Examples of Strong DJ Responses

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| “Shall I call the tree tyrannical, since where it stands nothing survives but itself and its highborn guests?” (Gardner, 115). | Here, Hrothulf is in the forest and is looking at a tree. This tree is a symbol of Heorot (Hart). It has sucked the life from everything around it just as Hrothgar has taken control of all of his neighbors’ kingdoms. He and his thanes live the life and like this tree, Hrothgar is trying to reach for the sun, the light that keeps him alive. He gives treasures to those near, just as the tree does for its inhabitants, but Hrothgar is failing. He is not currently soaking up the light he requires. Grendel, the darkness, is blocking the light from “the tree.” Hrothulf’s comparison (or the contrast it shows the reader) is used by the author to show Hrothulf’s feelings about Hrothgar’s kingdom and to foreshadow his unhappiness and what it brings to the kingdom. |
| “I must have been closer to the calf than I had guessed since he’d arrived to protect it. Bulls do such things, though they don’t even know that the calves they defend are theirs” (Gardner, 19-20). | Grendel is stuck and hurt, calling for his mama, his own flesh and blood, and she is not coming to his rescue. It is at this moment in his strife that a bull comes to protect the calf that Grendel has been after. As he says, this bull may not even have been the father of the calf, but still he comes to protect it by taking care of Grendel. To Grendel, whose own flesh and blood is not coming to help him in his time of need, this relationship between the bull and calf does not make sense to him. I predict this will be a sort of loss of innocence for Grendel as he realizes that his mother is not all he thinks she is (children always think their mothers are capable of anything). I also believe this view of another type of relationship (humanity – the help one gives to another of the same species even if not always human) will further Grendel’s realization of his displacement in society. |
| “The Shaper is sick” (Gardner, 139). | Everything in Hrothgar’s kingdom seems to be asleep or dormant. Also, there is an absence of a certain character, the Shaper, due to an illness. These two things seem to be symbolically connected. Without the person who gives them hope and shapes their mind, they become nothing. They become dim without the happy and hopeful songs. It’s as if he is their heartbeat, or their rhythm. |
| “The word ‘hero’ was beginning to grate. He was an idiot” (89). | The definition of hero seems to be different to Grendel than to the people of Hrothgar’s kingdom. Grendel doesn’t believe Unferth is a hero, and that’s what Unferth is trying to prove. This could be the beginnings of the downfall of the character of Unferth. Also, Unferth and Grendel seem to be a lot alike. They both want to be accepted in some way, but both keep failing. This is causing much anger and despair but most of all the downfall of a character. |