

Reaction paper on beowulf poem

Literature



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Youssef Abdat Kinne CL1025 15/10 Reaction Paper to Beowulf Although many individuals have pointed to connection between Christianity and Paganism that is represented within Beowulf; this connection is nonetheless bears repeating and is important to understanding some of the thematic and historical reasons for why such a connection exists. As a function of seeking to understand this correlation to a more full and complete degree, the following analysis will engage the reader with a focus on how these two inter-relate within the story.

Firstly, it must be understood that a great deal of the storyline and plot motive can be interpreted with regards to the way in which Grendel, and her mother, are viewed as the source of all of the problems/evil. This menacing creature is most certainly not unlike the Devil that is defined by the Hebrew Old Testament as having existed long before the formation of the world (Major 7). Says Hrothgar, "(fate) often saves the undoomed man when his courage is good" (Chickering 34). As such, the reader can quickly denote that the idea of fate is something that is unique to the that author's understanding/interpretation of pagan belief as compared to Christian thinking.

Yet, within the very same text and within the very same page, the author denotes, "(after a) signal from God, the sea become still" (Chickering 34). Naturally, the juxtaposed imagery of the God the Bible calling for the waters to be stilled on the Sea of Galilee is a relevant comparison to the way that this same action is completed within Beowulf. Whereas the depiction of Christ calming the troubled Sea of Galilee in the New Testament allows for the men on the ship with Him to be saved from the natural elements, the calming of the sea that was performed in Beowulf at a sign from God was <https://assignbuster.com/reaction-paper-on-beowulf-poem/>

performed as a function of keeping men safe from sea monsters; adding an even further level of pagan parallels to the Christianized interpretation of the Sea of Galilee story (Saur 88). In such a way, even though the predetermined nature of fate is represented within the text, it is presented right alongside a clear reference to the Christian God; a character that has, in terms of religious understanding and belief, extended the right of free will to all mankind.

Whereas pagan lore is replete with images of vengeance and the need to defend one's clan or immediate family, the Bible, especially the New Testament, does not focus upon the need for vengeance and instead channels peace, love, sacrifice, and charity above such human virtues as vengeance. With that being said, the author found it difficult to incorporate the elements of vengeance with the elements of love and forgiveness that are so common within Christian theology. This was performed by allowing those brave and noble warriors that sought to fight against Grendel as representative of the spiritual struggle against God and Satan. By representing Grendel as a type of rebellion against humanity, goodness, kindness, and virtue, the author was able to cast those heroes that fought against Grendel's mother as a type of crusader for Christ's cause. Although naturally a great stretch, the author was able to perform this effectively and interwove imagery and text within the story to affect this. For instance, the author described Heorot as "Wearing God's anger" (Chickering 50). By allowing a type of comparison to the Christian elements of a righteous rage and need for vengeance as compared to the pagan story and the demands of such an approach, a combination of such elements is affected (Moorman 5).

From the information that has thus far been presented, it can be clearly noted that the story of Beowulf is not only indicative of a purely pagan tale that draws upon elements of war and folktale. Rather, it is a synthesis of both Christian and pagan elements and this synthesis is represented at various junctures throughout the story itself. As such, an even further level of emphasis can be made with respect to the fact that the most likely author of Beowulf was indeed a Roman Catholic monk living within the British Isles and absorbing both the flavor of culture and folklore within the pagan people he interacted with as well as integrating this with the Christian belief system that he represented.

Work Cited

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