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THE ANGLO-SAXON PEACE WEAVING WARRIOR

by

ANTHEA ANDRADE

Under the Direction of Mary Ramsey

ABSTRACT

Beowulf presents a literary starting point in the discussion of peace weaving, reflecting the primary focus of Anglo Saxon epic poetry on the male hero rather than the peace weaver. Scholarship on peace weaving figures in the poem tend to negatively perceive the lack of female presence, and determine the tradition as one set up for failure. Adding historical peace weavers like Queen Emma to the discourse encourages scholars to view smaller successes, like temporary peace, as building on each other to ultimately cause the peace weaver to be successful at her task. From studying the life of Queen Emma, the continuous struggle of such a figure to be an influential presence in her nation is more evident. Combining the images of peace weaving set down by literature and then history prove that figures participating in the tradition are as vital to the heroic world as the warrior himself.

INDEX WORDS: peace weaving, peace-weaver, peace pledge, queens in Beowulf, Queen Emma

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ANTHEA ANDRADE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION……... 1

2 BEOWULF AND THE PEACE WEAVING TRADITION……. 13

3 PEACE WEAVER: THE FEMALE WARRIOR…….. 30

4 CONCLUSION……..49

WORKS CITED……..…53

Introduction

Peace weaving plays a fundamental role in the history of western culture. Jane Chance in her essay, "Peace-Weaver, Peace Pledge: *The Conventional Queen and Ides*," defines a peace weaver politically and socially as a noble woman whose role is "to effect peace between two tribes through marriage and children" (3), and to counsel "through her lightheartedness, gentleness and constructive eloquence" (5). Therefore peace weaving is the intertribal alliances resulting from mingling bloodlines, and the unifying effects of public rituals performed by the female figures who actively participate in the tradition. Traces of the peace weaving tradition can be found specifically in Anglo-Saxon works like The Wife's Lament, Wulf and Eadwacer, and Beowulf. There is a fair amount of scholarship on the topic of peace weaving; however, the critics writing these articles appear to look mainly at literature, not historical figures, to determine the characteristics of the women who followed the tradition including the lives of Queen Emma, wife of King Æthelred II and King Cnut, and Queen Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor. Looking solely at literature for a better understanding of peace weaving is problematic for two reasons. First, poems like Beowulf focus on the life and triumphs of the male epic hero, and hence provide only glimpses into the life of the peace weaving figures encountered. As a result, scholars only focus on the lives of the queens for the short instances they appear in the poem, restricting themselves to just those short periods in the queens's lives. The second effect of looking only at literary representations and peace weaving, and focusing on a few moments in the peace weaver's life, is that scholars have become prone to voicing only one idea or conclusion about peace weaving; the peace weaver is seen as a victim or unfortunate product of her society because these are the images of peace weaving offered up by Beowulf and

other literature. In other words, the peace weaver may act in accordance with the tradition, weaving webs of peace through her words and actions, but ultimately the violence between the feuding nations is too much for her limited presence to settle. The problem with drawing notions of peace weaving from literature alone, that is the ability to analyze only brief interludes in the peace weaver's life and the appearance of an agreement among scholars of the ill-fate all peace weavers suffer, indicates a number of gaps in peace weaving history that have yet to be filled.

By extending research to the life of historical figures like Queen Emma, in the context of peace weaving, we will discover further, more interesting complexities regarding the tradition that current scholarship does not seem to consider. For instance, if the peace weaver operates within the militant part of Anglo-Saxon society, wouldn't such a role adapt and perhaps evolve over time to the surrounding conditions? What if the peace weaver were a hero in her own right, recognizing the challenges and history of the role, knowing that the chances of her failing at the task are great and still persevering? If the Anglo-Saxon warrior sought glory in going to battle, hoping to die for his cause, isn't it possible that the Anglo-Saxon peace weaver sought her own glory in undertaking what appears to be a hapless role? The answers to these questions will give a deeper understanding of peace weaving, but in order to arrive at this outlook, current scholarship must be evaluated in terms of their limited views on the tradition.

The work of two scholars forms the foundation of scholarship on peace weaving. These researchers and their fundamental texts include: Gillian Overing's book Language, Sign and Gender in *Beowulf* and Jane Chance's book Woman as Hero in Old English Literature. Each text contains passages that implicitly and explicitly characterize a peace weaver's role as a doomed one in Anglo-Saxon society.

With regards to peace weaving, Overing's book focuses on Anglo-Saxon culture and female signification into the culture. Overing asserts that since Anglo-Saxon culture is focused on war and death, women are not naturally built into the heroic system, and so the most unsettling fact about all of the peace weavers in Beowulf is that none of them are successful at the task. She states:

> I want to emphasize the most outstanding characteristic of the peace-weaver, especially as we see her in Beowulf is her inevitable failure to be a peace-weaver; the task is never accomplished the role is never fully assumed, the woman is never identified. [. . .] It is, as we shall see, an essentially untenable position, predicated on absence. (74)

Overing views the role of peace weaver, in Beowulf, as an unacceptable solution to the chaos in Anglo-Saxon warfare, especially since the women who participate in the tradition are either silent, not given their due recognition for their work or disappear from the poem without explanation. The implications are that women have limited power in this male-defined role and are forced into passivity. Although they perform the tasks required of them, the men's actions are still more important. As Overing states "women have no place in the death-centered, masculine economy of Beowulf; they have no space to occupy, to speak from [. . .] they must be continually translated by and into the male economy" (xxiii). The constant translation that Overing refers to is the never-ending process of peace weaving, the peace weaver in a position of immeasurable potential with the hope of deferring the inevitable destruction of the kingdom. In observing the words and actions of the peace weavers in Beowulf, Overing's arguments about the tradition are valid. All kingdoms mentioned within the poem are ultimately destroyed regardless of how tactful the queen is. Yet Overing's argument is dependent on the limited information the poet

provides about the queens, from the brief glimpses of them in the mead halls to the funeral pyres, and their levels of involvement in Anglo-Saxon warfare. She does not reconcile the peace weaver's presence in such a male-dominated part of society, nor does Overing look beyond literary theory and literature for a way to put such figures in a noble light considering their unfortunate fate. Overing's arguments regarding peace weaving are provocative yet similar to other scholars like Jane Chance, who uses milder language to relay the image of the doomed peace weaver.

Chance states, in her book Woman as Hero in Old English Literature, that the ideal role for an aristocratic woman in the Anglo-Saxon world was that of a peace weaving queen. According to Chance, the most important function of any peace weaver is that of motherhood, simply because child-bearing mingles the bloodlines between the two or more tribes involved in the peace pledge and hence becomes a physical means of achieving peace. Moreover, Chance also stipulates that besides childbearing and being the mead-bearer, the characteristics of a peace weaver in Anglo-Saxon literature include "being cheerful in dealing with others, she was also close-mouthed, loving, loyal, and most of all wise" (1). Chance emphasizes the role of peace weaver as that of an intermediary between warrior and king, both politically and socially. Moreover, she does point out the issue of looking solely at literature to understand the art of peace weaving. She says:

> Unfortunately, women who fulfill this ideal role in Anglo-Saxon literature are usually depicted as doomed tragic figures, frequently seen as weeping or suffering. [. . .] It appears that the very passivity of the bride and peace pledge leads inexorably to disaster, both in Anglo-Saxon and in Germanic literature. (10)

Chance draws attention to the problematic nature of interlacing peace weaving with epic, male-centered literature. First, the peace weaver appears to have little influence over her male counterparts' actions and is hence seen as an unfortunate figure; second, the passive nature of the role leads to destruction; and third, the wretchedness and passivity of the peace weaver are images acquired through literature. However Chance herself does not suggest that peace weaving figures are anything but tragic, or that sources can be found outside of literature and/or criticism agreeing with or contradicting what scholars have learned from reading poems like Beowulf.

Several scholars cite Overing and Chance, also allowing literature including Beowulf to determine the value of the peace weaver in Anglo-Saxon society. Brian McFadden's article "Sleeping after the Feast: Deathbeds, Marriage beds, and the Power Structure of Heorot," agrees with the limitation of feminine power Overing refers to but he believes that a peace weaving figure, like Wealhtheow in Beowulf, is active in her struggle to maintain that power. In other words, McFadden argues that while feminine power is limited in the militant part of Anglo-Saxon society, the peace weaver still has the ability to influence decisions made by her king. In the case of Wealhtheow, he states that her "awareness of the coming power struggle in Heorot implies that she is not helpless; she is taking steps to head off violence with her words," indicating a certain degree of the queen's power. However, he continues, "but by attempting to remove Beowulf from the picture, she opens the door for bloodshed" perpetuating the idea of the hopeless peace weaver (631). McFadden does not deny the importance of the peace weaver; in fact, he emphasizes her role based on the impact royal lineage has on national identity. He says "the end by death of a royal line denies identity to the whole people, which makes the role of peace weaver important only to the society, not to the individual woman" (631). A connection

that McFadden does not make is the parallel that can be drawn between a peace weaver and a warrior. Much like the peace weaver attempts to speak and act to advance her offspring's succession, and hence prolong the life of the nation, the warrior works towards protecting his king and nation, which is also done in an attempt to prolong the life of the kingdom. The nation's identity is therefore defined explicitly by the warrior and implicitly by the peace weaver.

Another scholar who emphasizes the peace weaver's lack of individual identity is Carol Parrish Jamison in "Traffic of Women in Germanic Literature: The Role of the Peace Pledge in Marital Exchanges." Throughout the article Jamison emphasizes the notion of women being mere objects in gift transactions, forced to bear the burden of binding men together and ensuring peace between conflicting nations. She states that the women could have two possible outcomes, either become the "unfortunate plight as object of male exchange" (14) or "find ways to move well beyond the role of object, asserting their influence as mothers and diplomats by king-making, or king-breaking in their new husband's homes" (30-31). Using literature, Jamison suggests that the peace weaver may also be helpless in choosing to express loyalty to her own kin or her husband's kin. That is, the peace weaver may want to remain loyal to her own father and brothers but still have to show favor upon her husband's kin because she is weaving peace in his court. However, citing Modthryth from Beowulf, she asserts that peace weavers do have a choice in whether they are willing to be followers of the tradition (24-25). Jamison's argument posits that peace weavers have the ability to be vengeful, especially if they are unwilling to marry their pre-determined partner and/or if their marriage fails. If the latter does occur, she states that the peace weaver may be treated once again like an object and returned to her family since she has failed at the task of establishing peace. Overall, Jamison's arguments maintain that

peace weavers have more autonomy than most scholars give them credit for. However, she is limited to examining solely literature, focusing only on the periods in the peace weaving figures' lives accounted for in the texts.

Ruth Mazo Karras shares Jamison's views on peace weaving with regard to the figure's loyalty in her article "Marriage and the Creation of Kin in the Sagas." Their arguments both emphasize the conflict regarding the loyalty a peace weaver has with her brother and with her husband. Moreover, Karras states that the act of peace weaving in itself does not create close ties between the two nations involved because the peace weaver's family loses importance after the marriage has taken place because of the patrilineal nature of Anglo-Saxon society (473). For instance in Beowulf, the hero is identified by Hrothgar as the son of Ecgþéo from his union with the daughter of Hréþel leaving Beowulf's mother unnamed. Karras specifically aligns her arguments about peace weaving with Overing and Jamison, looking at the figures performing such duties as visible tokens or significant gifts of male alliance. That is, the women are supposed to build stronger relationships between men, but it is the men who are exchanging the women. There is no partnership between the two in developing better networks. The limitation of Karra's argument is her focus on relationships between men and nations, rather than the women who strive to develop and maintain those relations. Victoria Wodzak pursues this binary of men versus women further by categorizing them as main components in the heroic and domestic worlds respectively.

According to Wodzak in her article "Of Weavers and Warriors: Peace and Destruction in the Epic Tradition," there is a clear distinction between the men's and women's worlds in Anglo-Saxon culture. The men's world spurs from military, heroic actions while the women's world

focuses on domestic work. Like other scholars, she alludes to both opposing worlds depending on each other for survival even though the nature of the heroic world allows only for domestic intervention, like peace weaving, to fail (257). This idea of doom for the domestic medium in the heroic world perpetuates the continuous line of scholarship of the fated peace weaver. Wodzak also states:

> The Anglo-Saxon heroic world understands the grim realities of war, but it possesses no remedy for the feuding and social disruption its code of conduct produces. So the heroic world turns to the domestic world, seeking a peace-weaver that which it does not possess itself [sic]. It finds instead a formula for tragedy, as the ethic of heroism asserts itself over the ties formed through a peace-weaver, and again, the heroic disrupts the continuity of the domestic. (256)

Wodzak points out that the chaotic world of the heroic does not possess the peace and continuity the domestic world has and that therefore, peace weavers bring these domestic qualities into the heroic world. The problem for Wodzak lies in relying on the ability of only one figure, a queen, to settle on-going disputes between men, who take pride in war. Wodzak emphasizes the interdependent nature of the heroic and domestic worlds, but does not explain how the worlds are interdependent when the heroic world relies upon the failure of its domestic intermediary. Further, if the heroic world fails without peace and the peace weaver is set up for failure in the heroic world then why does literature continue to reiterate the hopelessness of the system in place? These questions arise from scholarship that is unable to look beyond literature to characterize the qualities of a successful peace weaver who has avoided the predetermined doom. Wodzak states that “ideally peace reigns. Women weave it. Men defend it. Yet balance is rarely

achieved in this interdependent world" (257). And this is where her analysis ends. She doesn't propose a way for balance to be reached, or a way for the peace weaver to be successful in the heroic world. In answering the aforementioned questions within the context of this balance, will prove that the literature critiques peace weaving on a deeper level. Scholarship currently positions the peace weaver as separate from the militant world she lives in, yet her goal is the same as the male warriors, that is, to prolong the life of the kingdom. Therefore examining the peace weaver's presence as an integrated component of the heroic world would align her actions with those of her male counterparts, making her a warrior in her own right with the mead-hall as her battlefield. Shari Horner takes a different approach to critiquing the peace weaving tradition in her book The Discourse of Enclosure.

Horner sheds some light on the gloomy path set forth for peace weavers by other scholars, emphasizing that the tribes do benefit from the act of peace weaving, even if the role is set up for failure by the system. She states:

> Ironically, as Chance and Overing have shown, the peace-weaver inevitably fails; the peace rarely lasts for long and peace-weaving often produces death. Yet at the same time peace-weaving is productive—if only temporarily. Both childbirth and diplomacy (even if short-lived) are creative acts: the peace-weaver produces a "text" that rewrites history, either her own or that of the two tribes. (68-69)

Horner attempts to redeem the image of the peace weaver by calling attention to the idea that even if the peace weaver is an ill-fated figure, she at least brings (temporary) hope to the tribes involved in the exchange. Horner uses the word *text* as a metaphor embodying the peace weaver's actions that attempt to draw attention towards kinship and away from feuding. So

according to Horner, the peace weaver does have some sort of positive impact on her society, even if the influence of her actions is temporary. Ultimately, however, Horner focuses on the significance of peace weavers and their stories in literature, and hence reconfirms traditional Anglo-Saxon models of femininity, passivity and suffering (66) by stating, within the context of Beowulf, that "enclosure within the social structure of marriage is essential" especially since "women [who] cannot be identified as mothers, or when mothers produce death, the social order perceives its greatest threat" (90). The peace weaving figure has no autonomy in this instance. She must marry and strive to bring about peace and since death of the kingdom is imminent she is destined to fail at her task.

The majority of the scholarship on peace weaving outlines a path of doom for the peace weaver, a figure with an insurmountable task, based on literary accounts of Anglo-Saxon pledges that fail on some level to fully sustain the life of the kingdom. The inherent flaw in relying solely on such accounts of peace weavers is that the literature is focused on the warrior's legacy of fighting victoriously in battle. These female figures are often in the background in these instances since their struggle is not as celebrated as that of their male counterparts. Looking at historical peace weavers and the recorded portions of their lives, other alternatives or perspectives can be found regarding how overwhelming the task of peace weaving really is. For instance, Queen Emma, wife of King Æthelred II in 1002, and wife of King Cnut in 1017, her life as an Anglo-Saxon peace weaver can be compared to the models set forth by the queens in Beowulf. Her life stands in sharp contrast with those peace-weaving figures in Beowulf because she embraced her craft and lived a life that exemplifies some scholarly ideas surrounding the tradition and surpasses others' with what can only be termed *successful peace weaving*.

Therefore, a peace weaver's life must exude efforts on a variety of levels to support her husband and sons in order for her to be considered successful.

Emma's biography, written by Pauline Stafford in Queen Emma and Queen Edith, embodies all of the aspects of peace weaving that scholars continuously refer to. In her marriage to Æthelred II, she is the young, inexperienced bride who is thrust into the militant part of Anglo-Saxon life. After her marriage to Cnut, Emma exhibits the conflicts in loyalty, especially when she must choose between allegiance to Cnut, her husband, or the offspring from her marriage to Æthelred II, the surviving heirs to the English throne. This issue of loyalty is further complicated when she has children with Cnut. Emma also exemplifies the notion of the peace weaver disappearing or fading from the text. After the Edwards takes the English throne, she no longer makes her way to the forefront in an effort to maintain peace within the nation. In fact she dies alone and virtually powerless. In spite of all of these elements in Emma's life that validate the scholarship on peace weaving, there are enough significant differences that merit attention and suggests Emma's success at the role. For instance, in her second marriage, Emma reaches the height of her power, forging a partnership in her union to Cnut, teaching him about English law and acting on his behalf throughout the nation. Moreover, she actively fights for her sons to succeed to the English throne even when none of them is physically present to do so himself. These are just two of many facets of Emma's life that sets her apart from literary peace weaving figures and offer a more complicated image of peace weaving than the queens in Beowulf. She is not passive or silent as queen, nor is she powerless. She does suffer through numerous events in her life, but she ultimately dies with her son on the English throne. These factors make her a successful peace weaver, complicating the notion of the tradition continuously put forth by

scholars. The peace weaver as she comes from the domestic world is thrust into the heroic world, and she has to find a way to adapt to the conditions in this male-oriented part of society. Therefore, she must learn to speak and act in order to influence those around her. When scholars focus on the peace weaving figures in literature, the allusion of a peace weaver to a warrior, in her own right, is lost. By examining the life of Queen Emma the peace weaver's presence in the heroic world is active and thriving amongst the men, striving for peace throughout the nation in the hands of her kin at all costs. Yet literary peace weavers provide images of the tradition on the most fundamental levels.

Beowulf presents a literary starting point in the discussion of peace weaving, reflecting the primary focus of Anglo Saxon epic poetry on the male hero rather than the value placed in the peace weaver. Scholarship on the peace weaving figures in the poem tend to negatively perceive the lack of female presence, and as a result determine the tradition as one set up for failure due to lack of male co-operation with the peace weaving figures. However, in viewing the peace weaver as a part of the militant area of Anglo-Saxon society, the burden of failure, that is, the destruction of the kingdom, is no longer on just the lone female presence but on her male counterparts as well. Moreover, Beowulf provides several instances in the peace weaver's life where she struggles to bring peace to such a chaotic part of her society.

Beowulf and the Peace-Weaving Tradition

The female characters in Beowulf are meticulously embedded within the central theme, the main story, illustrating the distinctions between the functions of men and of women in Anglo-Saxon society. The focus of the main story and language in Beowulf is on the role of the Anglo-Saxon warrior, particularly the victories of Beowulf. Compared to the male acts of heroism in the poem, the acts of peace weaving performed by the female characters have been viewed as minor points of interest in the poem. Therefore when a queenly figure appears in the poem, either in the main story or a digression, scholars are drawn towards the overall lack of female presence in the poem. This lack then leads to the question as to how so much scholarship can be conducted on the peace weaving in Beowulf when the poem itself is focused on Beowulf's legacy, allowing for only brief passages involving queenly figures. The instances in the poem where the peace weavers are encountered emphasize significant activities that were expected of them by Anglo-Saxon society, and this fact alone merits scholarship. However, determining whether the entire tradition produces only tragic figures that live in passivity and suffering based on literature that focuses mainly on male heroism is not entirely profitable. Moreover, the problem with relying on the queenly figures in Beowulf to provide this evidence of tragedy is not advisable because the poem touches upon mere moments in the peace weaver's life. This fact alone enables scholars to project the tragic nature onto the peace weavers in Beowulf. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines a tragic figure as one who "suffers death, grief or destruction" Therefore the first step in understanding the role of peace weaving in Anglo-Saxon culture is determining what expectations were made of such figures and how such demands were met. The steps following this include finding out whether

the peace weaving figure is a failure at her task based on whether she fulfills her purpose in society, determine whether she is a tragic figure as per the definition provided, and then assess what Beowulf really says about the tradition.

Each queen in Beowulf appears to perform different duties within the tradition of peace weaving and is conscious of her importance as a public figure. This consciousness is why the peace weaver performed activities primarily in the mead hall during "festivities of peace and joy after battle or contest" (New Readings, 250). She expressed her bond with her husband and the warriors symbolically through the dispensing of treasure, and she continued her weaving through the passing of the cup. The literal action of passing the cup from warrior to warrior symbolizes an invisible web of peace, reflecting the dependent relationship each warrior had on another. The words spoken by Wealhtheow in Beowulf, during the cup-passing are important in stressing to the warriors their common goal in battle and how their victory relies upon each man fulfilling his duty to his nation. These activities gave the woman who performed them agency as political and social intermediary, not only between individuals but nations as well. Wealhtheow is the only female character in Beowulf who demonstrates these qualities and embodies the true nature of peace weaving, since her instances in the poem depict her performing a variety of peace weaving activities.

Wealhtheow, queen to Hrothgar, weaves peace primarily between the Danes and the Helmings with her marriage to Hrothgar: "Wealhtheow came forth, Hrothgar's wife […] lady of the Helmings" (612^{b}-613^{a}, 620^{b}). Clearly she is knowledgeable in this aspect of her life because her words appear to be carefully chosen and are accompanied with actions that display her intention to weave peace. In the poem, she performs this function when she passes the cup

around the mead hall at Heorot, and the poet stresses the aptness of Wealhtheow's character through the language used when he writes:

> Dær wæs hæleþa hleahtor, hlyn swynsode,
> word wæron wynsume. Ēode Wealhþēow forð,
> cwēn Hrōðāges cynna gemyndig,
> grētte goldhroden guman on healle,
> ond þā frēolīc wīf ful gesealde
> ærest Ēast-Dena ēþelwearde,
> bæd hine blīðne æt þære bēorþege,
> lēodum lēofne; hē on lust geþeah
> symbel ond seleful, sigerōf kyning.
> Ymbēode þā ides Helminga
> duguþe ond geogoþe dæl æghwylcne,
> sincfato sealde, oþ þæt sæl ālamp,
> þæt hīo Bowulfe, bēaghroden cwēn
> mōde geþungen medoful ætbær; (611 – 624[a])[1]

The language depicts Wealhtheow as an honorable character, using phrases like "cynna gemyndig" translated as "mindful of etiquette" to reinforce the idea that Wealhtheow is aware of her position as queen and public figure. Moreover, in terms of peace weaving, she appears to be without fault in that from the words themselves, she appears to be conscious of how her actions will influence the men in the mead hall and she passes the cup flawlessly. Helen Damico also maintains the importance of the "gold-adorned one [. . .] holding out a cup, bedecked with rings" as being "an embodiment of one of its [heroic society's] creeds, generosity: the giving and

[1] The laughter of heroes was there, the noise made melody, their words were joyful. Wealhtheow, Hrothgar's queen, came forth, mindful of etiquette, adorned with gold, greeted and gave out full cups to all the men in the hall. First to the East-Dane's homeland guardian, beloved by the people, bade him to blithe at the partaking of beer. In delight he took the feast-food and hall-cup, the victorious king. Then she, lady of the Helmings, went among them and a portion to each old and young gave rich cups until she, the ring-adorned queen blossoming in spirit, to Beowulf carried the mead-cup.

receiving of rings is a sign not only of wealth and largess, but of interaction with one's fellow beings" (32). Based on the poet's language the peace weaver's presence in the mead-hall is celebrated. She influences the warriors into action, reminding them of their relationship with their fellow warriors and more importantly the importance of their king. Alexandra Hennessey Olsen reemphasizes the importance of the peace weaver's speech acts as an example of the hostess's public, influential functions, "exercis[ing] her diplomatic" purpose alongside the intention "to influence masculine action" (323).

As a model queen, Wealhtheow has the most lines of spoken word of any of the queens in the poem; these lines reflect the importance she places on her role as queen and weaver of peace. Through her language, the depth of her role as she counsels Hrothgar on his decision to adopt Beowulf.

'Bēo wið Gēatas glæd, geofena gemyndig,
nēan ond feorran þū nū hafast.
Mē man sægde, þæt þū ðē for sunu wolde
hereri[n]c habban. Heorot is gefælsod,
bēahsele beorhta; brūc þenden þū mōte
manigra mēdo, ond þīnum māgum læf
folc ond rīce, þonne ðū forð scyle,
metodsceaft seon. Ic mīnne can
glædne Hrōþulf, þæt hē þā geogoðe while
ārum healdan, gyf þū ær þonne hē,
wine Scildinga, worold oflætest;
wēne ic þæt hē mid gōde gyldan wille
uncran eaferan, gif hē þæt eal gemon,
hwæt wit tō willan ond to wormyndum
umbrọwesendum ær rna gefremedon.' (1173 - 1187)[2]

[2] "Be gracious with the Geats, mindful of the gifts which from near and far you now have. It has been told to me that you wish to have this leader of armies for a son. Heorot, the bright ring-hall, is cleansed. You

Wealhtheow carefully reminds Hrothgar that there are offspring as a result of the peace-pledge and she wants to preserve this pledge by putting Beowulf in the role of protector of her sons. Beowulf does not reply to Wealhtheow's speech probably because he understands of her role as peace weaver, defending her purpose and her children. He could also be asserting his loyalty to Hygelac which is a component of the heroic code. Moreover, this speech demonstrates Wealhtheow's acting as defender of her kingdom, because in stepping in and stopping Hrothgar from adopting Beowulf, she is, through her words, trying to keep the kingdom within royal bloodlines. Brian McFadden views Wealhtheow's speech as an indication of her power, one that goes against Hrothgar's wishes and so after the battle with Grendel's mother following its delivery, Wealhtheow is no longer named. He states:

> Wealhtheow is now "the lady with them," and she says nothing about the speech [where Hrothgar tells Beowulf that he will rule the Danes]; she does not speak again in the poem, and the feminine voice which attempts to replace violence with language is silenced. [. . . because] Wealhtheow's efforts to intervene are improper or ineffective interference with the king's right to choose his successor. (641)

Regardless of whether Wealhtheow speaks again or not, she does act as advisor to the king, a role the peace weaver may undertake. She attempts to keep the line of succession within her and Hrothgar's bloodlines, but he does not heed her advice. Wealhtheow is not guilty of defying her husband's wishes because she leaves him to make the ultimate decision, and she obviously

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may enjoy the many rewards and when you must go forth to meet what is fated, leave your kinsmen, folk and kingdom. I know my gracious Hrothulf will wish to honor these youths if you, friend of the Scyldings, leave the world behind, earlier than he. I believe that he will repay our children in kind as he remembers all that we, before his youth, bestowed our favors for his sake and worldly renown."

strives to keep the Danish throne within her family. This situation lends itself to the scholarship on the helpless nature of the peace weaver, because Wealhtheow appears to have no say in the Danish future. But still, the poem is about Beowulf's legacy, and his allegiance is to Hygelac, and so he returns home, allowing lineal sucession of the Danish throne. Wealhtheow's actions as peace weaver in Beowulf are not limited to her performing rituals in the mead-hall or her attempts to retain the Danish throne for her sons. She also weaves peace is by teaching her own daughter, Freawaru, to be a peace weaver, another factor in the longevity of a kingdom.

As a mother, Wealhtheow trains Freawaru to be a peace weaver during the celebrations, having her pass the cup amongst the warriors in her father's hall. Wealhtheow's legacy of peace weaving is important because it promulgates the practice. Freawaru becomes an example of how the tradition of peace weaving continues between nations, especially since she is destined to marry Ingeld, king of the Heathobards, and weave peace between his nation and the Danes. Overall, Wealhtheow is an example of a competent peace weaver. She strives to protect the kingdom by making sure that all of her offspring succeed, her sons in taking their father's throne, ultimately establishing continuity in the ruling monarchy's presence in the nation, and her own daughter's marriage to preserve peace with the Heathobards, continuing the peace weaving tradition. She cannot be described as a tragic figure because she copes with the conditions of the heroic world and continues in her attempts to weave peace. These qualities differentiate her from the other female characters of the poem who have the same function; Hildeburh, for example, strives to maintain peace much like Wealhtheow but her circumstances are different since both her brother's and her husband's kingdoms are ultimately destroyed.

Hildeburh, in her marriage unites the Danes and the Frisians, initially establishing the peace pledge.

Nē hūru Hildeburh herian þorfte
Ēotena trēowe; unsynnum wearð
beloren lēofum æt þām lindplegan
bearnum ond brōðrum; hīe on gebryd hruron
gāre wunde; þæt wæs geōmuru ides! (1071 – 1075)[3]

Hildeburh demonstrates the conflict in the peace weaver's identity regarding loyalty to her husband, Finn, and her brother. According to McFadden, "peaceweaving is more important than the individual feminine identity to the depicted culture…the end by death of a royal line denies identity to the whole people, which makes the role of peaceweaver important only to society, not to the individual woman" (631). The goal for the woman is to establish her own individual identity with her family and thus help her community preserve its own goals including prolonging the reign of the king in his kingdom. The poet refers to Hildeburh as guiltless, because there is nothing she could have done to prevent the destruction of both kingdoms. This also implies that society does not hold Hildeburh accountable for the violence that ensued. Moreover Hildeburh appears to have acted in accordance with the tradition, because she did have a son out of her union, although he too is killed amongst the chaos between his father and his uncle. The next step for the peace weaver is "to grieve over the destruction" (Jamison 23). In mourning the three deaths, Hildeburh sees no bright future for the nation since both their king and his son are dead. Yet she makes one last attempt at weaving peace in the poem, by burning her son and brother side by side on the funeral pyre, which Overing considers to be a "gesture of conciliation, a kind of peace-weaving in the face of death" (Women in Beowulf 235). Her son would have eventually ruled her husband's nation, and thus represents Finn's nation; burning him and his uncle together would consign their flames together as one (Chance 262).

[3] Truly, Hildeburh did not have need to praise the good faith of the Eotens: she was guiltless, bereft of her dear ones, son and brother. They fell in accordance with Fate, wounded by the spear. That was a mournful woman!

Hēt ðā Hildeburh æt Hnæfes āde
hire selfre sunu sweoloðe befæstan,
bānfatu bærnan, ond on bæl don
ēame on eaxle. Ides gnornode,
geōmrode giddum. (1114 – 1118[a])[4]

Hildeburh does what is expected of her. She weaves peace in her marriage to Finn, bears him a son, but is still unable to prevent the battle between her brother and Finn, and then she grieves over the total devastation. Jamison argues that Hildeburh is a failure as a peace weaver because she does not appear to exert the kind of influence Wealhtheow has and is hence unable to prevent the fatal battle. Wealhtheow's success as a peace weaver is dependent on male recognition and co-operation with her acts of weaving peace. Hrothgar did not agree with her on the issue of succession, and perhaps for Hildeburh, in the heat of battle Finn would not listen to her pleas for peace. Moreover, the situation for each queen is different and therefore there is no way to gauge either queen's response if they were in the other's situation. Hildeburh does have the last act in her union to Finn. She attempts to weave peace between the nations by burning of her son's and brother's bodies together. Therefore, Hildeburh is not a tragic figure because while she does suffer and her future with Finn is destroyed, she still tries to weave peace at the funeral pyres. The Hildeburh digression is told by Hrothgar's bard in Wealhtheow's presence, reminding her of the importance of evading the devastation of war, and the endless work involved in peace weaving, even in the light of destruction. The peace weaver should not have a hand in the destruction, which is something Modthryth learns through marriage.

[4] Then Hildeburh, the wretched woman, ordered her own son to be committed to the fire, the body vessel burned and put on the bier as Hnaef's shoulder companion. The lady lamented, sorrowing with songs.

Modthryth, like Hildeburh, is part of one of the digressions in Beowulf. She is one of two figures whose history before marriage is talked of in the poem. Anglo-Saxon society expected the king's daughter to recognize her status as a public figure and ultimately her duty as a peace weaver. However Modthryth's pride in her beauty impedes her role as peace weaver. Her actions were not acceptable to Anglo-Saxon society because of the active role she took in having her father kill any man who looked at her. As McFadden states, "Modthryth was weaver of war before" she marries Offa and becomes acceptable in society as a peace weaver (633). As the narrator comments:

Mōdþryðo wæg,
fremu folces cwēn, firen' ondrysne;
nænig þæt dorste dēor genēþan
swæsra gesīða, nefne sinfrea,
þæt hire an dæges ēagum starede;
ac him wælbende weotode tealde
handgewriþene; hraþe seoþðan wæs
æfter mundgripe mēce geþinged,
þæt hit sceādenmæl scyran mōste,
cwealmbealu cyðan. Ne bið swylc cwēnlīc þēaw
idese tō efnanne, þēah ðe hīo ænlicu sy,
þætte freoðuwebbe fēores onsæce
æfter ligetorne lēofne mannan. (1931[b] – 1943)[5]

[5] Modthryth, a beautiful queen of the people, performed terrible crimes. Not one of the bold, dear companions, except the dear lord, dared risk even by day to look her in the eyes, for he might consider prescribed slaughter-bonds woven by hands, then quickly after seizure a sword, shadow-marked, appointed obliged to settle and make known the evil of death. Such is not a queenly manner for a lady to perform even if she is matchless in beauty, that the peace weaver should deprive the life of a beloved man owing to false injury.

Women in Anglo-Saxon society, as peace weavers, were expected to speak and act in such a manner to influence peace between men, since violence and war were considered to be the man's domain. Mothryth participated through her father in such violence, making her, as Overing states, "with the exception of Grendel's mother…the most unwomanly, unqueenly female in the poem" (249). Unlike Wealhtheow, Modthryth doesn't speak in the poem, but more importantly, she appears to encourage violence until she marries. Modthryth's role in the poem is crucial to the understanding of the necessity of a peace weaver in violent aspects of Anglo-Saxon society; she loses her selfish tendencies in becoming a peace weaver, and works towards the greater good of Offa's people and her own.

Hūru þæt onhōhsnod[e] Hemminges mæg:
ealodrincende ōðer sædan,
þæt hīo lēodbealewa læs gefremede,
inwitnīða, syþþan ærest wearð
gyfen goldhroden geongum cempan,
æðelum dīore, syþþan hīo Offan flet
ofer fealone flōd be fæder lāre
sīðe gesōhte; ðær hīo syþþan well
in gumstōle, gōde mære,
līgesceafta lifigende brēac,
hīold hēahflufan wið hæleþa brego,
ealles moncynnes mīne gefræge
þone sēlestan bī sæm twēonum,
eormencynnes; (1944 – 1957[a])[6]

[6] Nevertheless, a kinsman of Hemming, cut her off at the hill, told the ale-drinker of that evil, she practiced less malice and enmity, since she was first given, gold-adorned, to the young champion of noble

Modthryth learns how to be a peace weaver through marriage, working for the good of the society around her rather than for her own individual benefit. Overing states:

> Modthryth [. . .] reveals the trace of something that we know cannot exist in the world of the poem: the trace of a woman signifying in her own right. Her initial gesture is strikingly alien, incomprehensible , until translated into the binary language of the masculine economy. (The Women of Beowulf, 252)

Modthryth does not take on the role of peace weaver until she assimilates into the symbolic order through marriage. Moreover, the poet describes her as being a good, famous queen after marriage, indicating that as a peace weaver she gains more respect since she realizes how much the people need her. Modthryth is not a tragic figure simply because she embraces her position as peace weaver and is apparently successful. Modthryth's late arrival as peace weaver stands in contrast to Freawaru, who has been trained by Wealhtheow to fulfill this function.

Like her mother, Freawaru is destined to be a peace weaver, uniting the Danes and the Heathobards. However, Beowulf predicts her failure at the task, a peace weaving experience like Hildeburh's. This speech is significant because he is speaking to Hygelac about the destruction of the Danish and Heathobard nations in spite of the marriage.

> Hwīlum for (d)uguðe dohtor Hrōðgāres
> eorlum on ende ealuwæge bær,
> þā ic Frēaware fletsittende
> nemnan hyrde þær hīo (næ)gled sinc
> hæleðum sealde. Sío gehāten (is),

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ancestry, when she to Offa's hall, by her father's wisdom, over dusky flood sought in her journey. Where she for goodness famed used well for the length of her life on the throne. She held high love for the hero's lord.

geong goldhroden, gladum suna Frōdan
(h)afað þæs geworden wine Scyldinga,
rīces hyrde, ond þæt ræd talað,
þæt hē mid ðy wīfe wælfæhða dæl,
sæcca gesette**.** Oft seldan hwær
æfter lēodhryre lytle hwīle
bongār būgeð, þēah sēo bryd duge**!**
Mæg þæs þonne ofþyncan ðēodne Heaðo-Beardna
ond þegna gehwām þāra lēoda
þonne hē mid fæmnan on flett gæð:
dryhtbearn Dena duguða biwenede,
on him gladiað gomelra lāfe
heard ond hringmæl Heaða-Bear[d]na gestrēon
þenden hīe ðām wæpnum wealdan móston. (2020 - 2039)[7]

He states that, although the match is good, peace will not result simply because of the pride between the Danish and Heathobard warriors, symbolized by the spoils of war. That is, the warriors of each tribe will wear armor and treasures from previous battles against each other, agitating each other to the point of chaos. According to Beowulf, Heathobard warriors will be able to convince Ingeld to join in the battle against the Danes, and hence ignore his peace-pledge bride, bringing destruction to both kingdoms. The speech Beowulf makes regarding this matter

[7] "A long time, Hrothgar's daughter, bore the ale-cup before the band of warriors to the nobles. Then I, on the floor, heard her name, Freawaru, as she continuously gave the studded cup to the warriors. She is promised, young and gold-adorned to the gracious son of Froda, the friend of the Scyldings, this arranged and the counsel advised that he and this woman will settle a great part of the slaughter-feud. Seldom anywhere does the deadly spear which befalls the prince, bend down though the bride is good. This may then displease the chief of the Heathobards and every thane of that people, when he with the maiden walks on the floor, attended by her troop, the sons of the noble Danes, who are decorated with ancient heirlooms, hard and ring-adorned, the Heathobards' treasure as long as they were able to wield those weapons."

does not only indicate his own distrust of the Heathobards, but also his lack of faith in the lone peace weaver being able to settle the chaos between two nations. Beowulf's opinion aside, if Freawaru's marriage does turn out as he predicts then perhaps Freawaru is the only tragic peace weaver in the poem. She has been trained as a peace weaver by Wealhtheow but is destined to suffer like Hildeburh from being unable to form her own identity as queen of the Heathobards before war ensues. Hildeburh has the last word at the funeral pyres but there is no indication that Freawaru will have the opportunity to do the same. Beowulf continues, with regards to Freawaru's marriage:

> Manað swā ond myndgað mæla gehwylce
> sārum wordum, oð ðæt sæl cymeð,
> þæt se fæmnan þegn fore fæder dædum
> æfter billes bite blōdfāg swefeð,
> ealdres scyldig; him se ōðer þonan
> losað (li)figende, con him land geare.
> þonne bīoð (āb)brocene on bā healfe
> āðsweorð eorla; (syð)ðan Ingelde
> weallað wælnīðas, ond him wīflufan
> æfter cearwælmum cōlran weorðað.
> þy ic Heaðo-Bear[d]na hyldo ne telge,
> dryhtsibbe dæl Denum unfæcne,
> frēondscipe fæstne. (2057 – 2069[a])[8]

[8] "Thus he incites and reminds every time with grievous words until that time comes that the woman's thane for his forefather's deeds is stained with blood, having forfeited life from the sword's bite. Thence the other escapes him, the land already known to him. Then are the sworn oaths of the earls' broken on both sides. Then in Ingeld murderous hate will well up, and in him the love for his woman will become cooler surging grief, therefore, I do not consider the Heathobards's loyalty a part of the alliance, nor their treachery for the Danes' worth enduring friendship."

Beowulf's prediction of Freawaru's plight reflects his opinions on the notion of peace weaving and men relying on one woman for peace. According to Victoria Wodzak, because of the heroic and domestic codes trying to generate some form of stability in the heroic world, peace weaving will ultimately fail because it is only the "women attempt[ing] to weave peace in a bifurcated domain" (260). If this is the case, according to Beowulf, for peace weaving in Anglo-Saxon society, then perhaps the poem does contain an underlying critique of the idea of peace pledging, suggesting that peace weaving is only a temporary solution to men's battles, and that ultimately it is the men alone who have a hand in destroying their own kingdoms. By the end of the poem, the problem of finding other ways to resolve conflict in this masculine arena is still not resolved. Wodzak states that "while Beowulf, and others, may view such arrangements as having little chance of success, their world knows no other clear remedy for warfare" (31).

Beowulf's main frame story depends on the military aspects of Anglo-Saxon life, and these aspects are dependent upon domestic figures, namely peace weavers, to settle the chaos and violence that would lead to annihilation otherwise. According to McFadden, Beowulf criticizes the idea of peace depending on one woman, because the weaving appears to give women an autonomous position but is ultimately a male-defined role and the female does not signify into this military system (630). Beowulf notes the failure of the peace weaving ideology in completely resolving war conflict, and through his own words and actions destroys the need for such a construct, alluding to the impending death of the concept. Beowulf may condemn peace weaving as a solution to war between nations, but this does not mean that he does not observe peace weaver's and their unions. For instance, when Hygd offers Beowulf the throne, he declines:

þær him Hygd gebēad hord ond rīce,
bēagas ond bregostōl; bearne ne truwode,
þæt hē wið ælfylcum ēþelstōlas
healdan cūðe, ðā wæs Hygelāc dead.
Nō ðy ær fēasceafte findan meahton
æt ðām æðelinge ænige ðinga,
þæt hē Heardréde hlāford wære,
oððe þone cynedōm cīosan wolde;
hwæðre hē him on folce frēondlārum hēold,
ēstum mid āre, oð ðæt hē yldra wearð,
Weder-Gēatum wēold. (2367 – 2379a)[9]

Hygd is not wrong for asking Beowulf to take the throne because he is one of her kinsmen. One possible reason as to why Beowulf rejects the throne at this point is to respect the offspring of Hygd's and Hygelac's marriage, hence, allowing the rightful heir to take the throne. Moreover, when Wealhtheow speaks to the warriors in the hall regarding the adoption of Beowulf into the Danish kin, she is preserving the peace-pledge, and Beowulf recognizes it by not commenting on her speech. When home, he criticizes the notion of peace weaving by condemning Freawaru's marriage to Ingeld, stating that it will not result in peace but in more violence. Another instance of Beowulf's attitude towards peace weaving is when he appoints Wiglaf as his successor. This is because he does not leave behind any heirs or even a grieving widow. All of these factors

[9] There Hygd bade him, hoard and kingdom, rings and throne; she did not believe in her son that he could hold the ancestral throne against foreign people now that Hygelac was dead. Not the sooner could the destitute ones find in the noble one, by any means, that he to Heardred would be a lord, or wished to accept the kingdom; yet he upheld with the counsels, graciously in honor, until he grew up, among the folk, ruling in the Weder-Geats.

point towards the continuous failure of the peace weaving tradition to prevent chaos in the heroic world.

The notion of peace weaving is carefully embedded into Beowulf, and this is why ultimately the poem can be seen in part as a critique of this war policy. Beowulf appeals to the construct of peace weaving because in death he does not leave any kinsmen to take his throne and an unknown woman is left singing at his pyre. He does not marry to settle peace between his nation and another's.

(æfter Bīowulfe b)undenheorde
(song) sorgcearig, sæde geneahhe,
þæt hīo hyre (hearnda)gas hearde (ondrē)de,
wælfylla worn, (wīgen)des egesan,
hy[n]ðo (ond) h(æftny)d. (3151 – 3155[a])[10]

The significance of the mourning woman lies in the fact that she is not a peace weaver; she enters the poem to mourn the loss of Beowulf and to prophesy the coming of war and chaos. Her purpose in the poem is only to reflect on there being no one to weave peace with, especially since Beowulf dies childless. If he had married a peace pledge then perhaps the real tragedy in the nation's lack of identity would have been avoided. There is no widow, peace weaver, to offer hope to the mourning nation. She would offer hope because even if she remarried a king from another nation, there would be some continuity for the Geats. Yet the poem ends with no hope for Geats but destruction now that Beowulf is dead.

[10] After Beowulf, an old woman sang sorrowfully, earnestly of fortune, that she dreaded for herself days of harm fiercely, of multitude of slaughter-feasts, terror of warriors, humiliation and captivity.

The end of the poem emphasizes the importance of the peace weaving ideology because there is no woman to carry forward the culture Beowulf leaves behind. Beowulf, in his death, leaves no heirs to his throne and ends his lineage; this lack of female presence emphasizes both the importance of the peace weaver to the prolonged survival of society, but also more importantly, signifies the need for a solution other than the peace weaver, because without the peace weaver there is no one present at the end of the poem to encourage peace between warriors and nations.

Peace Weaver: The Female Warrior

The majority of scholars of Beowulf and Anglo-Saxon culture agree that peace weavers ultimately fail at their task of bringing peace to the two nations involved. Furthermore upon examining Beowulf, peace weavers are found to be supporters of a tradition that fails simply because the instigators of the tradition, the male warriors, eventually determine whether the figure's actions for peace are worth investing in or not. The peace weaver herself is not a failure unless she fails to act in every possible way to achieve peace. This perspective on peace weaving is provided through literary examination, which in the case of Beowulf is inadequate because the participating figures are minor focal points of the poem. That is, they only appear for a few scenes and then disappear, creating a need for other sources to be used to determine whether peace weavers are indeed prone to practicing a failing tradition. Historical peace weavers provide information that literary figures lack, especially in terms of what happens to the queen when her son takes the throne, or what the end of the peace weaver's life looks like. Adding a historical peace weaver to the discussion on the tradition is beneficial because she brings more information and insight into the lifestyle that literature may not account for, and also validates models or aspects of peace weaving set down by literary figures.

Emma, daughter of Richard I of Normandy, was one of the last Anglo-Saxon queens having married King Æthelred II in 1002, and then Cnut in 1017. Both in marriage and life, she took on the role of peace weaver, aspiring to prevent conflict between the English and one or more opposing nations, and also bearing two future English kings. In examining Emma's life she embodies each of the peace weavers we find in Beowulf, whether she takes on the role of counselor to and eventually mourner of her king, protective mother or even

performer of fundamental ritualistic acts expected of the peace weavers at the time. Emma's life is exemplary of a peace weaver who bound her own identity to her husband's nation, in this case England, and continuously struggled to hold her position as queen. Emma's actions to secure England's future does suggest in a number of instances the tragic nature set forth by literary peace weavers, but considering the fact that when she dies, her country is in the hands of her son Edward and his wife Edith there is little room for argument that she is not successful at her task as a peace weaver. Examining Emma's life, chronologically and in comparison to the queens in Beowulf, the parallel of the peace weaver as warrior arises. Like a warrior, Emma acted only with the intention to prolong the life of her kingdom. That is, she never allowed England to fall into the hands of someone outside of her and her husbands' bloodlines without a fight, and in every case she succeeds in maintaining and sustaining national identity throughout her life. From her youth till death, Emma defies the stereotypes of the traditional peace weaver, that is a passive and suffering figure, and sets down a lifetime of peace weaving for scholars to consider when continuing the discourse of the tradition.

There is little known of Emma's training as a peace weaver, although it bears some resemblance to Freawaru's training in Beowulf. Like Freawaru, Emma was the offspring of a peace pledge, between her father, Richard I of Normandy, and her mother, Gunnor, of Danish decent. This kind of background, being the product of a political union, and coming from an influential family, provided Emma with the rearing of a peace weaver. Pauline Stafford asserts the possibility that since Richard I died in 996, when she was much younger,

Emma was able to learn certain notions about power and widowhood from Gunnor. She states:

> It is impossible to say what Emma might have learnt from observing her mother [. . .] she could have imbibed her first lessons in female power and regency [. . .] in the 990s the young Emma could have had in her mother an example of a widow's power, and could have learnt from the value of shaping and editing as well as celebrating family history. (Queen Emma 212-213).

In spite of the lack of information regarding Emma's childhood, Stafford and Isabella Strachan can allude to Gunnor as a peace weaver herself, passing on the peace weaving tradition to Emma, in instances like instructing her in languages like Norman French and Danish as well as attending court (Strachan 35). This is similar to Wealhtheow teaching Freawaru basic rituals of the tradition like having her pass the cup in Hrothgar's court. This parallel between Emma and Freawaru can also be furthered with Emma's entrance and reception into Æthelred II's court and Beowulf's projection of Freawaru's arrival into Ingeld's court. As Beowulf states:

> Sío gehāten (is),
> geong goldhroden, gladum suna Frōdan
> (h)afað þæs geworden wine Scyldinga,
> rīces hyrde, ond þæt ræd talað,
> þæt hē mid ðy wīfe wælfæhða dæl,
> sæcca gesette. Oft seldan hwær
> æfter lēodhryre lytle hwīle

> bongār būgeð, þēah sēo bryd duge**!** (2024b - 2031)[11]

Freawaru's marriage to Ingeld is meant to ease tensions between the Danes and the Heathobards, much like Emma's marriage to Æthelred II, was meant to prevent the Danes from any future attacks against the English. While the situation is different, the mood for the arrival of the peace pledge is similar. Stafford describes the mood for Emma's arrival in England, almost mimicking Beowulf's speech regarding Freawaru,

> Waiting for the arrival of Emma was a time for fears and claims among the royal family and the religious houses closely associated with its female members. [. . .] she was a peace-maker, of a particular kind, but one whose arrival had already provoked tension and fear. (Queen Emma 220)

Beowulf predicts that the union between Freawaru and Ingeld will result in more conflict, much like Emma's marriage to Æthelred II, which was unable to prevent an attack from the Danes less than a year after their union. Stafford refers to Emma's influence as being useless to "a military court and military politics" especially since her "peace-making marriage had proved ineffective in closing off Norman aid to England's Danish attackers" (Queen Emma 224). In this instance Stafford aligns herself with current scholarship by alluding to Emma being unsuccessful as a peace weaver because of her inability to exact an influence on the nations involved in her union. Emma's failure to prevent the Danish attack puts her and Hildeburh from Beowulf in a similar position. Hildeburh emphasizes the idea that marriages meant to settle conflicts did not always work out because of the peace weaver's failure to

[11] "She is promised, young and gold-adorned to the gracious son of Froda, the friend of the Scyldings, this arranged and the counsel advised that he and this woman will settle a great part of the slaughter-feud. Seldom anywhere does the deadly spear which befalls the prince, bend down though the bride is good!"

prevent further war through marriage. According to scholars like Gillian Overing, Hildeburh and Freawaru are depicted as passive characters, who have no control over what happens in their lives, and are voiceless in Beowulf. “Emma appears far less important during the reign of her first husband [. . . because] this woman descended of Danes on both sides could hardly be an effective symbol of peace” (“Emma” 18). This may explain why for the years in Emma’s life when she is passive and powerless there are barely any historical accounts of her life. Nonetheless these years are important because Emma learns about the inner-workings of English politics, and it is this knowledge that empowers her as queen of England.

According to Stafford in Queen Emma and Queen Edith, there are two ways in which a queen could have and retain power, the first way is being queen, and the second, most crucial way is through motherhood (163 – 192). Emma was crowned queen of England twice, placing her in a prime position to study the laws and system in place. A key difference between both marriages is that with Æthelred II, there is no evidence of Emma trying to prevent the Danish attack, and hence draws attention to one of her periods of passivity as a peace weaver. This marriage focused more on Emma developing her own identity within the royal family, specifically as queen and mother of future kings.

> The years 1002-16 [the dates of Emma’s and Æthelred II’s marriage] are arguably the stage of Emma’s career when she was most strongly gendered as a woman, in marriage, childbirth and military incapacity, when she was most feminine, though it was the combination of circumstances [like the Danish attack], not her gender alone, which were her weakness. (Queen Emma 224)

Stafford refers to the marriage to Æthelred II as forcing Emma to focus on the domestic duties of the peace weaver. That is, Emma was not allowed to partake in the militant aspects of peace weaving like influencing the warriors's and nation's identity. When Æthelred II died in 1016, Emma retained her position as the queen of England by marrying Cnut in 1017. This second marriage of Emma's was for her to gain clemency for Cnut from the English people. "The marriage too established peace between English and Dane, through a woman who could embody the continuity which the legal texts sought" (Queen Emma 228). Moreover Emma's Norman background may have been looked upon as another asset to the union, forming an alliance between the Danes and Normans. Being a Danish king, Cnut learned the intricate workings of the English political system from Emma, gaining him the approval of the people and hence putting him and Emma on equal footing, making their marriage more of a partnership (Queen Emma 229). The most significant fact about Emma's marriage to Cnut is his recognition of Emma as the symbol of continuity the English people would need to accept his reign. As her Encomium states:

> When he was opposed by the English, and vigorously using force was resisted by force, afterwards won many wars; and perhaps there would scarcely or never have been an end of the fighting if he had not at length secured by the Savior's favoring grace a matrimonial link with this most noble queen." (7)

Moreover, the importance of the resulting partnership emphasizes a position that literary peace weavers lack, that is, one of equality with their king. Therefore it is her marriage to Cnut that marks the beginning of Emma's powerful position as queen, bringing to light the more active peace weaving qualities. When Emma was married to Æthelred II, there was no

documentation of her patronage or any actions she may have taken as queen, even though her name appears on a number of witness lists. “Her say in her first marriage was probably nil, and it is difficult to be certain of how much control she had over her second one” (“Emma” 6). Emma resembles Wealhtheow the most in her marriage to Cnut. This is because of how diplomatic she was and the fact that their marriage was more of a partnership. Emma’s patronage mirrors that of Cnut, and in many cases her name appears after his on witness lists, yet again prompting the idea of their marriage being a partnership. Emma’s advice was

> sought or acknowledged in a range of transactions, from land purchases and the confirmation of episcopal appointments to the making of wills. [. . .] Early medieval queens often achieved the height of their power and influence as the mothers of royals sons. At this stage of her career, and in these circumstances, Emma demonstrates the potential power of a wife and Queen. (Queen Emma 232)

This power that Emma wields is similar to that of Wealhtheow’s in Beowulf, because she is more of a diplomatic queen. Wealhtheow clearly counsels Hrothgar, the way that Emma would advise Cnut on English politics, and both queenly figures would perform the activities and rituals expected of them as peace weavers. In Beowulf, Wealhtheow’s voice is crucial to pointing out the importance of the role of peace weaver in the mead hall because her opinion and advice is carefully embedded in her language. Emma’s Encomium documents Emma’s voice, and is a primary source for her opinion on her life as a peace weaver. Together, Wealhtheow’s speech and Emma’s Encomium reflect the active, political role of peace weaver. The major difference between Wealhtheow and Emma as diplomatic queens is the fact that Wealhtheow is seen only within the environment of Heorot, while Emma’s activities

are documented all over the nation. It is these activities performed by Emma that boost the image of a peace weaver as a political figure, and emphasize the impact of such a figure on national identity and the king's image overall.

The activities performed by the peace weavers in Beowulf consist of marrying to settle conflict, the passing of the cup, dispensing of gold, training of daughters to be peace weavers, attempting to keep the throne within the bloodlines, mourning for the dead kings and much more. Emma presents other aspects of a peace weaver as a public figure, symbolizing reconciliation between the king and any political opposition. For instance,

> She may have been present at the consecration of the church at Ashindon in 1020, celebrating Cnut's victory, but also commemorating the English dead. She and her infant son Harthacnut played a major role in the movement of Archbishop Ælfheah's relics from London to Canterbury in June 1023. [. . .] there she offered gifts in recognition of Ælfheah's sanctity. Here she was an English Queen receiving the body of an English martyr murdered by Danes in 1011. She was also Cnut's wife and his heir's mother, associating the new dynasty in expiation and conciliation. (Queen Emma 232 – 233)

These actions illustrate Emma's awareness of her role as a public figure, and how her actions as queen represented her king and affected the nation. According to Mary Frances Smith, Robin Fleming and Patricia Halpin, she "vigorously participated in the spread of relics throughout England" (595) and "commanded vast stores of gold or silver to be melted down and reworked into reliquaries, books covers, images of saints, crosses, or other ecclesiastical ornaments" (590). Moreover, Emma was considered to be a very generous patron, giving

precious "textiles, manuscripts, offices, lands and less tangibly of influence and protection" (Queen Emma 143). This generosity on Emma's part is similar to the queens in Beowulf when they dispense treasure to the warriors in the mead-hall. In her marriage to Cnut, Emma embodied the construct of a powerful peace weaver, working to improve her husband's reputation throughout England, bringing the nation together under a foreign king, and overall making her marriage more of an equal partnership. However, while Emma was an influential queen, security as a peace weaver lay in motherhood.

According to Stafford, "childbirth offered a royal wife additional security, without making a queen unique and irreplaceable; the accession of a son made her both" (Queen Emma 75). Emma did not have to struggle in her marriage to Cnut to be indispensable because of the knowledge and connections she had. However, two major sources of insecurity for her lay in the fact that she was second wife to both Æthelred II and Cnut, and both kings had offspring from their first marriages. So Emma had to find a way to ensure that her sons, and not her stepsons, would inherit the throne after their fathers' death. In a way, by making sure that her own sons were next after their fathers to be king, Emma was protecting national identity since she was recognized as the queen of England over her husbands' first wives, and so her sons' accessions to the throne would only seem natural to the English people. Furthermore in ensuring her sons' futures in England as kings, she would secure her own future and her success as peace weaver. The queens in Beowulf do not have to worry about their sons succeeding because there are no previous marriages mentioned to contend with. Hence the complexities of the time period arise with Christianity still growing in England making concubinage still acceptable, but more importantly another factor in the

life of the peace weaver. “Church control of marriage, the status of the rank of queen or role of the concubine are places where forms of restraint and control operate, or fail to operate,” implying that ideologies and traditions were in place but not necessarily adhered to during this period (Lees 11). Emma did not have to worry about the first wife during her marriage to Æthelred II, because she had died a year before their marriage took place. She did however have to struggle with being stepmother to Æthelred II’s ten other children, and Cnut’s two other sons. While Emma’s marriage to Cnut was recognized by the Church, she still had to contend with his first wife, Ælfgifu of Northampton, and the offspring from those relations. Cnut did send Ælfgifu and one of their two sons Swein to Norway. Emma refers to Ælfgifu’s presence as a “concubine” in her Encomium (Queen Emma 233). This reflects her opinion of being treated as the second wife, and her unwillingness to share the title of queen. Each stepson was named after a king, indicating the possibility of each taking the throne if and when there was a need. Emma’s own sons were also given royal names even though the odds of them becoming king were not good at the time. The reason why it was so important for Emma to ensure that her own sons could succeed the throne was because they would secure her position as queen mother, reaffirming her union with Æthelred II or Cnut. The only queen in Beowulf who worries about her sons’ positions is Wealhtheow, who counsels Hrothgar against adopting Beowulf in order to keep the kingdom within their bloodlines. Both peace weaving figures appear to defend their sons’ right to the throne emphasizing the importance of the peace weaver as mother.

Ideal Anglo-Saxon motherhood lay in child-birth rather than in child-rearing, because so much emphasis was placed on first of all, prolonging the bloodlines in power, and then

nurturing the son to be a wise king. Emma's years with hers and Æthelred II's sons, Edward and Alfred, do not present an image of a mother surrounded by her children. Stafford comments on the division in the household,

> the older princes, young men of warrior age, were with their father, involved in military planning and action. The younger remained with their mother and stepmother, the queen, or more correctly with foster parents, but attached in some way to her and her household. (Queen Emma 223)

When the Danish conquered England in 1013, Emma and her sons were sent to Normandy, illustrating a clear division between her sons and stepsons. Æthelred II soon followed them, and it was in the care of his Norman brother-in-law that he saw Edward's true kingly potential, and put him in charge of negotiations between him and his English counselors. Emma's importance to Æthelred II grew at this time as well since he was able to seek refuge from the Normans because of their marriage. Also as a result, Emma became more conscious of her power as peace weaver.

When Æthelred II died in 1016, and Cnut took over the throne, all of Emma's stepsons were killed, leaving Edward and Alfred the rightful heirs to Æthelred II's throne. In spite of her own sons' claims to the English throne, Emma made no attempt to send for them. She instead moved immediately into her short lived period as the king's widow. Strategically it was wise for Emma to have not sent for Edward or Alfred at this point, because Cnut would probably have killed them, and also the likelihood of the English people aligning themselves with either Norman-raised prince was doubtful. Regardless of Emma's intentions, she was able to protect her sons, almost reminiscent of Hygd, who tries to prevent her minor,

inexperienced sons from taking Hygelac's throne by offering Beowulf the position. Moreover, Emma's inability to see either of her own sons on the throne at this point can be viewed as a failure in the peace pledge. However, because Cnut saw an alliance with Emma as being profitable in the long run, so he held her captive in England until he could marry her. Also, Emma's willingness to marry Cnut reflects, like Hildeburh, her trying to bring about peace in spite of unfavorable circumstances.

Cnut saw Emma's value as a queen and recognized her for her merits. Emma was wiser at the time of this marriage, implying that perhaps she was more conscious of her desire to be successful at peace weaving. The difference between mothering Cnut's children and Æthelred II's, is that Cnut's son, Harthacnut, was taught more about diplomacy from Emma herself, making him more throne-worthy than Cnut's other sons, while Æthelred II's sons, Edward and Alfred, were reared primarily by her relatives in Normandy (Queen Emma 232). Beowulf does not provide any instances where the peace weaver teaches her son directly about diplomatic relations. Emma's main worry lay in whether Harthacnut would inherit the English throne from Cnut, and her hopes were thwarted when he was sent to rule Denmark. This division in sons among three kingdoms, implied that Harold, the youngest son from Cnut's first marriage, would inherit the English throne (Queen Emma 234). Throughout her life as peace weaver, Emma recognized the king's authority. She always chose to act in accordance with her allegiance to her king, rather than rebel and put her sons' interests first. So in spite of her having two surviving sons from her marriage to Æthelred II, Emma stayed focused on her union to Cnut, favoring Harthacnut's succession of the English throne.

Emma during Cnut's reign seems to show us two separate and contradictory faces: on

> the one hand the powerful Queen, on the other the wife and mother embroiled in family politics. [. . .] Emma's Queenship at this stage is not readily separable from her wifehood. It bears little or no relationship to the careers of her sons, which diverged from hers to the extent of geographical separation by the North Sea and the Channel. (Queen Emma 236)

Stafford states that Emma's marriage to Cnut raised her status, and she was more politically active as a result. Unfortunately for Emma, she could not forge stronger relationships with any of her sons because of her continuous allegiance with the king and his decisions, as well as geographical distance between them.

Edward's and Alfred's popularity in Normandy grew, but England was not yet rid of Danish rule (Queen Emma 234). In fact at the time of Cnut's death in 1035, Harold took over the rule, and one of his first acts as the self-proclaimed king of England was to recognize Emma as a threat. She had accumulated a vast amount of wealth and land, and she had three sons who could claim the English throne. Moreover, she also possessed support from the English people and so began attacking her by depriving her of a great amount of the treasures left to her by Cnut. A council of "great men" met at Oxford and divided England between Harold and Harthacnut. However, Emma did not gain any security from the decision because of her son's absence from his English throne slowly overturned the council's decision by 1037. Emma attempted to independently reserve power for Harthacnut in England, implying yet another dimension to the peace weaver's activities, attempting to represent her son to the nation. Emma proved to be loyal to all of her sons at this point. She hoped for the arrival of Harthacnut, while attempting to aid Edward and Alfred in overthrowing Harold. In her

Encomium, Emma documents letters that she wrote to all of her children against Harold and his rule. She encouraged either Edward or Alfred to meet with her so that they could discuss her plans of winning support for one of them in England. Unfortunately in 1037, Harold purposefully drove Emma out of her home in Winchester and exiled her to Flanders. Stafford phrases Harold's view of Emma's presence accurately,

> [T]he seizure of the treasure and the attempt to gain consecration was entirely justified. The Oxford division was a forced compromise, against which he would naturally struggle, and the continued efforts of himself and his mother in 1036 merely attempts to recover a kingdom rightly his. Emma's residency was illegitimate; she could certainly not be a candidate for regency of the whole kingdom on behalf of her absent son Harthacnut, and should have retired as a dowager widow to her lands. (Queen Emma, 240)

Emma's position as a peace weaver seemed unnecessary because she did not have a son ruling England and her sons who were present in England did not have the support of the English people. She tried to maintain her position as queen, one of power involving patronage and influence; however Harold left Emma no other alternative but to retain her official status through motherhood. Yet her identity was bound to England by this point and so her efforts to establish continuity specifically regarding the royal blood on the throne continued.

Emma's time in Flanders is significant because this is where Harthacnut visits her with plans for an invasion of England. She does not have her role in the plan for invasion documented in her Encomium, possibly because it would put her in the role of using force, a

political actor, a role that would undermine her own position as peace weaver. However, her involvement in re-establishing her family in England is important for reassuring national identity under familiar, historical bloodlines. Harold's death in 1041 made Harthacnut's succession to the English throne much easier, restoring Emma's position as queen, more specifically as queen mother. Moreover, since she was the more familiar with English law and history than Harthacnut, she was able to advise and influence Harthacnut on a number of decisions, including inviting Edward back to England to share in his rule. The significance of both Harthacnut and Edward ruling is the unifying of English identity under both Danish and English rule, serving as the ultimate symbol of Emma's success as a peace weaver. Emma appeared to have successfully attained "the advancement of all of her sons" and "secured the continuation of her own Queenship" (Queen Emma 247). She was initially active in her role as queen mother because neither Harthacnut nor Edward was married. However, upon Harthacnut's death in 1042, Edward shortly moved against her in 1043. Emma was probably the wealthiest dowager in England before Edward seized majority of her wealth and all of her land, leaving her with only what he deemed was necessary. Edward may have felt that his mother's constant loyalty to Cnut and apparent lack of support for him and Alfred at the time was inexcusable. She had not done enough to advocate her sons' claim to the English throne. Stafford also states another possible explanation for his removing Emma from her powerful position:

> Perhaps Edward's action achieved its main aim, the cutting down of Emma from her pre-eminent position to a more normal widowhood. […] this was the deprivation of a queen who had attempted to buck the female lifecycle, the forcible retirement of a

> dowager, the reduction of her to widowhood by a king who would marry within eighteen months or so. (Queen Emma 249)

Emma had been fortunate Similarly Hygd is the only queen in Beowulf who provides a glimpse into the active role of queen mother, however, after her eldest son takes the throne her character disappears. This disappearance suggests that once her son is in power, she probably decides to take her role as the king's widow more seriously. In Emma's case, Harold's and Edward's actions force her into a less visible role suggesting that the queen mother's position as the mourning king's widow for the remainder of her life was more acceptable than the active role she normally took. Emma had proven to be a powerful peace weaver, by simply using all of the tools allotted to figures undertaking the role, like marriage and childbirth.

The last decade of Emma's life was virtually powerless. She returned to court in 1044, and appeared on only a few witness lists between then and her death in 1052. She returned to Winchester and spent the rest of her life in quiet retirement, tending to Cnut's grave (Queen Emma 253). The widow was expected to represent her dead husband, and was both "uniquely free and uniquely vulnerable" (Queen Emma 75). Emma's periods of widowhood were initially different from what society would have expected for her. In fact the main difference between being Æthelred II's widow and Cnut's widow was that Emma had no choice but to settle into the less active position because of Edward's actions. When she was Æthelred II's widow, Cnut believed Emma would be a symbol of continuity for the English people, and so he presented her with the opportunity to resume her peace weaving as his queen. As Stafford states,

> The marriage too established peace between English and Dane, through a woman who could embody continuity which the legal texts sought. That continuity was with Æthelred's reign, but also with a longer English past, through a woman whose name change in 1002 had linked her to a sanctified dynasty. (Queen Emma 228)

Emma was no longer seen as just the daughter of a Norman, the mother of English kings. She was adopted by the English people as their queen. Her identity lay in her position as an "English" queen. As a result of her actions throughout her lifetime, and the eventual adoption by the English people, Emma enables scholars to draw parallels between the Anglo-Saxon warrior and the peace weaver, since both figures possess similar characteristics.

The Anglo-Saxon warrior must possess certain qualities like bravery, loyalty, honor, generosity, nobility, and strength. These components work together to ensure that the warrior builds a strong relationship with his lord and fellow warrior, as well as works towards protecting the nation from outside forces. The warrior strives to perform optimally in battle, so as to earn his right to boast and ultimately fame. Beowulf is an archetypal warrior as he embodies all of the characteristics of a great warrior, never forgetting his allegiance to Hygelac and his sons, and risking death and eventually dying for the sake of his nation. Emma's life possesses similar elements to that of a warrior. She is of noble birth being the daughter of Richard I of Normandy; she exhibits loyalty whether to her husband the king, or her sons as heirs to the throne; and she is generous in her donations to the Church. Her strength and bravery are displayed less through immediate actions and more through long-term goals like her advocating Harthacnut's rite to the English throne and then influencing his decision to bring her eldest son Edward to England to rule beside him. In other words,

while the warrior's actions are direct and the peace weaver's indirect, they both work together in the heroic world towards protecting the interests of the nation. Emma, like Beowulf, puts the future of her nation above all else, working for peace between nations through marriage and childbirth. Finally, just as Beowulf gets recognition for being a great warrior as a result of his successes in battle, Emma gains recognition from and is claimed by the English as their queen for her work as peace weaver, hence making her ultimately successful as a peace weaver (Queen Emma 7). She married twice to diminish conflict involving England, and proved to be generous in her patronage as queen. She made a valuable counselor to Cnut, teaching him about English laws and exercised her role as a public figure representing his reign to the fullest extent. Moreover she mothered and supported two kings, dying while her nation was in the hands of her eldest son. She successfully prolonged the life of the kingdom, defying all odds especially with the presence of stepchildren. "A woman like Emma played roles written for her by tradition, and the representations of those traditions often mask[ed] the essentially contested nature of the power and authority they possess" ("Emma" 20). She accepted her role as peace weaver from a young age, moving from an inexperienced queen who knew little about English politics and culture to an increasingly powerful political figure who eventually had to be forced into widowhood. The silencing was not symbolic of a peace weaver being out of control but rather, society's need to have her be less politically active and more importantly less powerful than her son, the king. "Thus Emma has no secure position [. . . , she] deserts her cause; she is a pawn of marriage politics, her whole career appears within the confines of marriage politics; even at her death she is remembered as the mother of noble faction trapped in family politics" ("Emma" 8). Emma's life provides insight into the multi-dimensional

peace weaver who embodies power and helplessness within one lifetime. Her role as one of the last Anglo-Saxon queens, even the first English queen, adopted so wholly by her first husband's nation, establishes her importance as an Anglo-Saxon peace weaver from the period. Moreover, having these details of Emma's life enables scholars to fill in some of the gaps in literature that involve peace weaving. For instance the true extent of Emma's struggles to keep her family in power and the recognition she received as the nation's queen, are components of peace weaving that are barely touched upon in literature like Beowulf.

Conclusion

Literary and historical scholarship on peace weaving is important to understanding an aspect of Anglo Saxon warfare that predicates an extension in the nation's longevity, either through marriage which imposes a bond between two feuding nations or through childbirth which reinforces the nation's identity under the reigning bloodline. Anglo Saxon literature focuses on the epic hero, especially in the case of Beowulf, but the fact that peace weaving is an element of the poem indicates the importance placed in the tradition regardless of whether the peace is temporary or not. Scholars think of peace weavers as participants in a tradition that is ultimately devalued in Anglo Saxon warfare, that is, the figure is never fully recognized by the warriors because of the chaotic nature of the heroic world. Moreover, the peace weaver's identity is uncertain because of her inability to exact peace between the feuding nations. Together the peace weaver's lack of individual identity and inability to signify into the heroic world paves the way for scholars to attest to peace weaving as a tradition that is contingent upon the figure's failure. However, historical evidence, in this case the life of Queen Emma, questions the validity of arguments regarding peace weaving in literary scholarship. Her actions and Encomium indicate a figure who is powerful and ultimately successful at prolonging the life of her nation, England. As a result of her actions, for instance acting as emissary for Cnut throughout the country, Emma wins the support of the English and they adopt her as their queen, reflecting the peace weaver identity as bound to her nation, an aspect of peace weaving that literature does not account for since its primary focus is on the male hero's actions.

The peace weaver is a counterpart to the male hero or warrior. Both act in the nation's best interest, hoping that their successes at their tasks grant them national recognition, an

irreplaceable position within the kingdom, and ultimately an elevated place in history. The warrior strives to earn his right to boast of battles well fought to protect his king and nation, while the peace weaver subtly works towards maintaining and sustaining the nation's identity under the royal bloodlines, which ultimately gives her position more power. Also, the warrior represents the nation's ability to defend itself against other countries, presenting the nation's ability to be aggressive and independent; the peace weaver represents the nation's need to extend its longevity through expansion of the royal bloodlines and agreements with opposing nations, presenting a lighter, more diplomatic image of her nation. The goals of the warrior were to live by the heroic code and ultimately prolong the life of the kingdom. Hill summarizes the "Germanic heroic code" as emphasizing "warrior loyalty, gift exchange, revenge obligation and ultimate, perhaps even suicidal, courage" (Anglo Saxon Warrior Ethic 1). The first component of the code is problematic in itself with the warrior having to choose between loyalty to his lord or to his kin. This is similar to the peace weaver's own conflict in loyalty between her husband and her family. Hill states that Beowulf is the first poem that notes the social changes in the code by allowing warriors to select their lord and kings to favor some warriors over others without incurring any repercussions.

> A retainer need not always be loyal, especially to an unworthy lord, retainers shift their loyalties from one lord to another without necessarily incurring some sort of onus; and lords can treat their retainers differentially, depending upon changing circumstances. They can even recruit and elevate an outsider over longstanding retainers. This is what Hrothgar seems to have done from Beowulf's Ecgtheow, and is something he certainly tries in Beowulf's case. (Anglo Saxon Warrior Ethic 3)

These social changes possibly explain why the peace weaver's importance fluctuates. That is, the king may rely on and favor the queen more or less depending on the circumstance. Another goal of the Anglo-Saxon warrior is to gain immortality by showing bravery in battle (Mitchell 136). He leaves a legacy that earns the praise of those alive once he is dead. Unlike warriors peace weavers do not necessarily share this goal of fame but they do leave legacies behind through their daughters who are also peace weavers or through historical documents like Emma's Encomium. So warriors and peace weavers struggle against insurmountable odds to prevent the destruction of the kingdom.

Literary representations of peace weavers do not always stress the nation's attempts to reach this balance. These accounts of peace weaving figures tend to seek the ultimate success of the task, a surviving kingdom, rather than stressing other successes accomplished by the women in such roles. Nonetheless Beowulf provides glimpses into the life of the peace weaver, specifically within the public environment of the mead hall. These encounters with such figures serve to emphasize the symbolism of peace weaving actions, that is, binding warriors and their lords together, reminding them of their relationships with each other and their dependence on the other's performance in battle. Furthermore, adding historical peace weavers like Queen Emma to the discourse on the tradition encourages scholars to view the smaller successes, like temporary peace, as building on each other to ultimately cause the peace weaver to be successful at her task. From studying the life of Queen Emma, a fuller picture of peace weaving is gained, the continuous struggle of such a figure to be a strong, powerful and influential presence within the kingdom is more evident. Therefore combining the images of peace weaving set down by

literature and then history prove that figures participating in the tradition are fruitful at their task, and that they are as vital a part of the heroic world as the warrior himself.

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