

# Beowulfiana: Modern Adaptations of Beowulf

by John William Sutton  
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This image of Grendel's arm hanging from the ceiling of Heorot was drawn by Dr. Sarah L. Higley, and appears as one of her many illustrations to *A Readable Beowulf*, translated by Stanley B. Greenfield (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982).

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Note: This online version of the bibliography was transformed into a Word document and PDF for deposit in the University of Rochester Research Repository in January of 2024.

## A Note on the Bibliography

This content relates to an exhibition of Beowulf artifacts in the Robbins Library from December 1, 2004 - March 15, 2005. My inspiration for this assortment of "Beowulfiana" (items based in some way upon the poem *Beowulf*) is the remarkable collection of Arthuriana assembled over many years by Dr. Alan Lupack. When I first beheld the broad scope and the sheer magnitude of his collection at the Camelot 2000 conference at the University of Rochester, I decided to begin my own collection, one that was devoted to my favorite work of literature, the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*. I chose not to include translations and editions of the poem (those materials that are already well known to scholars and students alike), but to focus instead on adaptations, retellings, and transformations into new media. These include fantasy novels, comic books, films, musical compositions, and a remarkably diverse range of other objects. The collection continues to grow at a steady pace, often leading me to marvel at the extent to which *Beowulf* has permeated twentieth- and twenty-first-century Anglophone culture. I welcome your comments and questions, which may be addressed to me at [johnwsutton44@gmail.com](mailto:johnwsutton44@gmail.com).

## Books

Anson, W. S. W., ed. "Beowulf." *Epics and Romances of the Middle Ages*. Adapted from the work of W. Wagner by M. W. MacDowall. 2nd ed. London: W. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1884. Pp. 347-64.

[This book contains stories about Roland, Siegfried, and other medieval tales in addition to a prose account of *Beowulf*; this retelling is among the earliest adaptations of the poem, and features some rather archaic renditions of character names ("Hunford" for Unferth, "Walchtheov" for Wealhtheow, etc.). The story is broken up into brief chapters that follow the narrative of the poem, but with a few exceptions: here Beowulf engages in his swimming match with Breca immediately prior to leaving for Heorot (in the poem it is implied that this event takes place considerably earlier); the feud between the Geats (here "Goths") and the Swedes is not told in flashback form, but is woven into the main storyline; and in the dragon episode the hero is assisted not by Wiglaf but by the youth's father, Weohstan (here "Wichstan").]

Bryher. *Beowulf*. New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1956.

[*Beowulf* is a fairly obscure Modernist novel by Bryher, the pen name of Annie Winifred Ellerman (1894-1983). The story is set during the London Blitz of World War II, and the characters are residents of a London neighborhood that is under constant threat of German bombardment; their "mascot" is a plaster bulldog named Beowulf. Symbolically, the neighbors represent the denizens of Heorot, while the German bombers—striking at night with invincible force and wreaking massive destruction—stand for Grendel.]

Crichton, Michael. *Eaters of the Dead: The Manuscript of Ibn Fadlan, Relating His Experiences with the Northmen in A.D. 922*. New York: Knopf, 1976; rpt. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.

[This book follows the exploits of a tenth-century Arab named Ahmad Ibn Fadlan, who travels with a band of Viking warriors (led by a Beowulf-like hero) on a quest to stamp out an ancient evil that threatens the people of the far north. The enemy here is not a single monster named Grendel, but a barbaric race called the "wendol," whom Crichton depicts as a group of Neanderthals that survived for thousands of years longer than others of their species. See also [The 13th Warrior](#).]

Dickerson, Matthew T. *The Finnsburg Encounter: A Novel*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991.

[Interestingly, the author of this novel of historical fiction is a professor at Middlebury College. Unlike the other writers who have adapted the Finnsburg narrative (see [here](#) and [here](#)), Dickerson casts the Frisians, not the Half-Danes, as the protagonists. The tale ends with the death of the heroic king Finn at the hands of Hengest, but we are left with the sense that the coming of Christianity will reform this culture of destructive feuding; Hildeburh, the heroine, is herself baptized late in the novel.]

Ebbutt, Maude. "Beowulf." *Myths & Legends of the British*. London: George G. Harrap & Company, 1910; rpt. London: Tiger Books International, 1998. Pp. 1-41.

[Ebbutt's straightforward prose retelling (with accompanying illustrations) is similar in length and style to many of the early adaptations for [children](#), but hers is meant for an adult audience. It is the first of 16 such tales in a volume that purports to be a collection of British myths, but is actually a miscellany of medieval hero tales (others include Roland, Robin Hood, Cuchulain, etc.).]

Gardner, John. *Grendel*. New York: Knopf, 1971; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

[In this highly acclaimed novel, originally published in 1971, Gardner retells the *Beowulf* narrative from the perspective of an adolescent Grendel, a temperamental but otherwise logical creature who grapples with complex issues of faith and reason. By telling a Grendel-centered story, Gardner helps to humanize the monster. *Grendel* has become a springboard for those who seek to use this character as a subversive figure who can question traditional beliefs and values. See also [Grendel Grendel Grendel](#).]

Godwin, Parke. *The Tower of Beowulf*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1995.

[This excellent novel offers a mix of historical fiction and fantasy in its complete retelling of Beowulf's life story, which is set against the backdrop of Norse gods competing against an ever-expanding Christian presence. Grendel, meanwhile, is heavily based upon [Gardner's](#) conception of the monster; he is the bastard son of the Danish king Scyld and the demigoddess Sigyn, daughter of the trickster god Loki.]

Hill, McKinley. *True Confessions of a Dumpster Diver or, Faster Thru the Biofractal: A Cyberpunk Version of the Beowulf Legend*. Bloomington, IN: 1<sup>st</sup> Books, 2000.

[In this novel one finds a nearly incomprehensible (and in many places poorly written) cyberpunk tale of a hero named Wulf, who attempts to stop a villainous ogre from spreading a virus (via a dragon-shaped jet) that would destroy mankind's DNA.]

Holt, Tom. *Who's Afraid of Beowulf?* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

[This whimsical novel has very little to do with the poem. It tells of a young American archaeologist who accidentally awakens a Viking warlord and his band of retainers; humorous misadventures ensue as the archaeologist and her new friends race to save the world from a wizard whom the Viking lord knew in his former days.]

Kiernan, Caitlin R. *Beowulf*. Based on the screenplay by Neil Gaiman and Roger Avary. New York: HarperEntertainment, 2007.

[The novelization of the Robert Zemeckis film *Beowulf*, complete with a glossary of the many Germanic names and terms that the author uses throughout.]

Lewis, Ernest. *Beowulf: Guide Dog To the Blind*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1936.

[Beowulf is a German Shepherd guard dog that comes into the service of an English pastor named Alan Stuart. When Stuart goes blind, Beowulf must become his guide. The novel is quite a paean to seeing-eye dogs.]

Magnusson, Magnus, Sheila Mackie, and Julian Glover. *Beowulf, an adaptation by Julian Glover of the Verse Translations of Michael Alexander and Edwin Morgan*. Gloucester, UK: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1987; rpt. 1988.

[This book contains the text of celebrated actor Julian Glover's one-man-show, a dramatic recitation of *Beowulf*. First performed in 1981, this oral performance attempted to evoke the style of the Anglo-Saxon *scop* (poet/storyteller). Glover's version of *Beowulf* keeps to the main plot of the three monster battles (Grendel, Grendel's Mother, and the dragon). Sheila Mackie accompanies the text with illustrations based upon Sutton Hoo motifs, while Magnusson provides a literary and historical introduction.]

Niven, Larry. *Crashlander*. New York: Del Rey, 1994.

[In this collection of short stories, Niven has gathered all his previously published tales of the character Beowulf Shaeffer, and has added some new material to link them all together into a cohesive narrative. The stories are science-fiction, but they make some use of Beowulfian themes.]

Niven, Larry, Jerry Pournelle, and Steven Barnes. *The Legacy of Heorot*. New York: Pocket Books, 1987.

[Niven and his partners tell the story of a distant planet where human colonists encounter indigenous reptilian creatures possessing lightning speed and incredible strength; the colonists call them "grendels," and their escalating feud with the creatures provides the major plot for the novel. See also *Beowulf's Children*.]

Niven, Larry, Jerry Pournelle, and Steven Barnes. *Beowulf's Children*. New York: Tor Books, 1995.

[This is the sequel to *The Legacy of Heorot*. We return to the planet years later and find a stark generation gap between the original settlers (those who survived the battles against the grendels in *Legacy*) and their teenaged children, who resent and distrust the ways of their elders. The grendels remain an ever-present threat, but the greatest danger the colony faces comes from within.]

Ragozin, Zenaide A. *Tales of the Heroic Ages: Siegfried, the Hero of the North, and Beowulf, the Hero of the Anglo-Saxons*. Illustrated by George T. Tobin. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898.

[To compensate, as the author says in the preface, for the abundance of tales from the Greco-Roman tradition, this volume presents retellings of two great Germanic epics: the *Nibelungenlied* and *Beowulf*. The *Beowulf* adaptation is a prose rendition that follows the basic plot of the poem. Minor alterations include Beowulf's people referred to as Goths instead of Geats.]

Schaefer, Frank. *Whose Song is Sung*. New York: Tor Books, 1996.

[One of the better fantasy novels based upon the poem, this is the story of Musculus Herodes Formosus, a cunning dwarf from the Byzantine empire who, after many adventures, joins Beowulf's crew and helps the hero face a monster called Grundbur.]

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*. London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1937; rpt. New York: Ballantine Books, 1989.

[When renowned medievalist scholar Tolkien created his fantasy world of Middle Earth, he drew upon his extensive knowledge of medieval languages and literatures, infusing his tale of the hobbit Bilbo Baggins with motifs from *Beowulf*, *The Saga of the Volsungs*, and other sources. The most overt debt of this book (first published in 1937) to *Beowulf* can be seen when Bilbo sneaks into the lair of the dragon Smaug to pilfer treasure on behalf of his dwarven employers. See also *The Lord of the Rings*.]

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1954-56; rpt. New York: Ballantine Books, 1989.

[Like *The Hobbit*, the three books of this legendary fantasy trilogy—*The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King* (first published 1954-56)—are replete with themes and characters drawn from medieval works like *Beowulf*; the Kingdom of Rohan, for instance, is highly reminiscent of the court of Hrothgar.]

Treece, Henry. *The Green Man*. New York: Paperback Library, Inc., 1966; rpt. 1968.

[Treece's final novel is based on the story of the Danish prince Amleth (the ultimate source for Shakespeare's *Hamlet*), as told by the thirteenth-century historian Saxo Grammaticus. Beowulf

has an extensive supporting role as a rather unheroic pirate-king. King Arthur also makes an appearance in this surprisingly excellent amalgamation of Celtic and Norse traditions.]

Willingham, Bill. *The Monster Maker*. Beowulf 1. Austin, TX: Clockwork Storybook, Inc., 2002.

[This novella takes place in modern times, but in an alternate reality where magic and other supernatural forces are real. The immortal Beowulf (out of work since his license to practice heroism was revoked) is recruited by an organization called the Saint George Group and given the opportunity to resume his career as a monster-slayer. Beowulf then heads to Montana to find out why all the citizens of a small village have committed suicide. He ultimately discovers that his own son, fathered centuries ago in Gaul, is responsible for the deaths. Both men are in the same helicopter as it crashes into the ocean, but the book ends with Beowulf unsure that his evil son perished. See also [Hyde & Seek](#).]

Willingham, Bill. *Hyde & Seek*. Beowulf 2. Austin, TX: Clockwork Storybook, Inc., 2002.

[This is the second book in Willingham's Beowulf series (see also [the previous entry](#)). This adventure draws from Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and pits Beowulf and the Saint George Group against a demonic presence known as the Pacific Coast Terror.]

## Children's Books

Beatty, John O. *Swords in the Dawn: A Story of The First Englishmen*. Illustrated by Henry C. Pitz. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1937.

[This is a tale of Hengist, one of the chief characters of the Anglo-Saxon "Finnsburh" narrative (a story that appears in a fragmentary poem called *The Fight at Finnsburh* and in a summary recounted in *Beowulf*). Beatty, making a common (and most likely misguided) leap of faith, links this individual to the Hengist/Hengest who was, according to legend, the leader of the Germanic migration to Britain in the mid-fifth century. See also [The Finnsburg Encounter: A Novel](#) and [Hengest's Tale](#).]

Brady, Charles A. *The King's Thane*. Illustrated by Henry C. Pitz. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961.

[This reconfiguring of the *Beowulf* narrative is told from the perspective of Beorn, a crippled boy who serves the Norse hero Bjarki, later called Beowulf. Brady transposes the Grendel story from Hrothgar's Denmark to King Edwin's Northumbria (northern England), and the action takes place during the conversion of the English to Christianity.]

Geisel, Theodor (Dr. Seuss). *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. New York: Random House, 1957; rpt. 1985.

[At least one scholar sees Grendel as the inspiration for one of Dr. Seuss's most famous characters: see Robert L. Schichler, "Understanding the Outsider: Grendel, Geisel, and the Grinch," *Popular Culture Review* 11.1 (Feb. 2000), 99-105.]

Green, John. *Beowulf*. Dover Coloring Book. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2007.

[This coloring book contains 30 full-page illustrations. It opens with a young Beowulf and his battles against sea monsters, proceeds through the Heorot episodes (Grendel and his mother are tall and human-like, with pointed ears and tattered clothes), and ends with Beowulf's funeral. Fight scenes are plentiful, but unlike many other children's retellings, this book avoids graphically violent images.]

Guerber, H. A. "Beowulf." *Legends of the Middle Ages, narrated with special reference to literature and art*. New York: American Book Company, 1896. Pp. 9-21.

[*Beowulf* is the first of 18 medieval tales retold by Guerber; others include the life of Charlemagne, the basic story of Tristan and Iseult, and the *Nibelungenlied*. A notable feature of this author's work is that he sprinkles passages from early verse translations of *Beowulf* throughout his prose account. Guerber's retelling is clearly intended as more of a detailed plot summary than a typical story, however; consider it a nineteenth-century Cliffs Notes version of *Beowulf*.]

Heiderstadt, Dorothy. "Beowulf, Hero of the North." *Knights and Champions*. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960. Pp. 27-37.

[The *Beowulf* adaptation in this book is one of many tales about the deeds of renowned warriors from history and myth (others include St. George, El Cid, and Edward the Black Prince). The author's rather uninspired retelling is essentially a plot summary, and it focuses almost exclusively on the hero's three monster battles.]

Hosford, Dorothy. *By His Own Might: The Battles of Beowulf*. Illustrated by Laszlo Matulay. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1947; rpt. 1967.

[A prose retelling of the complete *Beowulf* narrative.]

Katz, Welwyn Wilton. *Beowulf*. Illustrated by Laszlo Gal. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 1999; rpt. 2000.

[Written by one of Canada's top children's writers and featuring lavish illustrations, this book centers on the character Wiglaf, who, as a young boy, learns from his grandfather about Beowulf's exploits. Later, when Wiglaf is a member of Beowulf's band, he accompanies the king on his final journey to face the dragon.]

Kimmel, Eric A. *The Hero Beowulf*. Illustrated by Leonard Everett Fisher. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

[Lush, full-page illustrations characterize this prose retelling that begins with Beowulf's deeds as a youth (embellished greatly from the poem) and then follows the hero to Heorot, where he defeats Grendel (a green-skinned, gap-toothed troll who also happens to be balding). This Grendel, before losing his arm to the hero, first tempts him with promises of treasures. The book ends with the celebration of Beowulf's victory over Grendel.]

Lewis, Brenda Ralph. "Beowulf." *Timeless Myths*. Illustrated by Rob McCaig. Cambridge, UK: Brimax Books, 1980. Pp. 24-32.

[This prose retelling for young children (covering the first two monster battles) is from a book of famous Greek and Germanic tales (Perseus, Siegfried, etc.). The 8x11 pages are filled with



colorful illustrations, over which the text is superimposed. Grendel appears as a gigantic green reptilian creature (with the obligatory loincloth). The plot deviates from the poem in a few ways, most notably in that Grendel's Mother carries off Beowulf himself (not Hrothgar's friend Aeschere) to her lair, where she prepares to boil him in her cauldron. Beowulf kills her with a giant's sword, as in the poem, but here the sword is identified as Grendel's.]

McMullan, Kate (K. H.). *The New Kid At School*. The Dragon Slayers' Academy, book 1. Illustrated by Bill Basso. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1997.

[This is the first in a series called The Dragon Slayers' Academy, which in many ways is akin to the Harry Potter books, but geared toward younger readers. The hero of this series is named Wiglaf, a likable but often befuddled young pupil at the Academy. See also [A Wedding for Wiglaf?](#)]

McMullan, Kate (K. H.). *A Wedding for Wiglaf?* The Dragon Slayers' Academy, book 4. Illustrated by Bill Basso. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1998.

[Young Wiglaf finds himself in trouble when he fears that he will have to marry an overbearing princess. See also [The New Kid At School](#).]

Nye, Robert. *Beowulf: A New Telling*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1968; rpt. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1982.

[A prose retelling of the complete *Beowulf* narrative. The book is notable mainly for a plot twist at the end, in which Beowulf kills the dragon using a swarm of bees.]

Osborne, Mary Pope. "Beowulf." *Favorite Medieval Tales*. Illustrated by Troy Howell. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1998. Pp. 8-16.

[The tale of Beowulf is recounted briefly in this illustrated collection that also summarizes such works as *The Song of Roland*. Osborne's retelling covers only the events from the appearance of Grendel to Beowulf's departure after the death of Grendel's Mother.]

Paton Walsh, Jill. *Hengest's Tale*. Illustrated by Jean Margrie. London: Macmillan, 1966; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Puffin Books, 1976.

[Paton Walsh also equates the Hengest from Finnsburh with the legendary Hengest who led the Germanic migration to Britain. See also [Swords in the Dawn: A Story of The First Englishmen](#) and [The Finnsburg Encounter: A Novel](#).]

Patten, Brian. *Beowulf and the Monster*. Illustrated by Chris Riddell. London: Scholastic Children's Books, 1999.

[This prose retelling for young children is punctuated by occasional four-line stanzas of verse; for instance, Grendel repeatedly taunts the people of Heorot with the following: "Sweet human meat's the best to eat, / And human bones the best to grind. / Human blood will flow again / And cold terror haunt the human mind." Beowulf arrives with no companions, and when he faces Grendel in Heorot he begins by hiding in the shadows and assailing the monster with riddles. Grendel's Mother, "the Hag," is described as "the first and most terrible witch in the world" (p. 43). The tunnel to her underwater stronghold is blocked by three huge, magical boulders; each of these rocks tests Beowulf with a riddle before he can pass. When the hero

slays the Hag with a shard of human bone, he drags the carcasses of both monsters to the surface for all to behold.]

Potter, Tessa. *Beowulf and the Dragon*. Illustrated by Simon Noyes. Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby Education, 1996.

[With colorful illustrations on every page, this book covers (in free verse) the *Beowulf* story from the introduction of the dragon through Beowulf's funeral and burial. The author also includes some background information on Anglo-Saxon England that is aimed at the book's young readers.]

Pratt, Mara L. "Beowulf." *Stories From Old Germany*. Vol. 1. Boston: Educational Publishing Company, 1895. Pp. 139-53.

[This nineteenth-century book, the earliest children's version of *Beowulf* that I am aware of, presents the following plot: Grendel attacks Hrothgar's people, Beowulf learns of this and proves his valor in a swimming match against Breca, and then the hero travels to Denmark to defeat the monster and his mother.]

Riggs, Strafford. *The Story of Beowulf*. Illustrated by Henry A. Pitz. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1933.

[This early retelling begins with the hero's youth among the Geats (the swimming match with Breca, etc.), but then follows the poem's ordering of the events once Beowulf and his crew arrive in Hrothgar's realm; it ends with Beowulf's death and funeral.]

Rumford, James. *Beowulf: A Hero's Tale Retold*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007.

[The author uses an almost exclusively Germanic vocabulary in this retelling that closely follows the plot of the poem. The book features watercolor illustrations on every page.]

Saxby, Maurice. "Beowulf." *The Great Deeds of Superheroes*. Illustrated by Robert Ingpen. Newtown, Australia: Millennium Books Pty Ltd, 1989; rpt. Limpsfield, UK: Dragon's World Limited, 1989. Pp. 120-29.

[This volume contains tales of 'superheroes' from ancient Greece, the Old Testament, and medieval Europe. In a straightforward prose narrative, the *Beowulf* selection retells the complete story chronologically (starting with Beowulf's swimming match with Breca), although very little attention is given to the dragon episode. The *Beowulf* tale also features two beautiful full-page illustrations: one of a young Beowulf, the other of Beowulf grappling with Grendel's talon-like claw.]

Schmitt, Gladys. *The Heroic Deeds of Beowulf*. Illustrated by Walter Ferro. New York: Random House, 1962.

[This prose adaptation is low on violence and meant for younger children. It depicts the events from the building of Heorot up to Beowulf's coronation as king of the Geats.]

Serraillier, Ian. *Beowulf the Warrior*. Illustrated by Severin. London: Oxford University Press, 1954; rpt. Bathgate, ND: Bethlehem Books, 2000.

[A retelling of the complete *Beowulf* narrative, in verse.]

Smith, C. F. Bricknell. *Beowulf*. Illustrated by L. H. Bennett-Collins. Exeter, UK: A. Wheaton & Company Limited, 1951.

[Part of a series called The Young Readers' Library (books about myths and legends), this prose retelling for intermediate readers stays close to the plot of the poem; the story runs from the building of Heorot to Beowulf's funeral.]

Strickland, Brad. *Be a Wolf!*. The Adventures of Wishbone #1. Allen, TX: Big Red Chair Books, 1997.

[The popular children's book character Wishbone (a playful Jack Russell terrier who loves reading) pretends that he lives out the adventures of Beowulf after his master, Joe, runs afoul of the mysterious Mrs. Grindle and her terrifying bulldog. Wishbone must demonstrate courage—he must 'be a wolf'—on his imagined adventures, which follow the basic plot of the poem, from the hero's battles with Grendel (this canine Beowulf pulls off the monster's arm with his teeth) and Grendel's Mother (he holds the sword in his jaw) to his fatal encounter with the dragon.]

Sutcliff, Rosemary. *Dragon Slayer: The Story of Beowulf*. Illustrated by Charles Keeping. London: Bodley Head, 1961; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Puffin Books, 1979.

[Among the more famous novelizations of *Beowulf*, this book offers a complete retelling of the narrative.]

Szobody, Michelle L. *Beowulf, Book 1: Grendel the Ghastly*. Illustrated by Justin Gerard. Greenville, SC: Portland Studios, Inc., 2008.

[Featuring beautiful full-page illustrations, this adaptation of the first third of the poem also includes footnotes with pronunciations and an appendix describing important characters, concepts, and even poetic terminology (litotes, metonymy, etc.).]

Thomson, C. L. *The Adventures of Beowulf*. London: Horace Marshall and Son, 1899; rpt. 1904.

[This prose adaptation (which Thomson claims is in the 'style' of Old English) for schoolchildren follows the basic plot of the three monster battles, but it omits most other episodes that do not pertain directly to Beowulf's personal story. The text is complemented by a few black-and-white illustrations and photographs (e.g., a facsimile of a page from the original manuscript).]

## Comic Books

Antczak, Stephen L., James C. Bassett, and Andy Lee. *Beowulf: The Legend*. Special Convention Edition. VLE Comics, 2006.

[Andy Lee's allusive, abstract black-and-white illustrations constitute the most striking aspect of this comic, but *The Legend* is also notable for weaving together the conventional *Beowulf* storyline and the 'sub-plot' about Hrothgar's daughter Freawaru and her betrothal to the warlord Ingeld. Here, Beowulf has an affair with Freawaru while the spiteful Ingeld and Hrothgar's cunning wife Wealhtheow (who fears that Hrothgar will make Beowulf his heir) plot against the hero. The story ends with Grendel's Mother slain and Freawaru

explaining to Beowulf that she can best serve her people by marrying Ingeld and thereby ending the feud between his people and the Danes.]

Augustyn, Brian. *Beowulf: Gods and Monsters*. Speakeasy Comics, 2005-06.

[This series made its debut in April 2005, with the first few issues laying the foundation for a rich and intricate storyline. The premise of the series (set in modern-day New York) is that an alarming number of ordinary people have spontaneously developed superhuman powers. Meanwhile, the immortal hero Wulf awaits the coming of a cataclysmic threat and helps the emerging 'supers' as well as he can—just as the shadowy Knights of the Blood try to control or destroy them. Unfortunately, only seven issues were produced before Speakeasy Comics shut down operations in early 2006.]

Bingham, Jerry. *Beowulf*. First Comics, 1984.

[This graphic novel presents a complete and straightforward retelling of the *Beowulf* narrative.]

Fajardo, Alexis E. *Kid Beowulf*. San Francisco: Lexpress, 2005.

[The first in a series of book-length graphic novels, *Kid Beowulf* recounts the adventures of a twelve-year-old Beowulf and his twin brother Grendel (they are the offspring of the Geat warrior Ecgtheow and the cursed shape-shifter Gertrude). *Kid Beowulf* is intended as a comedy, but the jokes routinely fall flat; even so, Fajardo has certainly succeeded in creating a unique re-imagining of the poem.]

Gustovich, Mike, and Mike Gorman. "Beowulf." *The Lands of Prester John*. Vol. 1.1. Noble Comics Group, 1977. Pp. 28-31.

[In this collection of "illustrated fantasy," a few of the key moments in *Beowulf* are depicted in full-page black-and-white illustrations.]

Hinds, Gareth. *The Collected Beowulf*. TheComic.com, 1999-2000; rpt. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2007.

[This graphic novel contains the three issues of Hinds's retelling of the *Beowulf* narrative. Each issue covers one of the major battle episodes (Grendel, Grendel's Mother, the dragon), and each is drawn in a distinctly different artistic style. The hardcover 2007 reprint adds extra luster to this superb comic book adaptation.]

Hutchison, David. *Beowulf*. Antarctic Press, 2006-Present.

[This most recent *Beowulf* comic book is the first manga (the Japanese style of comic book art) adaptation. The story takes place in an alternate universe with highly advanced technology. In the first three issues, we learn that the cunning Hrothgar has united the nations of the world, but he is unable to defeat Grendel; he recruits Beowulf, the hard-bitten leader of a mercenary team, to assist him. Beowulf battles Grendel, and each rips off the other's arm (Beowulf attaches Grendel's severed claw to his own body). Beowulf pursues the fleeing Grendel and defeats Grendel's Mother, a shapeshifter, learning in the process that Hrothgar is Grendel's father, and that Grendel was originally a human who, on his deathbed, was transformed into a cybernetic monster by his father's technology.]

Petrucha, Stefan, and Kody Chamberlain. *Beowulf*. HarperTrophy, 2007.

[A graphic novel that faithfully adapts the complete narrative of the poem.]

Ryall, Chris. *Beowulf*. IDW Publishing, 2007.

[This four-issue series adapts the *Beowulf* film directed by Robert Zemeckis and written by Neil Gaiman and Roger Avary. At the end of each issue, the authors provide lengthy excerpts from Francis Gummere's famous translation (1910). The third and fourth issues contain essays discussing, respectively, *Beowulf* adaptations in film and in comic books.]

Uslan, Michael. *Beowulf: Dragon Slayer*. DC Comics, 1975-76.

[Though this comic survived for only six issues, it is billed as the story of the "first and greatest hero of them all"—no small claim for DC Comics, the home of Superman and Batman. *Beowulf*'s adventures in this series, while ludicrous, today might be enjoyed as campy fun. The comic depicts a horned-helmeted Beowulf who fights against the minions of Satan (including a *Gardner-inspired* Grendel) alongside his band of companions and his Amazonian sidekick Nan-Zee. In his wanderings he also battles enemies ranging from Dracula to aliens in flying saucers.]

Wagner, Matt. *Grendel: Devil by the Deed*. Dark Horse, 1993, 1997.

[Wagner's popular antihero Grendel, a masked assassin, has been in existence since the early 1980s. The first *Grendel* storyline tells of a child prodigy named Hunter Rose who adopts the pseudonym Grendel and rises to prominence as a fearsome assassin. His chief enemy is the wolf-man Argent, a kind of twisted Beowulf figure who ultimately slays him. The graphic novel *Devil by the Deed* retells and summarizes this original story arc. See also *Grendel Cycle* and *Batman/Grendel: Devil's Masque*.]

Wagner, Matt. *Grendel Cycle*. Dark Horse, 1995.

[This graphic novel is a kind of encyclopedia of the "Grendel universe." It chronicles the long, tangled story—stretching from contemporary times into the far future—of those who have taken up the identity of the assassin Grendel. See also *Grendel: Devil by the Deed* and *Batman/Grendel: Devil's Masque*.]

Wagner, Matt. *Batman/Grendel: Devil's Masque*. DC Comics, 1993.

[Grendel's popularity has not reached the level of such iconic characters as Superman or Spider-Man, but he has certainly left his mark on the comic book world. This book is an example of a crossover story in which the masked assassin faces off against Batman. See also *Grendel: Devil by the Deed* and *Grendel Cycle*.]

## Music

Beowulf. *Slice of Life*. Morrhythm Records, 1980.

[Beowulf was one of many hard rock/heavy metal bands playing the L.A. scene in the early 1980s. *Slice of Life* was the only album they recorded before breaking up. Like the more recent *heavy metal band* of the same name, this group's connection to the poem is purely in their appropriation of the name.]

Beowulf. *Lost My Head...But I'm Back on the Right Track*. Caroline Records, Inc., 1988.

[Not the same group as [the previous entry](#). The thrash metal band Beowulf seems only to be drawing on the name of the poem. *Lost My Head* is a largely uninspired album that features proficient guitar work but otherwise has little to recommend it. See also Beowulf's later albums [Un-Sentimental](#), [2 Cents](#), and [Westminster & 5th](#).]

Beowulf. *Un-Sentimental*. Restless Records, 1993.

[Vocalist Dale Henderson returns with a second offering of intense heavy metal. This time his band Beowulf is billed as BWF. See also [Lost My Head](#), [2 Cents](#), and [Westminster & 5th](#).]

Beowulf. *2 Cents*. Restless Records, 1995.

[See also [Lost My Head](#), [Un-Sentimental](#), and [Westminster & 5th](#). The album *2 Cents* includes a few songs that would be worth multiple listenings for fans of the thrash metal genre.]

Beowulf. *Westminster & 5th*. I Scream Records, Inc., 2007.

[The first new Beowulf album in 12 years offers still more high-speed thrash metal. The instrumental work is solid, but the lyrics are generic and uninspired. See also [Lost My Head](#), [Un-Sentimental](#), and [2 Cents](#).]

Beowulf. *Wotansvolk*. Eastside Records, 2002.

[Not the same group as [this](#) Beowulf or [this](#) one. *Wotansvolk*, or "Odin's People," is the product of a Czech heavy metal band, and many of the songs draw from the themes and characters of Norse mythology. Most of the tracks are in Czech, but there is a bit of English as well.]

Danny McCulloch's Friends. *Beowulf*. Edsel Records, 1995.

[This is the second solo album from well-traveled British bass player McCulloch. It is not immediately clear to what degree he has the poem in mind, but in any case the album offers some good light rock with a lot of soul.]

Davies, Victor. *Beowulf: A Musical Epic*. Libretto by Betty Jane Wylie. Daffodil Records, 1974.

[This Canadian musical drama closely follows the plot of the poem.]

Goldenthal, Elliot. *Grendel*. Dir. Julie Taymor. Libretto by Julie Taymor and J. D. McClatchy. Lincoln Center Festival 2006, July 11, 13, 15, 16.

[This item is the playbill for the New York debut of the opera *Grendel*, based upon John Gardner's [novel](#) of the same title. *Grendel* had made its world premiere with The LA Opera the previous month.]

Grendel. *Beowulf*. Narok Records, 2005.

[Not the same group as [this](#), [this](#), or [this](#) band of the same name. Grendel is an Italian black metal group. *Beowulf* is a middle-of-the-road concept album with songs based on characters and episodes from the poem.]

Grendel. *Grendel*. Husk Records, 1994.

[Not the same group as [this](#), [this](#), or [this](#) band of the same name. This grunge-rock band seems to have adopted the name "Grendel" to suit the gloomy, angst-ridden tone of its music. The songs are of widely varying quality, which should not be surprising given that this album was entirely self-produced.]

Grendel. *School Vehicle*. Resin Records, 1996.

[Not the same group as [this](#), [this](#), or [this](#) band of the same name. This album consists of a number of fairly interchangeable punk/grunge tracks.]

Grendel. *Prescription: Medicide*. Metropolis Records, 2004.

[Not the same group as [this](#), [this](#), or [this](#) band of the same name. This odd electronica band (the two performers call themselves VLRK and 4N1T4), much like the previous groups, seems to have adopted the name for its evocative quality alone. The album is repetitive, droning, and relentlessly pessimistic. See also [Soilbleed](#) and [Harsh Generation](#).]

Grendel. *Soilbleed*. Metropolis Records, 2005.

[*Soilbleed* is the second album from electronica duo VLRK and 4N1T4 (see also their [first](#) and [third](#)), and it seems to be oriented around a general antiwar message. Those interested in the electronica genre will find some of the tracks catchy, but the album is low on substance: two of the seven songs are remixes of the monotonous title track, in which vocalist VLRK menacingly hisses the word "Soilbleed" over and over.]

Grendel. *Harsh Generation*. Metropolis Records, 2007.

[See also Grendel's [first](#) and [second](#) albums. *Harsh Generation* is another offering of Euro-techno-electronica.]

Hanson, Howard. "Lament for Beowulf." Opus 25. 1925.

[Hanson, one of America's greatest composers, was inspired by William Morris's translation to craft a musical interpretation of the hero's funeral. His masterpiece "Lament for Beowulf" ranks among the best creative works based upon the poem. See also [this recording](#).]

Hanson, Howard. "Symphony No. 2 ("Romantic"), Op. 30; Lament for Beowulf." Eastman-Rochester Orchestra and Eastman School of Music Chorus. Mercury Records, no date.

[This record contains two of Hansons's best known works, "Symphony No. 2" and "[Lament for Beowulf](#)".]

Hasty Pudding Theatricals. "The Boy Who Cried Beowulf." 1970.

[This is the soundtrack to a musical comedy that lampoons the *Beowulf* story. "The Boy Who Cried Beowulf" was staged as the 122nd annual production of Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals.]

Marillion. "Grendel." *Essential Collection*. EMI Records Ltd., 1996.

[Originally released on *Script for a Jester's Tear* (Never, 1983), this "power ballad" from the '80s British rock group Marillion presents a righteous Grendel who attacks the Danes

(Marillion's Danes seem to stand for modern-day Britons) with God's authority because the Danes' culture is rife with greed and vice. See also "[Grendel](#)," "[The Web](#)".]

Phillips, Flip. *Cookin' at the Beowulf*. Grendel Records, 1978.

[Saxophone legend Flip Phillips recorded this album at a jazz club called The Beowulf in Lighthouse Point, Florida. The music, however, has no obvious connection to the poem.]

Pickering, Ken, and Keith Cole. *Beowulf, A Rock Musical*. Schulenburg, TX: I. E. Clark, 1986.

[This item is the libretto for a British musical from the early 1980s. *Beowulf, A Rock Musical* is meant for school-aged children, and is notable for its depiction of Grendel as a black-hearted, cockney punk rocker—a clear reaction against the punk's place as a '70s and '80s anti-establishment icon.]

## Film

*The 13th Warrior*. Dir. John McTiernan. 1999.

[This is the film version of Michael Crichton's novel [Eaters of the Dead](#), and stars Antonio Banderas as the Arab hero Ibn Fahdlan. The film features excellent sets, intense battle scenes, and an appealing portrait of the early medieval Germanic *comitatus* (fellowship) of an aristocratic lord and his band of loyal retainers.]

*Beowulf*. Dir. Graham Baker. 1999.

[Christopher Lambert plays the title role in this post-apocalyptic sci-fi retelling of the story. The film draws much from Westerns for its visual style, particularly in its depiction of the cowboy-like Beowulf. With the help of Hrothgar's spunky daughter Kyra, the hero takes on the monster Grendel and his mother (here a sexy shape-shifter, performed by a *Playboy* Playmate). Overall, the film is derivative and insipid.]

*Beowulf*. Dir. Robert Zemeckis. 2007.

[With a screenplay by Neil Gaiman and Roger Avary, and stars including Anthony Hopkins and John Malkovich, this film represents an impressive collection of creativity and talent. In addition, the motion-capture animation is far more lifelike than in *The Polar Express*, Zemeckis's earlier foray into this technology. Although the film was a critical and commercial success—and deservedly so—it deviates sharply from the plot and tone of the poem. The film continues the post-[Gardner](#) tendency to portray Grendel in sympathetic terms and the Danes as somehow responsible for their misfortunes; to that end, the film depicts Hrothgar as Grendel's father. The same twist can be found in Godwin's [Tower of Beowulf](#).]

*Beowulf & Grendel*. Dir. Sturla Gunnarsson. 2005.

[In this version of the tale, Grendel and his kin are not monsters, but primitive cavemen. The bulk of the film depicts Beowulf's attempts to track and defeat the elusive Grendel, who only has a taste for Danes—because Hrothgar long ago murdered his father. Major additions to the plot include a proselytizing Christian priest (even Hrothgar himself gets baptized) and a witch named Selma who welcomes Beowulf into her bed, and, as we learn at the end of the film, is the mother of Grendel's child. Filmed in the director's native Iceland, this movie features



beautiful location shots, realistic sets, and impressive costumes. Unfortunately, the film suffers from a host of flaws, including underdeveloped characters and hokey dialogue (e.g., "I look like walrus shit," or "This troll must be one tough prick"). The film's rather unabashed moralizing, however, is its greatest downfall. It is a revisionist telling, and although subversive adaptations of *Beowulf* often can function as insightful and provocative critiques of Western culture (consider John Gardner's excellent novel *Grendel*), this film continually browbeats the audience with its message that the Germanic 'heroes' are the real monsters here, and the so-called monsters are actually just the marginalized and oppressed victims of the dominant culture. Selma's lines, in particular, sound rather like an English professor's lesson about how Western culture demonizes 'the Other.']

*Beware: Children at Play*. Dir. Mik Cribben. 1989.

[This bizarre low-budget horror film pits a UFO investigator and his friends against a cult of cannibalistic children who murder any adults foolish enough to stray into their realm deep in the woods. The children are led by a boy who witnessed the traumatic death of his father (a professor of Anglo-Saxon literature, no less!) and now believes himself to be Grendel. All the major characters, as well as the evil children, are wiped out by the end of this poorly written, poorly acted film.]

*Clash of the Titans*. Dir. Desmond Davis. 1981.

[The plot is taken directly from Greek mythology and follows the exploits of Perseus (Harry Hamlin), but the narrative structure is clearly Beowulfian: first the hero faces the Grendel-like man-monster Calibos, then Medusa in her dank lair, and finally the dragon-like Kraken.]

*Grendel*. Dir. Nick Lyon. 2007.

[This made-for-TV film debuted on the SciFi Channel, and features horned helmets, phony British accents, and shockingly unconvincing CGI monsters. Beowulf sets out for Denmark with his customary generic companions, but also Hygelac's headstrong young nephew, Finn. Beowulf swears to liberate Heorot (which here looks like an ancient Roman city), but his first fight against Grendel (a hairy giant with incredibly thick arms) is a draw. Hrothgar explains that the Danes have long provided human sacrifices to Grendel and his mother, but now they have run out of children, which is why Grendel is attacking them. Beowulf tracks down Grendel and ultimately kills the beast with help from a magical crossbow loaned to him by Hygelac. Grendel's Mother, a winged reptilian creature, soon comes for revenge, kidnapping Finn's new Danish girlfriend. Unferth (here Hrothgar's son), a rival suitor for the young lady, goes after Grendel's Mother and is slain. Then Finn himself is seized by the monster. Beowulf alone seeks out her lair. Grendel's Mother gets the upper hand on Beowulf, but the wounded Finn, Wiglaf-like, comes to his lord's aid, shooting the monster in the back with the magical crossbow. Beowulf then decapitates her. A running theme throughout the film is the notion that a man's story is all that remains of him when he is gone.]

*Grendel Grendel Grendel*. Dir. Alexander Stitt. 1981.

[Peter Ustinov is the voice of the monster in this excellent animated film based on John Gardner's novel *Grendel*. Here, Grendel is a bulky green creature with a prominent alligator

snout and a decidedly aristocratic demeanor. Hrothgar and his minions, meanwhile, are boorish idiots who speak in comical Monty Python-style accents. Grendel's desire to join the human community is gradually overcome by his realization that these creatures are hypocritical and petty.]

"Grendel," "The Web." Marillion. Dir. Martin Bell. 1984.

[This VHS video tape (sadly, viewable only on VCRs from the United Kingdom) contains a live performance of these two classic Marillion rock songs. See also the entry for [Marillion](#).]

"Heroes and Demons." Dir. Les Landau. *Star Trek: Voyager*. 1995.

[On the starship *Voyager*, a crew member programs the holo-deck to create an interactive depiction of the poem *Beowulf*, but then he and others disappear without a trace after encountering the monster Grendel—here a squid-like blob of light. It turns out that the *Voyager* crew had unwittingly captured an energy-based alien being, which abducted the humans only in response to being imprisoned itself. None too subtle is the episode's message about not judging individuals by their appearance. "Heroes and Demons" is discussed in an issue of *The Official Star Trek: Voyager Magazine* (issue #4, October 1995), in an article by Joe Nazzaro about Naren Shankar, the episode's screenwriter.]

*Predator*. Dir. John McTiernan. 1987.

[In this blockbuster action film, a reptilian alien from a distant planet hunts humans for sport in the jungles of Central America. A mercenary commando (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) and his team inadvertently become the alien's latest prey, and it picks them off one by one until only the leader is left to face the alien in a battle of wits, wills, and brute strength. The clear parallels to *Beowulf* can be found in the nature of the alien Predator (it is similar to Grendel in its powers and *modus operandi*) and in the narrative structure of the final battle, in which Schwarzenegger's character grapples, unarmed and Beowulf-like, with the Predator.]

## Toys & Games

"Beowulf." *Allen & Ginter's Ancient Icons*. Topps, 2008.

[This card is in the style of the nineteenth-century Allen & Ginter trading cards that were packaged with cigarettes. Beowulf appears in a series that also includes other legendary figures (Gilgamesh, Achilles, King Arthur, etc.) and genuine historical figures (Alexander the Great, Sun Tzu, Genghis Khan, etc.). This illustration appears to show the elderly Beowulf from the dragon episode. He is armed with a sword and shield. See also "[Grendel](#)".]

"Beowulf." *Pirates of the Frozen North*. WizKids, Inc., 2007.

[*Pirates of the Frozen North* is an expansion set for *Pirates of the Spanish Main*, a tabletop game in which players battle each other using fleets of miniature model warships. The "Beowulf" ship is a Viking vessel that specializes in combating sea monsters. See also "[Grendel](#)", "[Hrothgar](#)", and "[Wiglaf](#)".]

"Beowulf." *Spycraft: Operation Nightfall*. Alderac Entertainment Group (AEG), 2004.

[Beowulf is the code-name of one of many spy characters in the collectible card game *Spycraft: Operation Nightfall*. He appears as a weathered, older-looking man with an eye-patch.]

*Beowulf & Grendel*. Sculpted by D. Mize. Ral Partha, 1996.

[This set of die-cast figurines (for use in role-playing games such as *Dungeons & Dragons*) includes a handsome, bearded, mail-clad Beowulf holding a sword aloft in victory, while Grendel is taller, scaly, hairy, wears a loincloth, clutches a severed human leg, and has a huge, ape-like face with teeth too large for even its massive mouth.]

"Grendel." *Triple Triad*. Bandai, 1999.

[This Grendel from a *Final Fantasy* card game is a spiky, green, reptilian creature.]

Grendel. *BattleBots* Grip N' Grapplers. Jakks Pacific, Inc., 2001.

[This toy is from a line of products based on the Comedy Central television show *BattleBots*, in which contestants build remote-controlled robots that battle one another in a kind of gladiatorial arena. The robot Grendel is painted green and has a long arm with a spike at the end that slams downward to impale other robots.]

Grendel. *Void*. i-Kore Ltd., 2001.

[This Grendel (a man clad in battle armor, clutching a massive sword in one hand and a firearm in the other) is a metal miniature for use in a sci-fi tabletop game called *Void*.]

"Grendel." *Pirates of the Frozen North*. WizKids, Inc., 2007.

["Grendel" is a Viking vessel that players can use in the *Pirates of the Frozen North* tabletop game. See also "[Beowulf](#)", "[Hrothgar](#)", and "[Wiglaf](#)".]

"Grendel." *Allen & Ginter's Creatures of Legend, Myth, and Terror*. Topps, 2009.

[The Grendel on this trading card is a bearded, gangly "man-monster." See also "[Beowulf](#)".]

"Grendel's Absorb." *MapleStory iTCG*. Wizards of the Coast, 2008.

[This card allows players of the *MapleStory* collectible card game to draw additional cards and force their opponents to discard an equal number of cards. See also "[Grendel the Really Old](#)".]

*Grendel's Cave*. Grendel Enterprises, L.L.C., 1998-Present.

[[Grendel's Cave](#) is an online, browser-based fantasy role-playing game based on the exploits of Beowulf and Grendel.]

"Grendel the Really Old." *MapleStory iTCG*. Wizards of the Coast, 2008.

[*MapleStory* is a collectible card game based on the popular MMORG (massively multi-player online role-playing game) of the same name. The Grendel depicted on this card is nothing like the conventional depiction of the monster from the poem; he is shown as a wizard with a white beard, a pointed hat, and a staff. He resembles Gandalf from *Lord of the Rings*. See also "[Grendel the Really Old](#)".]

"Hrothgar." *Pirates of the Frozen North*. WizKids, Inc., 2007.

["Hrothgar" is a powerful Viking longship that players can use in the *Pirates of the Frozen North* tabletop game. See also ["Beowulf"](#), ["Grendel"](#), and ["Wiglaf"](#).]

Jamieson, Hugh. "Geat King Beowulf." *Anachronism*. TriKing Games, 2004.

[Billed as "The Greatest Game in History," *Anachronism* is a joint production of TriKing Games and The History Channel. In this collectible card game, players select real and legendary figures from history (Julius Caesar, Achilles, etc.) and pit them against each other in combat. Beowulf comes with the game's 'starter set.' Jamieson's illustration shows the mail-clad hero bearing sword and shield, slogging into battle against Grendel's Mother.]

Kane-Ferguson, Richard. "Grendel—The Worm Eaten." *Jyhad*. Wizards of the Coast, 1994.

[The popular collectible card game *Jyhad* (now known as *Vampire: The Eternal Struggle*) includes a vampire character called Grendel, though he is only of middling prowess.]

Knizia, Reiner. *Beowulf: The Legend*. Art by John Howe. Sophisticated Games Limited, 2005.

[In this complicated yet ingenious board game, players become the loyal thanes of Beowulf. They accompany him on his many adventures (the game follows the plot of the poem quite closely), performing deeds to win fame and treasure; at the end of the game (Beowulf's death after the dragon battle), the player who has achieved the greatest renown (as tabulated by a point system) becomes the new king of the Geats. The beautiful artwork is by John Howe, who was such an integral part of Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* films.]

Matt Wagner's *Grendel*: Seven-Piece PVC Set. Dark Horse, 2002.

[This boxed set of plastic figurines contains several of the major characters from [Wagner's Grendel universe](#). From left to right: Hunter Rose, Christine Spar, Brian Li Sung, Eppy Thatcher, Orion Assante, Grendel-Prime, Jupiter Assante.]

Shuler, Doug. "Hrothgar." *Tempest of the Gods*. Black Dragon Press, 1995.

[*Tempest of the Gods*, a collectible card game, includes a Minotaur-like beast named Hrothgar. This name could be deliberately ironic (in the poem Hrothgar is the elderly king who is beset by the monster Grendel), or perhaps the game creators may be unaware of the name's link to *Beowulf*.]

Wagner, Matt. "Grendel." *WildStorms: The Expandable Super-Hero Collectible Card Game*. Aegis Entertainment, 1996.

[Hunter Rose, the original assassin Grendel in Matt Wagner's acclaimed [comic book series](#), here appears as a character in the collectible card game *WildStorms*, in which players battle one another using superheroes and supervillains from a wide range of comic book series.]

Walotsky, Ron. "Grendel." *Star Quest: The Regency Wars*. White Buffalo Games, 1995.

[In the collectible card game *Star Quest: The Regency Wars*, Grendel is the name of a spacecraft operated by a race of reptilian beasts called Saurians, whose mission is to destroy the human race.]

"Wiglaf." *Pirates of the Frozen North*. WizKids, Inc., 2007.

["Wiglaf" is a Viking vessel that players can use in the *Pirates of the Frozen North* tabletop game. See also "[Beowulf](#)", "[Grendel](#)", and "[Hrothgar](#)".]

*Wiglaf, Viking*. Sculpted by T. Harris. Reaper Miniatures, no date.

[This die-cast miniature is of a fairly stereotypical Viking warrior. The figure's link to the poem is in his name and in the standard he carries, which is that of a dragon's head.]

## Miscellaneous

"Beowulf." 2004.

[This item is a 4x6 photograph of Gerard Butler, the actor who is playing Beowulf in the 2005 film *Beowulf & Grendel*.]

Beowulf Brewing Company. Pump clips for the following varieties of beer: Mercian Blade, Mercian Shine, Quest, and Wergild. Birmingham, UK, no date.

[These pump clips for beer taps are all adorned with an image derived from the Sutton Hoo helmet, one of the most famous artifacts from the Anglo-Saxon period. 'Mercian' refers to the early medieval kingdom of Mercia (settled by the Angles in the early fifth century), while 'Wergild' refers to the Germanic custom of the "man-price" that a murder pays to the family of the victim in order to avert a feud.]

Beowulf decal. No date.

[This is an oval-shaped gold reflective foil sticker, measuring 6 inches long and 2.5 inches high, that features the logo of the rock band [Beowulf](#).]

*Beowulf* magnet. Sarah's Smial, no date.

[At 2 inches wide and 3.5 inches long, this magnet depicts Gerard Butler (as Beowulf) on horseback—an image from the film *Beowulf & Grendel*.]

*Beowulf* Mardi Gras tokens. 1969.

[On one side of these five identical tokens we find Beowulf (wearing a horned helmet and carrying a shield and sword) battling the dragon; on the other side there is a Mardi Gras logo that is not related to the poem.]

*Beowulf* pin. No date.

[This brass-colored metal pin takes the form of the letter "B"; the vertical part of the "B" is shaped like a sword, while the curved part of the letter is shaped like a serpent. The pin promotes the animated film *Beowulf* (dir. Robert Zemeckis, 2007).]

*Beowulf* pins. Anonymous, no date.

[Eight circular, one-inch pinback buttons depict images inspired by *Beowulf*, including illustrations of the hero himself, Grendel, and the dragon.]

*Beowulf* plaque. No date.

[Measuring four inches on a side, this small plaque commemorates the film *Beowulf*. Its certificate of authenticity (by M. Saunders, director, Sprockets) reads: "Replica film poster + Authentic 35mm film cels sourced from original film stock as released in cinemas." The five frames of film show a close-up shot of Beowulf (Christopher Lambert) as he prepares to hurl a pair of grappling hooks.]

*Beowulf*. From the *Wrath of Greed* Collection. Sculpture No. 0932A. The Hamilton Collection. No date.

[Measuring about 6" high, this plastic casting depicts a green dragon coiled around a silver rock formation. The dragon is clutching a large, ornate shield.]

*Beowulf's Dragon*. Pendant designed by Chris Bennett. 2003.

[A silver-colored pendant depicting an angry, winged dragon.]

Crystal Glass Dragon. No date.

[Evidently the designer of this handsome glass figurine is not particularly familiar with the poem, since the piece is identified as "Grendel from *Beowulf*," yet it is obviously a dragon. The figurine is made of clear glass with red crystal eyes, and stands 5.5" tall, 6.5" wide, 5.5" deep, and has a 5.25" wingspan.]

"Gabrielle and Beowulf." *Xena* Premiere Photograph Club—May 2002.

[Depicting a scene from the television program *Xena: Warrior Princess*, this 8x10 photograph shows Xena's sidekick Gabrielle alongside Beowulf, one of many literary or legendary characters encountered by the two heroines in their adventures. Beowulf appears in three episodes from the show's sixth season (2000-2001), in a storyline that combines *Beowulf* with elements from the *Nibelungenlied*, the thirteenth-century Middle High German poem about the hero Siegfried, his murder, and the wife who avenges him. See also this [other photograph](#) from *Xena*.]

*Grendel's Goth Dragon*. Pendant designed by Lou Stiverson. 2003.

[A garish pendant with amber- and black-colored plastic "gems" set on either side of a silver-colored dragon.]

Grendel's Vatted Malt Whisky. Raleigh Ltd. Glasgow, Scotland. 1981.

[A small bottle of Scottish whisky that no doubt has a bite worthy of its name.]

*Jonathan Park: The Hunt for Beowulf*. Audio Adventure Volume IV. San Antonio, TX: The Vision Forum, Inc., 2006.

[This four-CD audio narrative is part of a series chronicling the exploits of young Jonathan Park and his friends in the Creation Response Team, a group that attempts to prove Creationism and disprove evolution. In the story, *Beowulf* (and other tales about dragons and similar monsters) is cited as "evidence" that humans and dinosaurs lived on Earth at the same time. The accompanying "educational" study guide is meant to be used in tandem with the CDs; parents

are encouraged to listen to the stories with their children and then complete the activities together.]

Kent, Rockwell. "Beowulf." *Rockwellkentiana*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1933. Lithograph 60.

[This lithograph is Kent's striking depiction of a young, nude Beowulf bearing Grendel's severed arm.]

Motion capture markers. No date.

[These are 11 of the actual motion capture markers used to record actors' movements and facial expressions for the animated film *Beowulf* (dir. Robert Zemeckis, 2007).]

Rhine, Karen C. "Beowulf." No date.

[Measuring about 11 inches tall and 14 inches long, this print, signed by the artist (an illustrator of children's books) depicts Beowulf's fatal battle with the dragon. The hero appears in full armor, poised to strike a blow with his sword, while the dark-scaled dragon spews fire at his feet.]

Sterling, Thomas L., et al. *How to Build a Beowulf: A Guide to the Implementation and Application of PC Clusters*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999.

[In the computing world, a "Beowulf" is a cluster of average PCs that, when linked with high-speed networking technology, become collectively more powerful and function as a single supercomputer—a kind of computerized *comitatus*.]

Wagner, Matt. "Hunter Rose." Rocket USA, 2001.

[This lithograph, printed on a thin metallic sheet, depicts the child prodigy Hunter Rose in his guise as the merciless assassin Grendel, from [Matt Wagner's comics series](#).]

"Xena and Beowulf." *Xena* Premiere Photograph Club—April 2005.

["Xena and Beowulf" is an 8x10 photograph from one of the *Xena: Warrior Princess* episodes that features Beowulf; the heroine and hero stand side-by-side, ready for action. See also this [other photograph](#) from *Xena*.]

## Scholarship

### The Poem

*Beowulf: A Dual-Language Edition*. Trans. Howell D. Chickering, Jr. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1977.

[This excellent facing-page translation includes a comprehensive introduction to the poem and the context in which it was written.]

*Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg*. Ed. Fr. Klaeber. 3rd ed. Boston: Heath, 1950.



[This has been the edition of choice for generations of *Beowulf* scholars.]

*Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*. Trans. Seamus Heaney. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.

[Renowned poet Seamus Heaney's facing-page translation has garnered its share of both praise and criticism, but its greatest distinction may be that it has introduced *Beowulf* to a new and wider readership.]

*Beowulf; reproduced in facsimile from the unique manuscript, British Museum Ms. Cotton Vitellius A. xv, with a transliteration and notes by Julius Zupitza*. 2nd ed. London: Pub. for the Early English Text Society by Oxford University Press, 1967.

[This is the facsimile of the manuscript in which the poem is found.]

## Introductory Readings

[These volumes contain a wide spectrum of essays that would be useful for readers who are coming to the poem for the first time.]

Baker, Peter S., ed. *Beowulf: Basic Readings*. New York: Garland Pub., 1995.

Bjork, Robert E., and John D. Niles, eds. *A Beowulf Handbook*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

## Bibliographies of Criticism

[These annotated bibliographies provide a good starting point for readers interested in learning more about the poem and its critical history.]

Fry, Donald K. *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburh: A Bibliography*. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1969.

Hasenfratz, Robert J. *Beowulf Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography, 1979-1990*. New York: Garland Pub., 1993.

Short, Douglas D. *Beowulf Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland Pub., 1980.

## Beowulfiana Scholarship

Carlson, Joshua J. "*Beowulf* in Comics." SUNY Albany Master's Project, 2005.

[The project includes brief discussions of the [Augustyn](#), [Bingham](#), [Hinds](#), and [Uslan](#) adaptations, as well as an introductory essay that explains why the *Beowulf* narrative is well suited for retelling in the comic book medium. Carlson's work is no longer on the Albany site, but can be found

via [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) with <http://www.albany.edu/%7EJA222227/isp523/beowulfincomics.html> as the URL.] [accessed 2004]

Giusti, Francesco. "La ricezione contemporanea del "Beowulf."" *Intersezioni* 3 (December 2006): 383-394.



[This article deals with Crichton's *Eaters of the Dead* and film adaptations of *Beowulf*. The article is written in Italian.]

Giusti, Francesco. "Il Beowulf nel XX secolo. La ricezione in versi." *Poesia* 212 (January 2007).

[This article explores poetic adaptations of *Beowulf* in the work of Stevens, Borges, and Wilbur. The article is written in Italian.]

Giusti, Francesco. "Il Beowulf nel Novecento: il romanzo e il fumetto." *Linguistica e Filologia* 23.

[Giusti's third article is about Gardner's *Grendel* and the Italian comic book by Enrico Basari. The article is written in Italian.]

Livingston, Michael, and John William Sutton. "Reinventing the Hero: Gardner's *Grendel* and the Shifting Face of *Beowulf* in Popular Culture." *Studies in Popular Culture* 29.1 (2006): 1-16.

[This article explores the influence of John Gardner's 1971 novel *Grendel* upon subsequent examples of Beowulfiana.]

Magennis, Hugh. "Michael Crichton, Ibn Fadlan, Fantasy Cinema: *Beowulf* at the Movies." *Old English Newsletter* 35.1 (Fall 2001): 34-38.

[This brief article discusses Crichton's *Eaters of the Dead* in reference to its film adaptation, *The 13th Warrior*, and also considers the lackluster Graham Baker film *Beowulf*.]

Osborn, Marijane. "Translations, Versions, Illustrations." *A Beowulf Handbook*. Ed. Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. Pp. 341-82.

[This is the first major academic publication to deal almost exclusively with the subject of Beowulfiana. It should be considered essential reading for anyone interested in the subject.]

Osborn, Marijane. "Annotated List of *Beowulf* Translations." The Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies website <http://acmrs.org/academic-programs/online-resources/beowulf-list>.

[This online list covers novelizations and films as well as translations. In this way, it updates and expands Osborn's earlier work.]