done correctly.
-1 to -3 Circle problems:
• Direct quotation isn't quoted exactly as it appeared in the original
• Quoted material stands alone. No effective lead-in statement is present. (Lead-ins should seamlessly integrate quoted material into the paper.)
• In-text acknowledgement of author (w/ credentials) of direct quotations not given proper credit.
• Material isn't found in the original.
• Interpretation of the original material is inaccurate.
• Other problem(s): _________________________

All paraphrased material is done correctly.

-1 to -3 PROBLEMS (circle):
• Paraphrasing of the original material raises suspicion of plagiarism. Wording is too close to the original.
• Interpretation of the original material is inaccurate.
• In-text acknowledgement of author (w/ credentials) of paraphrased material is not given proper credit.
• Material isn't found in the original.
• Other problem(s): _________________________

-/10 STYLE

1. LANGUAGE

4 _____ Diction (word choice) reflects a sophisticated tailoring of message to a clear academic audience.

Circle problems:
• diction is not precise and/or often incorrect.
• use of overly simple word choices; vocabulary is not near "college level."
• use of slang, colloquialisms, cliches, idioms, and other informal speech mannerisms.
• overuse of linking verbs or passive voice
• verb tenses are inconsistent

_____ The literary and other terminology must be used precisely, correctly, appropriately, and effectively. Terminology must be clarified.

_____ Literary present tense is not used consistently

-1 to -2 Do not use (except in direct quotations) first person or personal pronouns:
EXAMPLES: • I, me, my, mine, you, your, yours,
• the use of the "understood you"
• we, us, our, ours

2. VOICE/TONE

3 _____ Author's voice is Confident regarding assertions in the analysis of the text(s)

-1 to -2

_____ Author's voice is distinct from the sources' voices.

-1 to -2

_____ Author's voice/tone is sophisticated, precise, and appropriate to a near college level.

-1 to -2
The author's depth of understanding and appreciation of the texts is conveyed.

Sentence structure is purposeful, technically correct, well-crafted, and sophisticated.

Sophisticated use of subordination and sentence complexity is appropriate to academic writing.

The sentence structure must clearly differentiate student author's voice and style from the authors' voices and styles.

Complex sentence structures are used over simple sentence structures.

Sentence variety reflects a sophisticated tailoring of message to a clear audience.
You can buy back up to __/20 "writing convention" pts. by making ___ corrections by _____________________.

"Writing Conventions" consists of two areas: due date

- **MANUSCRIPT FORM (MSF)**
  - (total pts. off) REGULAR MSF ERRORS (-1 each)
  - (total pts. off) MSF ON DOCUMENTATION (-1 each)

  **DIRECT QUOTATION**
  - total Circle problems:
  - off
    - incorrect msf of direct quotations (DQ)
    - incorrect msf of the parenthetical documentations of direct quotations
    - incorrect use of ellipsis points in square brackets [ . . . ] for omissions, square brackets for interpolation, [sic] for errors in the originals
    - incorrect msf when quoting from a poem (see special requirements and the proper use of slashes (/))
    - other problem(s): ____________________________

  **PARAPHRASED MATERIAL**
  - total Circle problems:
  - off
    - incorrect msf of paraphrased citations
    - incorrect msf of parenthetical documentation of paraphrased citations
    - other problem(s): ____________________________

- **TECHNICAL ASPECTS**
  - (total pts. off) TECHNICAL ASPECTS

  **specific errors:**
  - AWKWARD word choice awk (-1)
  - AGREEMENT faulty subject-verb agreement or pronoun-antecedent agreement agr (-1)
  - CAPITALIZATION cap/lc (-1)
  - EXACT WORD word chosen is not precise or correct to convey clear meaning ew (-1)
  - FRAGMENTS frag (-2)
  - HOMONYM ERRORS H (-1) AND H no excuse (-2)
  - MISPLACED MODIFIER mm (-1)
  - PUNCTUATION--COMMAS pc (-1)
  - PUNCTUATION--APOSTROPHES pa (-1)
  - PUNCTUATION--OTHER pend & psc & pco & pund & pu & pd/h & syl (ALL -1)
  - PRONOUN CASE pro case (-1)
  - REFERENCE UNCLEAR ref (-1)
  - RUN-ONS ro (-2)
  - SPELLING sp (-1) AND sp no excuse (-2)
  - TENSE t (-1)
You may earn up to one extra credit point on this paper for using five extra-credit vocabulary words correctly. Box, bold, or highlight them in the paper.

\[ \text{TOTAL} = \quad \text{PRELIM. GRADE} \]

However, if you receive full credit for buybacks your new score would be \( \frac{\_}{70} = \_ \) grade

Do buybacks carefully! They are due on  and cannot be redone!

TEACHER COMMENTS:

+ positives

- suggestions
**SOME BEOWULF ANALYTICAL THESIS TOPIC CHOICES**

What follows are some ideas for Beowulf Analysis Paper topics. You do not have to choose one of these. You may want to revise some of them or make up your own topic.

David Wright, a translator of Beowulf (not the translator of the version we read), states:

*Beowulf* is one of the longest as well as the most important of complete poems in Old English. It is not a relic of savage bygones, nor is it merely a document of historical importance. It is the only native English heroic epic, and one of the finest products of the Dark Ages of Europe . . .

Its theme is the conflict of good and evil. It is an expression of the fear of the dark, an examination of the nature and purpose of heroism, and the great statement of the Anglo-Saxon outlook and imagination . . .

It affirms the human being in a world where everything is transient, whether life, happiness, power, or splendor; where darkness too quickly follows upon light, just as the long northern winter overwhelms the brief season of spring.

**Topic 1:** Wright suggests Beowulf is partially a document of historical importance. When we read Beowulf, we learn a lot about the Anglo-Saxon life and the values held important during that time period. In your essay, prove that Beowulf is as much an important document of historical importance as it is a good story of fiction.

**Topic 2:** Wright implies that Beowulf has a message for us in the twentieth century just as it did for the Anglo-Saxon and early English people. Look carefully at the last section of Wright's statement. (By the way, what does Wright mean by "the dark"?) He seems to say that Beowulf is the universal story of our journey from adolescence to adulthood to old age and the growth in wisdom about self and the world gained through the pain and triumph of experience. Prove that it is true that most people are really little Beowulfs.

**Topic 3:** A significant amount has been said about what constitutes a hero--both in the Anglo-Saxon times as well as in our times today. The story of Beowulf is an epic which focuses, of course, on the struggles and triumphs of an epic hero--namely Beowulf. But is he all he's cracked up to be? When all is said and done, does he measure up? Does he deserve the honor of being called a hero? In this essay, discuss whether or not Beowulf ultimately deserves to be called a hero. Concentrate, first, on whether he would have been considered a hero in the eyes of the Anglo-Saxons. Next, discuss whether he would have heroic stature in our society today. Finally, discuss whether you feel, taking into account your personal definition of hero, Beowulf is a hero.

**NOTE:** you may use the personal pronouns "I, me, my, mine" ONLY in the 3rd section of the essay.

**Topic 4:** Much has been said of the Anglo-Saxon concept of the so-called "heroic ideal." The story starts out with Shild introduced as the model of this ideal. As translator Seamus Heaney indicated about Shild, "that was one good king." Yet, Raffel translated this same idea another way: "there was a brave king." Of what stuff is the Anglo-Saxon hero made? What traits does he possess? How does Beowulf differ, say, from Hrothgar and Unferth? Ultimately, would Beowulf be considered the penultimate Anglo-Saxon hero?

**Topic 5:** J. R. R. Tolkien has suggested that the theme of Beowulf deals with "man alien in a hostile world", engaged in a struggle which he cannot win . . .”. Agree with or refute this idea.

**Topic 6:** Some say, "it's a man's world." But there are women in Beowulf (some who participate in the actual storyline and others present in the lays). Think about the role of women in this epic poem. Are these inclusions significant to development of theme? Is the world of Beowulf clearly "a man's world"? Do the
women's roles help our understanding of the poem's world and themes and enrich the events of the poem?

Agree with or refute the idea that the inclusions of women in the poem are important and help our understanding the poem's world, themes, as well as enrich the events of the poem.

**Topic 7:** Beowulf is steeped in a pagan tradition that depicts nature as hostile and forces of death as uncontrollable. Blind fate picks random victims; man is never reconciled with the world. **Beowulf ends a failure.** Agree with or refute this idea.

**Topic 8:** **Beowulf is the story of a dual ordeal:** an external battle with vicious opponents and an equally important internal battle with human tendencies. Agree with or refute this idea.

**Topic 9:** Beowulf derives much of its flavor from the ingenious manner in which the heroic qualities of pre-Christian Germanic civilization (the pagan) are brought into harmony with Christianity. **The integration of the two worlds (pagan and Christian) is quite successful.** Agree with or refute this idea.

**Topic 10:** **Is Beowulf a Christian piece of literature? or pagan?**

Is the message ultimately a Christian one? Is it God or Fate who rules the universe of this poem? If all the references to Christianity were cut out of the poem, would the spirit and point of the poem change at all? If the poem is written by a Christian, why are there no references to Jesus and the story of salvation? What kinds of values and attitudes does the poet especially seem to hold? Agree or refute some of these ideas.

**Topic 11:** Think about the **lays and the other extensive speeches** in Beowulf. Prove that either the lays/speeches are vital to develop major themes/characters in the poem or that we could just as well have done without them.

**Topic 12:** How does Beowulf develop the theme of the importance of **interconnectedness**? How many times can you spot the word **alone** in the poem? What about references to **weaving**? What does the importance of the giving of **gifts** throughout the poem and **treasures** --treasures that are given and treasures that are selfishly hoarded--have to do with stressing the importance of being connected with others? (Remember the biblical question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

**Topic 13:** Take a close look at **Hrothgar's parting words to Beowulf**. Some have called his closing speech a "sermon" on pride and munificence. Is it a sermon? a Christian sermon? or a pagan lesson on kingship? Why is this "sermon" so critical to Beowulf's life? Does Beowulf become like Hrothgar? What does this epic poem say about the concept of **PRIDE**?

**TOPIC 14:** J. R. R. Tolkien, known to most of you as the author of that fantastical trilogy, **The Lord of the Rings,** was by training an academician--in fact, a medieval scholar. In his now famous 1936 essay, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," Tolkien writes:

It [Beowulf] is an heroic-elegiac poem; and in a sense all of its first 3136 lines are a prelude to a dirge . . . one of the most moving ever written.

Prove that Beowulf does or does not "live up to" this statement.

**TOPIC 15:** Don't forget! **You can create your own thesis** based on something of importance that came to mind after reading Beowulf or after considering the above essay questions. This question must be submitted beforehand for instructor approval. In order for me to consider it, you must write a preliminary thesis statement and rough outline. Then, make an appointment to discuss it for possible approval by ______________________

IDEAS: