

# Anglo-saxon society in beowulf

Literature



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Anglo-Saxon society Anglo-Saxon society was male dominated and experienced several cases of war between communities. As the poem exhibits, Men are given superior roles while women are presented as second class citizens that are answerable to the husbands. Critical assessment of the scenario in this society presents women as home makers. While men ventured into war and other strenuous activities revolving around providing and defending the family, Women took charge and took care of children and arranged the home. In regard to prominent female characters in this literary work, another central role that Anglo-Saxon women had was that of peace-weaver. During to the warring communities, women would be married to enemy community in an attempt to promote peace and tolerance. In regard to Hildeburh who was a Dane and was married to an enemy Frisian, this role does not clear the problem of war and she bear double burden by when she is “ deprived of her dear ones at the shield-play, of son and brother” and indication of absence of peace (Donaldson, pp. 20). Women also play the role of mistress which Wealhtheow plays to Heorot. She is presented as charming and always dressed to impress and attract men. In Beowulf, she is described as mindful of customs, gold-adorned, and as the ring-adorned queen, mature of mind (Donaldson, pp. 12-13).

From the rude and heroic attempts of Grendel’s mother, women are seen as expressing the concept of femininity as the central aspect of their attractiveness. This explains why she is finally killed for gross misconduct and trying out masculinity that is a preserve for men.

It is evident that although at the beginning of Boeufull, the dominance of men and the raging war is explored, female roles are also touched. This has been done to signify the significance of the womenfolk in the societal fabric. A

collective review of the above three highlighted female characters reflect the completeness of the society when women are involved. By adducing the concept of peace-weaver in which marriage is used to mitigate feuds between enemy groups, the place of women in the society is confirmed. The arguments for the above ideas present female figures in Beowulf as indispensable components of the poetry.

Literary works entails various techniques which enhances the chances of expressing the ideas. The concept of elegy is more pronounced in poetry which presents personal reflection on a sad event. In that regard, elegy is defined as a mournful or sad musical composition or poem. Reciting it reflects one's feelings towards the circumstances surrounding the deceased. This concept has effectively been employed in the Lay of the Lone Survivor around lines 2250-2278, section XXXII, bottom of page 39, starting with " Hold now, you earth" and ending with " he is none the better for it." The elegiac expression of the italic parts indicates the in-depth sorrow that the speaker is expressing towards the loss of a loved one. It emphasizes the idea that the dead were cherished by the relatives but Earthed disregarded that and struck with death. This elegiac concept appearing in the excerpts paints a mourning mood in the poem and expresses the level of the speaker's dejection with Earth as the Mother Nature that takes away life. This is a literary too that significantly boost the understanding of addressed ideas.

Work cited

Donaldson, E. Talbot. Beowulf: A Prose Translation. NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1975, 2002.