

Research Article

The Impression of Geography Imparting Metamorphosis of Beowulf as Hero

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Abstract : This paper provides a reading of the Old English poem, Beowulf with a focus on its external factors, the surroundings of the hero in which he was born and brought up. This paper mostly tries to determine the inevitability of its effect on the development of modified characteristics, the theology, the politics as well as the economy. The key question is the role of place or site in the poem in general terms, and the more specific issue is how the geographic setup pertained Beowulf a heroic strata. A several sites delineating in the poem, Beowulf, for instances; the locations of the battles among Beowulf, Grendel, Grendel's mother and the dragon; the position of Geats land and Danes land by the bank of the sea and Heorot (a mead hall as well as the necessarily transformed battlefield) has got its varied interpretations and this paper tends to focus on the issues of the flourishing of Beowulf with the win over battle and unmasking the mystery of bog land inhabited by the mother of deformed demon and the possibility of navigation between the two countries- Geats land and Danes land that created an inter - regional trade between Beowulf and the old king of Danes land. It should be viewed importantly as the economic perspective of the geographic setup and the rapprochement among the countries regarding the financial enlistment. The possession of power, wealth, prestige, honor and dignity is the burnishing mark of that time Beowulf represents and it is a cause for life for them a man can fight in order to gain prominence in the society above all. The advantages of these physical background show here how geography can be a weapon to exercise political philosophy and make a political bridge among the countries. The focus of this paper has thus been pivoted to the relationship between human and the non-human nature. The paper aims to combine an analysis of the ecological concepts in analyzing the literary work as to believe in the fact that the scientific explanation of the universe of the primitive people bears the influence of their habitat. Thus, the paper ends up with the discussion of economic aggravation on the part of the hero, Beowulf, whom the geography- the position of the land beside the sea-coast, the navigable facility, the abundance of resources helped undeniably.

Keywords: External factors, inevitable effect, modification, characteristics, political economy.

1. Introduction

The hero by the name of the epic poem, the Beowulf, is adorned with omnipotent prowess all through the poem in epic quality which the title of this paper hints at the sort of metamorphosis from the part of the pivotal character of the poem as the other characters developed at the identical time could not reliably display themselves as superhuman. The history of Egypt, Middle east, Sind civilization has blissfully provided and is providing the fact that they survived and thrived due to undeniable gift of the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates the Ganges that helped those civilizations to thrive due to the availability of clean drinking

water, fresh food, arable lands, easy communication system and, above all, the natural barrier that enabled those civilizations not to be invaded easily (Rute, 2016, para.2). if the above ideation is historically true, the idea of metamorphosis or the emergence and existence of Beowulf all through the poem along with extra humanized quality gets some valid ground to brood over the probability of demographic influence (the demography posturized in the poem by the unanimous poet/poets) on Beowulf of having been a demi-god.

The theory of knowledge provides a perusal of the impression, that the physical existence marks on us, which aims at proposing with determination that man's idea about the world and life is molded due to the impact the outer visible phenomena impose on us. The artists often try to mimic that real world into their art forms and thus the characters represent as 'the appearance of reality' (Venture, 1941, p.36).

Crielaard (2003) postulates that Homeric epic utilized extensively the material goods around the world to express the characters and their actions and generally the social life (p.49 - 50). The Homeric epic is extended with the geographic association of Olympus, the abode of Gods and Goddesses, and the era-long voyages. These settings are nothing but the influence of Greek geography that made impact on the poet to get the materials. Mount Olympus and the Mediterranean are the reality in terms of geographic description of Greece (Crielaard, 2003).

Now the reference of Rute, Crielaard and Venture accord with the theory that man has been influentially directed by the demography and this idea creates several questions as (i) whether Beowulf is the progeny of the nature, (ii) whether demography created Beowulf as hero, and (iii) Whether the influence of demography is working on Beowulf and (iv) whether Beowulf could have been otherwise upon the alteration of the physical settings. All these questions need to be solved to reach the point of extrinsic impact of nature on shaping human behavior, specially the behavior of Beowulf that the poem projects; otherwise the hypothesis will remain disproved.

2. Literature Review

Grundy (2014) has the opinion that demography relates spatial and temporal dynamics with the fluctuation of races. Consequently, the fate of determinism rests upon the demographic interpretation of the human races which includes (i) how population changes, (ii) why change occurs in response to the interplay among 'fertility, mortality and migration'. (para. 1). Thus, the demographic setup suffices for determining the future of a race, a community as the representative of that race meaning demography creates a race that produces the person as the representative of the race. Thus, the demographic dividend may offer clues how Beowulf and Hrotghar had to view life with variegated spectacles.

The culture, economics, habits ,even navigation (all those are part of demographic geography) hint at many of the total influencing factors of a race , community and more specially a person and it completes when physical geography is added while scholarly discussion because a man is to be made with the influence of demography and physical geography (Wilhelm, 2016, para.1). As consequence, the impression of geography must be justified from the point of view of two dimension: (a) demography and (b) physical environment.

Semple (1911) has also agreeable opinion to the issue of 'adaptation of living organism' with 'certain geographic condition' as it is stated that

Certain geographic conditions, more conspicuously those of climate, apply certain stimuli to which, man like the lower animals, responds by an adaptation of his organism to his environment (p.45).

This ideation again profusely asserts how influential supremacy the environment has on its living organisms, like man.

Now the prowess of Beowulf shown through the activities done in Gates Land as well as Danes Land, which was totally unpracticed due to lack of vitalities among the people of those lands that Beowulf possess tends to be reviewed alongside the environment whether it helps Beowulf to emerge with such prowess as Semple (1911) states:

Many physiological peculiarities of man are due to physical effects of environment, which doubtless operated very strongly in the earliest stages of human development, and in those shadowy ages contributed to the differentiation of races (45).

Lakes, bays, rivers and oceans are few of the influential elements which have affected the behaviors of the people living by them as it afforded the ancient men facilitating the movements either to block the path or open a highway (Semple, 1911. p.69). Jacobs has extended this idea informing how these natural abundances had shaped the characteristics of the ancient men as the author says

One might almost say that the history of geographical discovery, properly so called, begins with Captain Cook, the motive of whose voyages was purely scientific Curiosity. But before his time men wanted to know one another for two chief reasons: they wanted to conquer or they wanted to trade; or perhaps we could reduce the motives to one- they wanted to conquer, because they wanted to trade (2004, p.42).

Howe (1989) claims that 'Beowulf is profoundly a work about place' (p.84). In the scholarly paper of Tolkien (1936), Howe's assertion gets specific dimension as the researcher urges that the historical context lying in the text, Beowulf, is overshadowed by the valuable presentation of the power of land and the politics of land (p.135).

A literary text, specially the text representing the ancient civilization, is profuse with the historical as well as the geographical settings that mark the courses of that text and the study of the textual history/story along with the geographical/demographic attire has been a new trend of modern literary criticism which Barry (2009) has exposed this tendency as 'eco-criticism' of a literary text that implies (i) Reading literature from an eco-centric point of view, (ii) Focusing on nonfiction and environmental writing featuring nature and (iii) Showing appreciation for ethical positions toward nonhuman nature (p.114).

Thus, the paper affords to evaluate Beowulf on the point of delving out whether the hero of the text can be characterized who is shaped by impression and abundances from the nature, and who represents his race of Germanic blood in his veins in order to show a lineal course of man and nature to create a civilization and its philosophy of life and living.

3. Methodology

According to Redmen & Mory (2009), research is a systematized effort to gain new knowledge. This definition projects several key issues for a research .such as:

i. It is systematical investigation,

- ii. It searches for new knowledge,
- iii. And it gains a new sight of the previously existent ideas.

So to say, the systematical investigation is required for the culmination to the find out the final result. The investigation for the final result is based on the research question which claims the pivotal position of the research initiative (Industrial Research Institute, 2010).

Then, the major task for a researcher is to identify the instruments to collect data to answer the question/questions along with the design, procedure and the methods of data analysis.

Thus, Research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem. It is a science of studying how research is to be carried out. Essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena are called research methodology. It is also defined as the study of methods by which knowledge is gained. Its aim is to give the work plan of research (Rajasekar *et al.*, 2013, p.5).

3.1 Formulation of Research Problem

As stated before, the research question aims at validating the rationale and objectives of the research and the type of question predicts the methods to be chosen for solving the questions (Rajasekar *et al.*, 2013, p.2). This paper tends to solve the question whether (i) the geography influences a man to shape his behavior and philosophy of life. To defend this position of the paper, a null hypothesis is set as: (i) Geography cannot influence a man to shape his behavior and thinking of life.

3.2 Choosing of Research Method

Shaghi (2016) has the opinion that qualitative research tends to collect and analyze non – numerical data to search for theme and holistic features and it does by following specified way that is; content / conceptual analysis (p.7). This paper aims at interpreting and critically analyzing the content of the text, Beowulf, in order to prove the hypothesis or disprove the null hypothesis. Consequently, the qualitative research method will serve the purpose of the research as per the nature of the research.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

This research involves theoretical analysis and explanatory interpretation which claims the development of the facts through ‘researching archives of public libraries, court rooms and published academic journals’. This is none the less an empirical research that claims the collection of data from secondary sources except from interviews, survey, focus group discussion (ibid. pp.7-8). Sources such as books, journals, previous research studies are used for the critical justification of the research problem.

3.4 Methods of Analysis

Predictions, results and conclusion are ultimate goals of the research performed. And the best outcome emerges if and when the method of analysis suits with the methods of research conducted. According to Rajasekar *et al.* (2013) there are two indispensable rules of modern research, such as; (i) The freedom of creative imagination necessarily subjected to rigorous experimentation and (ii) The interpretation of the facts that were collected (p.32).

It is a qualitative research where secondary data from secondary sources are being used. As per the condition and nature of the research, desk based content analysis claims acceptability. This content analysis will make a way for the interpretations of the sequences, consequences

as well as the themes of the text, Beowulf, in order to prove the hypothesis of the paper. According to Rajasekar *et al.*, (2013):

Interpretation refers to the task of drawing inferences from the actual research work. It also means drawing of conclusion. Conclusion is based on the study performed. It would bring out relations and processes that underlie the findings. The utility of the outcome of the research greatly lie on proper interpretations and is the hardest part of solving a scientific problem. Interpretation of results is important because it

- 1) links the present work to the previous,
- 2) leads to identification of future problems,
- 3) opens new avenues of intellectual adventure and stimulates the quest for more knowledge,
- 4) makes others understand the significance of the research findings and
- 5) often suggests a possible experimental verification. (pp. 32-33).

4. Discussion

Geography influences demography and the geographic setting changed even the religious beliefs and directed to shape distinct beliefs. Stewart (2018) opines that one of the surprising facts about the pyramids of Egypt is that they are on the west bank of the Nile and it symbolizes the death as the sun is observed to go down the western bank of the Nile representing reclining to death.

For ancient Egyptians, the afterlife and the sun were closely intertwined. Osiris, an Egyptian god closely connect with the afterlife, represented the strength of new life. Over time, he also became associated with the cycle of the sun and how it brought new growth from dormant seeds (ibid, para.7)

Thus, various geographic elements have engulfed the cultural and religious symbols which are, even now, being practiced by the people as guiding principle of living. Geography impressed men and motivated them to recline to the lap of it that the paper tends to trace its reliability for the case of Beowulf, the hero of the poem, *Beowulf*.

4.1 Brave Beowulf: The Progeny of Germanic Aristocracy

Josiah Strong was a noted congregational Minister powerfully influenced by Darwin's theory notes the racial undertones and frightening implications in his manifesto, "America's Destiny" written in 1885:

The noblest races have always been lovers of liberty. That love has always run strong in early German blood..... It was no accident that the great information of the sixteenth century originated among Teutonic rather than Latin people. Speaking roughly, the people of Europe...where the tutonic race are purest, there Pretestanism spread with the greatest rapidity.....most of the spiritual Christianity in the world is found among Anglo-Saxons.

In this manifesto, the physique and the infuenee of the race (Anglo-Saxon) has also been delineated that they were found to be superior not only in height but also in chest measurement and weight. Their physical facility helped them imposing "the specter of controlling influence". Thus, they turned into national genius being the "principal seat of power and having the preponderance of numbers and wealth".

The historian Malcolm Todd has the opinion that the Anglo –Saxon Dynasty emerges from ‘German Aristocracy’ and Beowulf bears the blue blood of German prowess (Todd, 1975, pp.

52-56). Beowulf has got a grand position in his country as well as beyond the border of his country. He had to fight against the sea monsters, Grendel and the mother of the deformed cursed Grendel and had to prove his valor over the criticizing tongues. His elevated attitude was never used up until the last drop of blood in the veins. His superiority complexity for being himself a Godly king was a citable attitude on the part of the hero-

Beowulf spoke, made a formal boast for the last time: "I risked my life often when I was young. Now I am old, But as king of the people I shall pursue this fight For the glory of winning, if the evil one will only Abandon his earth-fort and face me in the open.

..... This fight is not yours, Nor is it up to any man except me to measure his strength against the monster or to prove his worth. I shall win the gold By my courage, or else mortal combat, Doom of battle, will bear your lord away.

(Heaney, 2007, L. 2510-2537).

Here, the unanimous poet who wrote *Beowulf* extols the Germanic ancestry through the hero and the proof of this idea lies in the text as Hrothgar being a king, owner of Heorot, a grand mead – Hall, and the treasure king is found to bestow his fate on God that was unheard and unpracticed by the hero, Beowulf. Hrothgar, the king of Danes Land, urges-

And may the divine Lord In His wisdom grant the glory of victory To whichever side He sees fit.

(ibid. L. 685-687)

Thus, the demographic effect that Grundy (2014) elucidates ‘race impact on human behavior’ marks a characteristic impact on the hero, Beowulf, who is deliberately presented by the unanimous poet for the eulogizing of the Anglo –Saxon invaders in England.

4.2 The Controller of Land and Water

Earl (1996) suggests that the text *Beowulf* covers several references of lands like; Geats Land, Danes Land, Heorot, and water bodies which must not be evaluated as the world. Rather, the interest must be focused on the symbolic implication of those waters and lands. They are the materials which highlighted and heightened the supremacy of the hero over lands and waters with the association of geographic set up. (p. 65).

Tolkien (1936) has the identical insight as does Earl as the author observes that Beowulf’s swimming race, killing sea-monsters highlights him as a great warrior over sea that confirmed his prowess as a great ship man who could cross the long deep sea to visit Danes Land and win treasures through killing the demon ravaging the land. He could pursue the mother of Grendel to Lair in order to kill her and succeeded (p. 39).

4.3 Geographic Nobility and Economic Attitude of Beowulf

Geographic conditions influence the economic behavior with its probable abundance, paucity, or general character of the natural resources, by the local ease or difficulty of securing the necessities of life. The land of Beowulf is beset with sea, the swimming competition referred in the poem is the evidence of this fact. He could make ships and a great helms man. Again, there was navigable possibility between Geats Land and Danes Land. Danes Land is a rich country. It is rich with various mineral elements. Lots of gold and treasure are kept in the treasury of this country. The grandeur and the loftiness of mead half, Heorot, is sufficient example to measure their richness as the nation:

After it was built, Hrothgar did what he said he would; handed out gold And treasure at huge feasts. That hall was high-towerd tall and wide-gabled

(ibid, L. 65-87)

Beowulf had every possibility and power that his geography gifted to him to invade Danes Land in order to amass wealth for his country. Beowulf intruded into this land as a savior, protected the land with his valor but never forgot his ambition to be provided with treasures in returns by the king of Danes Land. Accordingly, It was Beowulf's urge to the king that all the treasure achieved by him with the killing of Grendel should be sent to his own land with his comrades if Beowulf is spot-dead with the attack of the mother.

Beowulf won the battle against the monster, Grendel. Hrothgar gifted the hero with lots of treasures:

Hrothgar gave Beowulf a gilded banner, decorated battle flag, as reward for victory.

.....

The king ordered eight horses with gold-plated bridles led into the hall. On one sat a saddle inlaid with jewels--

.....

Thus like a man that great prince, treasure giver of heroes, repaid Beowulf for his battle

(ibid, L. 331-71)

Thus Beowulf's voyage to the other part of the world was successful if it is measured on the point of economic or expansionist perspective. He intruded into the new land, killed Grendel and his mother and conquered the heart and the treasure. Here, geography aided Beowulf extend a tie of friendship with Hrothgar though the economy interplayed and it extends the idea of geo- economics where geography shapes economic behavior (Wigell, 2018) between the nations of Geats Land and Danes Land.

5. Conclusion

The Geographic map set up in this text is very tough to decipher but what the poet has tried to brief us with the description of various land and the poet has not forgotten to delineate the struggles over the land (through the land is not fixed only with the hard soil-surface rather the waters have also been convictional as certainty of land). Heaney (2007) in his introduction to the translation of the text, *Beowulf*, proposes that 'The Swedish dimension gradually becomes an important element in the poem's emotional and imaginative geography, a geography that entails, it's should be said no very clear map-sense of the world, more an apprehension of menaced border, of danger gathering beyond the mere and the marshes'. Thus it is not fancy to claim that politics originates from the appearance of the geography because the political ideology may be changed, and it is the geography that cannot be changed. That is to say, Hrothgar had to expand his hands to the hero, Beowulf, as Geats land is very near to Danes land and it is strategically important to make ties with the other county. Thus; land has become a political strategic question, which implies man formulate the ideas of operating the society. But the interrelation of the site and stake of struggle is important: land is not simply where battles take place, but often the focus of the struggle itself. This text thus gives a partial glimpse of the political -strategic issue alongside its very particular political economy of land. A careful reading of *Beowulf* provides insight into how very different historical conditions gave rise to particular geographies.

6. Recommendation

The prime matter of argument in this paper is to defend that geography and demography shapes human activities both socially and politically. Even economics has large dependence on geographic distributions as the paper tries to explain citing references from Beowulf and excerpting lines from the translated version by Heaney (2007). But this does never be the ultimate resolution, there must be further recommendation such as;

- 1) Basic instinct of a man never varies, only the exposure of this instinct varies with the variation of geography. The researchers must decide on the variation of exposure .not the basic instinct.
- 2) It is a literary criticism based on eco – criticism and the researchers must have deep knowledge regarding the measurement of human action on the balance of physical world.
- 3) This text may reveal lots of truth that this paper does not cover in order to evaluate a portion of idea of relationship between human and geography. The claim of this paper may not negate the claims of others.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest of any kind.

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