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Boast Activity

5/4/18

On December 30, 2016, legendary female boxer Ronda Rousey lost a highly anticipated match against Amanda Nunes within 48 seconds. Prior to the fight, Rousey often boasted about her fighting capabilities, claiming that she “can beat anyone on the planet” (Rafferty, 2015) and “could beat 100 percent of UFC men's bantamweights” (Raimondi, 2015). Unfortunately, the public did not react kindly with her egotism. After witnessing the controversial boxing match, many people rushed to the internet and ridiculed the fighting icon. On a reddit forum titled *Amanda Nunes vs Ronda Rousey*, the top comments ranged from stating that “Ronda just got a gif fight length treatment” (2016) and “the guy playing Ronda forgot to plug in the controller” (2016), reflecting on Rousey’s underwhelming and terrible performance.

In the modern era, boasting is seen as narcissistic and uncivilized. It is enough to ruin the reputation of a once respected fighter. Boasting today is similar to gambling; the speaker bet their reputation and it will either result in humiliation or admiration. On the other hand, during the Anglo-Saxon era, Beowulf handled the concept of boasting in a much different manner. In Beowulf’s warrior culture, the public reaction to boasting is respect. Beowulf’s examples of boasting greatly differed from Ronda Rousey’s due to the timing, wording, and setting of their world.

The first instance we witnessed Beowulf boasting about his accomplishments was when Unferth attempted to shame him by calling him a coward during a swim match. In warrior culture, honor triumphs over death, so it was understandable to the audience during that time why Beowulf verbally retaliated. He made valid arguments against Unferth by claiming that “mostly beer ... was doing the talking” (531-532). Despite this, Beowulf even acknowledges some of Unferth’s recollection, making his story more believable and displaying respect for his enemy.

The battle between Beowulf and Grendel was another appropriate opportunity for more boasting. Prior to Beowulf's arrival, Grendel was a monster who was immune to weapons. The news of his destruction on Herot had terrified the lives of civilians. During that time, they were desperate for a hero to end this nightmare. It was wise and reasonable for Beowulf to claim that he considers himself to be "as dangerous any day as Grendel" (678), because it gave those around him hope.

Beowulf handled boasting correctly and professionally, in contrast to Ronda Rousey who has a habit of badmouthing her opponents. Rousey once called her former opponent, Holly Holm a "fake ass cheap shot fake respect fake humility bitch – preacher's daughter" (2015) on Twitter. Because Holm was not a threat to humanity compared to a monster like Grendel, Rousey was criticized for being a stuck-up bully.

Work Cited

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