

Chapter 3

Words:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. Adder | 5. Hawthorn | 9. Pious |
| 2. Floundering | 6. Hoard | 10. transmute |
| 3. gewgawed | 7. Mange | |
| 4. Gild | 8. Mire | |

Questions:

1. How does Hrothgar build his empire?
2. How does Grendel describe this “growth”?
3. What values do the humans say they are promoting? What values do we see them promoting?
4. How does Hrothgar explain the purpose of this unceasing war? (What is his theory?)
5. The shaper is a literary allusion to...?
6. How does Grendel respond to the Shaper’s song? (look at the language, esp. diction)
7. How does the Shaper’s song compare with history?

Supplemental Readings:

Preface to Plato

8. What is so odd about Plato’s opinion of poets?
9. How does Plato characterize poetry?
10. Describe the allusions to Saint Paul and Samson & Delilah.
11. Explicate “We have our city of the soul to protect against her” (3).
12. Compare: “Just as the graphic artist employs illusionism to deceive us, so the acoustic effects employed by the poet confuse our intelligence.”(4) with Grendel’s description of the Shaper’s voice: “So he sang—or intoned, with the harp behind him...” (42)
13. How can poetry “rob” us of the truth?

Beowulf

14. Who was the original king of the Danes?
15. Who was his son?
16. What did Hrothgar build?
17. Who is Grendel descended from (according to the *Beowulf* poet)?
18. How many men did he eat on the first night of marauding?
19. Would Grendel negotiate for terms of peace?

Analysis

20. How does Gardner dramatize Thomas Hobbes’ story of human political development? Does the account in *Grendel* ring true? Why or why not?
21. How does art triumph over “reality”? What does this say about humans? Consider Havelock’s reading of the place of poets in Plato’s Republic. Picasso’s paradox may also

apply here: "Art is a lie that tells the truth." So what are (at least on of) the aims of art? How do they relate to the political sphere of action?

22. Are Grendel's morals really compromised as Plato might say? Remember, this is the young Grendel, at this point, who is NOT at war with the humans. Why is he so angry about being captivated by the sound of the Shaper's songs?