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The Anglo-Saxon Culture as Illustrated in Beowulf Beowulf is an epic poem, which takes place in ancient Denmark and Geatland and describes the adventures of Beowulf, a Geat hero. Through their heroes, epic poems usually describe the traditions and beliefs of a certain culture. An Anglo-Saxon author wrote Beowulf about the Danes and Geats.

The Anglo-Saxons had similar beliefs to that of the Dane and Geats, so the poem gives us some idea of what the Anglo-Saxon culture was like.

Throughout Beowulf, it is illustrated that women were thought to be virtually valueless; that Anglo-Saxons believed in paganism, and that there was great emphasis on valuables and weaponry. The Anglo-Saxon culture did not value women highly. Women were not recognized for the deeds they did. The Danish Beowulf's own mother was not even recognized for her part in his birth.

His father Ecgtheow was given all the credit for Beowulf's birth: And he gave them more than his glory conceived a son for the Danes, a new leader. (Beowulf, 1057). Kings usually would give away their daughters hand in marriage to a total stranger for a peace treaty with another nation. The daughter had no say in what was done with her, like Healfdenes daughter who was given away to Onela the Swedish king. In all aspects of life, women were not considered very valuable and were treated as objects rather than people. Hrothgar remembers Beowulf upon his arrival: His father was called Ecgtheow: Hrethel of the Geats gave him his only daughter for his home.

Now has his hardly offspring come here, sought a fast friend.(1067). The daughters were usually forced to marry someone they did not know rather than being able to marry someone they loved.

A woman was considered property, the ownership depending upon whether she was married or not. When married, she is her husbands, when unmarried, she is her fathers property. A man could beat his wife if she disobeyed him, and adultery by men was rarely punished, whereas women were disgraced and sent away for the same offense. Spinning, weaving, and cooking were skills possessed by nearly all of the women in the Anglo-Saxon period. Their main purpose was considered to bear children, feed, clothe their families, and to be a hostess for visitors.

Women were not considered equal to men, especially in the aspect of fighting. In the wake of Grendels mothers attack, the destruction is not considered as mighty due to the fact that the attacker was a woman: The attack was less terrible by just so much as is the strength of women,(1079). The Anglo-Saxons were pagans, people who are not Christians. This is a trait that was shown throughout the poem. The warriors had the attitude that fate would decide their destiny.

Beowulf leaves it up to fate as he prepares for the fight with Grendel: Fate always goes as it must! (1068). The people believed that Wyrd, the god of Fate, decided their future. The warriors showed a very fatalistic attitude.

Beowulf proves this point when he tells Hrothgar not to mourn his friend Eshers death: Sorrow not, wise warrior. It is better for a man to avenge his friend than much mournLet him who may get glory before death: that is best

for the warrior after he has gone from life. (1081). Beowulf believes that what happens is meant to happen and life will go on.

The Anglo-Saxons thought that fate decided the outcome of their battles. When Beowulf decides to fight the dragon, fate is not on his side: His mind was mournful, restless and ripe for death: very close was the fate which should come to the old man, seek his souls hoard, divide life from his body, not long for him was the life of the noble one wound in his flesh. (1094).

Beowulf illustrates the views of these people, and how their fighting was affected by their pre-Christian beliefs. Weapons and treasures were very important to the Anglo-Saxon people. These valuables symbolized all the fighting a warrior had done in order to receive them. The more good deeds a warrior had done, the more weapons and treasures he possessed.

Unferth presents Beowulf with a great sword named Hrunting as Beowulf