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## TODAY

- COLLECT ASSIGNMENT CONTRACTS;
- Snowball follow-up: Why study literature?
- Background for *Beowulf*;
- Questions to consider for next day;
- Exeunt, severally.

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## LISTEN!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR464WBmAzs> (Jefferson Reardon)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lOJ21LmDlq> (sung by Benjamin Bagby)




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# HEOROT

Heorot is "a great mead-hall / meant to be a wonder of the world forever" (69-70):

.... The hall towered,  
its gables wide and high and awaiting  
a barbarous burning. That doom abided,  
but in time it would come: the killer instinct  
unleashed among in-laws, the blood-lust rampant.

(81-5)

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# Retasking Sacred Spaces

Pope Gregory to St. Augustine (6<sup>th</sup> century):

Do NOT destroy pagan temples but use them as Christian Churches so "that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they have been accustomed."

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# DOUBLE VISION

*BEOWULF*

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A Christian Church (ALLEGORY)  
built inside  
a pagan temple (HEROIC TRADITION)

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# THE HEROIC LAY

JOURNEY → ARRIVAL → FEAST

→ QUARREL WITH WORDS

→ FIGHT WITH WEAPONS

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# HEROIC CONFLICT

ETHICAL/MORAL BATTLE:

- CHOOSE between CONFLICTING VALUES:
  - Hospitality & loyalty to thanes;
  - Marriage & vengeance
  
- LOSING BATTLE: there is no choice that does not result in failure to uphold a key value

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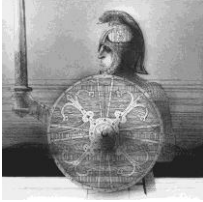
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## FACING FATE

INDIVIDUAL vs. FATE:  
 assert one's WILL by  
 choosing to face fate  
 bravely and with dignity




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## BEOWULF's CONFLICT

### CHRISTIAN STRUGGLE

- Sin and salvation
- Earthly and heavenly concerns
- Good and Evil

### ■ TRIUMPH OF HEAVENLY JUSTICE

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## ALLITERATIVE VERSE

ALLITERATION: first 3 stressed syllables start  
 with the same sound.

CAESURA: the line is broken in the middle with  
 a pause:

*Frumſceafƿ ƒira // feorran reccan*  
 Man's beginning // from far to recount

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## BALANCE and REVERSAL

"I can calm the turmoil and terror in his mind" (282)

"a hall-session that harrowed every Dane" (766)

.... The hall towered,  
 its gables wide and high and awaiting  
 a barbarous burning. That doom abided,  
 but in time it would come: the killer instinct  
 unleashed among in-laws, the blood-lust rampant.  
 (81-5)

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## FATE and PROVIDENCE

### GERMANIC FATE

- Cannot be evaded
- CONSOLATION:
  - WILL
  - FAME
- WERGILD
- Beowulf as AVENGER

- BALANCE
- REVERSAL

### PROVIDENCE

- God's plan for all beings
- CONSOLATION:
  - SPIRITUAL REWARD
- JUSTICE: Good vs. Evil
- Beowulf as SAVIOR

- DICHOTOMY
- TELEOLOGY

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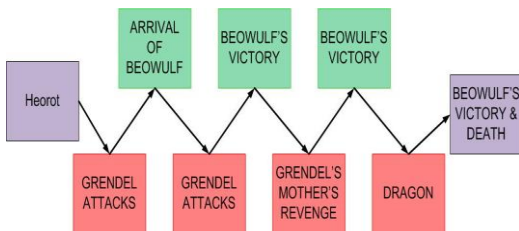
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## HEROIC REVERSALS




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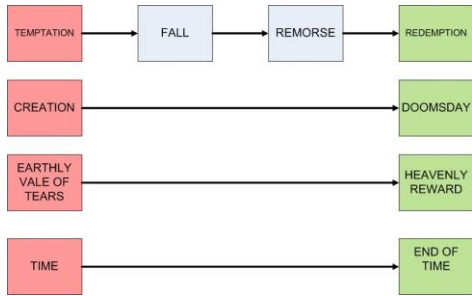
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# CHRISTIAN TELEOLOGY




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# THEMATIC & GENERIC TENSION

VENGEANCE vs. JUSTICE

EARTHLY REWARD vs. SPIRITUAL REWARD

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# QUESTIONS FOR NEXT DAY

- How does the text exhibit the tension between Germanic-heroic values and Christian values? Consider:
  - The imagery of armor;
  - The references to wealth and treasure;
  - The use of dichotomies: light/dark; quiet/noise; inside/outside; community/solitude.

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### QUESTIONS FOR NEXT DAY cont'd

- We are told that when Grendel comes to Heorot, "The iron-braced door / turned on its hinge when his hands touched it" (721-22). Why does the "mouth" of the hall open so easily to him? Consider:
  - The description of Grendel as both a denizen of the fens and part of "Cain's clan" (102-114)
  - ll. 115-21
  - ll. 480-87
  - The coast guard who looks outward for enemies (242-3).

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### QUESTIONS FOR NEXT DAY cont'd

- What is the significance of Beowulf's boast that he will kill Grendel in hand-to-hand combat (425-455)? Consider:
  - The inability of Beowulf's men to help him with their swords due to Grendel's magical imperviousness to metals (793-807);
  - The hall's inner destruction and strong outer structure (766-71).

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### QUESTIONS FOR NEXT DAY cont'd

- Beowulf is introduced to us MULTIPLE times. What is the purpose or effect of this repetition?

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