THE VERB IN BEOWULF

BY

Flight Lieutenant

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ABSTRACT
ABBREVIATIONS

comp. : compiler
ed. : editor
N.S. : New Series
rev. : revisor
trans. : translator
selec. : selector

CE : College English.
EA : Études Anglaises.
E and S : Essays and Studies.
EEETS : Early English Text Society.
ES : English Studies.
JEGP : Journal of English and Germanic Philology.
MLN : Modern Language Notes.
MLR : Modern Language Review.
MLQ : Modern Language Quarterly.
MP : Modern Philology.
NQ : Notes and Queries.
PQ : Philological Quarterly.
SAQ : The South Atlantic Quarterly.
INTRODUCTION

To discover what particular contribution the poet has made in a poem to one of the elements of the poetic diction, to determine the nature of it, to show how and to what extent it was achieved, to establish the rôle it plays, to indicate what relation it has to other elements of the diction, to analyze this in terms of the effects on the work, is a demanding task. The endeavour, however, becomes more exacting when the literary piece involved is one of unusual magnitude; it becomes even more challenging to the linguist in particular, when the poem is the epic Beowulf written by an outstanding poet in a tongue that has lost continuity with modern times.

The fact that Beowulf was composed in the intricate alliterative verse of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in a poetic language far removed from that of prose, exhibiting a poetic technique, conventions, a vocabulary, shades of meanings now archaic to modern criticism, appearing in the golden age of heroic civilization which reflects manners and ideals so remote from contemporary customs as to remain misunderstood by the great majority of readers, the understanding endures for a lifetime.
INTRODUCTION

W. W. Lawrence took ten years to write Beowulf and Epic Tradition after teaching the poem, investigating it, and writing about it for twenty-five years; Arthur G. Brodeur gave birth to The Art of Beowulf after forty years of study of the poem; and Fr. Klaeber worked all his life at his edition of Beowulf.

Thus, in a paper of the nature of this thesis, the Beowulfian novice is limited in scope and must be satisfied, at best, to open a small breach in the subject, examine one segment, focus his attention on one aspect, single out one feature of it, and channel the efforts of his research towards some contribution, no matter how small, to the overall scholarship in the field. In so doing, the understanding of the art of poetry in a period of Anglo-Saxon England that has had no parallel in the history of the British Isles may be made easier.

The present study makes no attempt to arrive at any speculation, or at the discovery of some kind of mathematical device permitting the working of a formula for the counting of instances. It keeps away from statistics as such; this has been done by others more inclined and gifted for that sort of approach and research. It is not aimed at discovering something outstanding, this belongs to the realm of Beowulfian experts; far rather, it takes a straightforward look at a poem, the epic Beowulf, as a poem, to show
INTRODUCTION

the importance of the meaning and understanding of what
has been noticed in the course of reading and studying
Beowulf.

The emphasis of this survey will be in particular
on the contribution made by the verb to the poetic diction
of Beowulf. The verb will be investigated, specimens will
be selected for special analysis, and examples will be
examined to illustrate certain passages in the poem which
in the past have been weakly translated or mistranslated
by men insufficiently acquainted or inadequately knowl-
edged in the Anglo-Saxon language, or not taking suffi­
ciently into account the etymological complexities of the
language, lacking in understanding of the connotative,
thematic, contextual overtones of their meanings and the
moods they convey and, as a result, by-passing, overlooking
and losing the subtleties of the Beowulfian verb and its
contribution to the enrichment of the diction of the poem.

The poetic function of the verb in Beowulf can
best be understood through a complete knowledge of Anglo-
Saxon poetic diction and technique; this will be discussed
in Chapter I. The importance of Anglo-Saxon semantics and
the influence of Latin Christianity on Anglo-Saxon liter-
ature will be considered and commented upon in Chapter II,
as their affinity to the verb is of primary importance.
INTRODUCTION

Mood and nature in Anglo-Saxon poetry and the spirit of the age will be examined in Chapter III for their effect on Anglo-Saxon literature. Some Anglo-Saxon stylistic characteristics will be investigated in Chapter IV. A detailed analysis of verbs in Beowulf, including an examination of verbs in other poems, will be made in Chapter V, together with an elucidation of general verbal features common to Anglo-Saxon poetry. Chapter V will be followed by a general conclusion.
CHAPTER I

ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

1. Definition of Literature, Beauty, Poetic Diction, Poetic Technique, Style, Poetic Convention, and Tradition.

The particular concern of this thesis lies in an investigation of the contribution by the poet of Beowulf to a certain aspect of the poetic diction of the poem. It has long been recognized that the poetic technique of an age, its style, conventions, attitude towards nature, and the zeitgeist or spirit of the age - social, religious, and heroic, exercise a marked influence on writers of the time and affect their choice of poetic diction. It follows that a study of the poetic diction of Beowulf must begin by an enquiry into the exigencies of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique, their coeval meaning and interpretation, the Anglo-Saxon language, its meaning and outside influences which were brought to bear upon it, and the period in which the poem was produced, that is, Anglo-Saxon England. Before an attempt can be made at showing what that contribution is, poetic diction and related terms must be defined.
Poetic diction **per se** belongs to the field of literature. For the purpose of the poem under study, *Beowulf*, literature is defined as "a new thing of beauty made of words which expresses a man's significant reaction to reality."\(^1\) Literature belongs to the field of fine arts; thus, *Beowulf* is a work of art or a fine artifact. Its form is the artistic ideal or the exemplary cause of the poem, and existed in the artist's conscious substance before it was externalized.\(^2\)

*Beowulf* has beauty, that is, it has "the brightness and splendour of a form unmistakably discernible," or shining forth, "in the proportioned parts of a matter."\(^3\) By matter is meant the words used in the writing of *Beowulf*. These are referred to as the diction, that is, "the choice of words in a literary work,"\(^4\) or as Aristotle described it, "language embellished."\(^5\) An apt selection of words is

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in either prose or poetry, but a marked difference exists between the two. "When the meaning is expressed by means of the meanings of words we have prose. When the meaning is expressed by means of this plus words' embellishments - rhythm, 'harmony' and song - we have verse," in other words, the music of language, that is, the sound of words and metrical rhythm necessary to enable the writer to externalize his poetic intuition. When this takes place, the language employed is called poetic diction.

Poetic diction, "the medium of imitation" in poetry, is the use of imaginative and expressive words, appropriate phrases, synonyms, unusual words, figures of language, archaisms, foreign words, allied to rhythm, alliteration, metrical devices, in short, the language and the order and pattern in which it is used to achieve a desired effect, that is, the effect caused or demanded by

7 Butcher, Aristotle's Poetics, p. 23.
the artistic ideal when externalized.

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines technique as the manner of artistic execution in relation to details, or the mechanical or formal part of an art, especially of the fine arts, or an artistic skill or ability. In the light of this definition and of the meaning of poetic diction given in the paragraph immediately preceding, poetic technique is defined as the harmonious combination of a poet's efficient manner, process, or knowledge of word selection in the causing or rendering of poetic diction, and the skill of his manipulation of word order, the ability of handling his sentences, his choice of felicitous rhetorical devices, his adroit use of variety and poetic license, and his skilful preference for a suitable line and stanza form. One must remember that a poet's approach is guided by the genre of writing to which his poem belongs; in the case of the composition of *Beowulf*, to the epic and its narrative character.

What is style? Like so many other terms, at the present time, style has been put to serve a variety of meanings, each definition being dictated by the writer's

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background and inclination. Several current books on literary terms, while adopting different approaches in their attempts to arrive at a definition of the term, agree on one point - style is a mode of expression. This definition is accepted for the purpose of this study. The Oxford Dictionary defines style, the manner of expression characteristic of a particular writer, or a writer's mode of expression; the Winston Dictionary calls it, a characteristic manner of writing, a suitable or appropriate diction, or a mode of expression or execution in any art;

12 William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, revised and enlarged by C. Hugh Holman (New York, 1960), p. 474, define style: "the arrangement of words in a manner which at once best expresses the individuality of the author and the idea and intent in his mind... adaptation of one's language to one's ideas... a combination of two elements: the idea to be expressed, and the individuality of the author...." Shipley's Dictionary of World Literature: "Critics of the Platonic school regard style as a quality that some expression has but that other expression has not; critics of the Aristotelian school regard it as a quality inherent in all expression," p. 397. Beckson and Ganz, A Reader's Guide: "...style is an immutable quality found in some writers and lacking in others... the perfect matching of the means with their end... verbal pattern that precisely expresses the meaning he wishes to convey.... The total of the qualities which characterize an individual writer's style... constitutes his literary personality and reflects his psychological one," p. 204.


Dean Swift described it "proper words in proper places, make the true definition of a style;" and Samuel Johnson, "manner of writing with regard to language." Looking back at the definition of poetic technique it is noticed that when the elements contained in it are put together they make up what is called style. Consequently, for the purpose of this paper, poetic technique and style will be used interchangeably as synonyms.

Convention in literature is a device used by the writer to enable him to externalize his artistic ideal. For the purpose of this study, it is defined as a peculiarity of idea or theme and treatment of it, of language including style, or word pattern, of figures of speech, of genre, of verse and stanza structure, of imagery, and of treatment of nature, character, and stage setting. A literary convention originates in a particular period by reason of its repeated use by the writers of the time, and its general recognition and acceptance by reader or audience as the means of expression of those writers. A set of literary conventions characteristic of the writers of a period is called tradition.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 25M, 2.
¹⁷ Thrall, Hibbard, and Holman, Handbook to Literature, pp. 109, and 487.
2. Anglo-Saxon Style and Diction.

Words evolve losing or changing their meaning with time, or adopting new ones. When literature is involved, particularly poetry, the logical sense, that is, the exact meaning intended by the writer and conveyed through the words used, may be even more difficult to grasp if the work was written centuries ago. As the Elizabethan student is well aware of it, the reader will probably welcome copious notes and a detailed glossary to facilitate his understanding and interpretation of the work he reads. The case of the Oxford professor of the Lusiadas of Camões arriving in Lisbon and not being able to make himself understood in the Portuguese classical language of the sixteenth century is a case in point.

The students of English and of Portuguese work with living languages, and their difficulties are few in comparison to those waylaying the student of Anglo-Saxon, a language that has had no continuity with the present. Throughout the ages Greek and Latin were given foremost places on the curriculum of English Universities and schools while Anglo-Saxon was not. In the last fifty years only has an interest in Anglo-Saxon, as a language, been revived, and since, it has gained in importance.
tion of Anglo-Saxon poetry in the 1920's, Kemp Malone was well aware of the status quo. He stated:

In looking over the field of OE poetry the first and strongest impression that one gets is negative; so little has been done ... we have no concordance and no dictionary of OE poetry; indeed, the only published concordance of an individual OE monument is Cook's concordance to Beowulf. In the absence of fundamental reference works such as these, our labors are terribly handicapped; any superstructure we build up necessarily rests on insecure foundations. I am glad to announce that Messrs. Howard and Ehrensperger are now at work on a full concordance of OE poetry. This enterprise ... ought to have the support of all lovers of OE studies. As for the dictionary, this task must wait until the concordance is made, for a concordance is, in the nature of the case, a necessary preliminary to the preparation of a sound dictionary of OE poetry.18

Malone went on to mention what had been done in the fields of Anglo-Saxon poetic style, folklore elements of the heroic tradition, and historical studies. His concluding remarks were more encouraging: "I should like to lay stress on the continued vitality of OE poetry, as reflected in the studies of many a scholar of today. At no time since OE

Since that time, scholars have turned to Anglo-Saxon producing a few valuable works and scores of articles which have contributed to an understanding and an appreciation of Anglo-Saxon writings, and have helped to establish the importance of a literature reflecting a period of great intellectual development. But the relatively few Anglo-Saxon works extant, while apparently representative of the quality of writings produced in that period, are not compatible with the number of records once available; many more existed.

Remembering the destruction carried out by the Vikings in the eighth and ninth centuries at Lindisfarne, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth and York, the plundering of more than six hundred monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the vandalism perpetrated in the period from 1536 to 1550 following the Dissolution by Henry VIII, a simple reckoning will show that many manuscripts were lost, while others were sold to do menial service to grocers and soapsellers, or cut in strips for book-binding. The contents of the rich stores of those treasure-houses of learning were in

great part destroyed. Even Bishop John Bale, who had been an ardent supporter of the suppression of the monasteries, was appalled at the wilful and ruthless destruction and could not repress his indignation to the King's antiquary, John Leland, in his preface to "New Year's Gift to Henry VIII," in 1549. No wonder, then, that Anglo-Saxon extant writings form but a small corpus of literary works. This had the unfortunate effect of limiting the range of Anglo-Saxon studies to a comparatively few works, and taking into account linguistic, semantic, and the other difficulties outlined earlier, Anglo-Saxon has become a highly difficult.

20 Clarence Griffin Child, Beowulf and the Finnesburh Fragment (Boston, 1904), quotes Bishop John Bale as saying: "Never had we been offended for the loss of our libraries, being so many in number and in so desolate places for the more part, if the chief monuments and most notable works of our excellent writers had been reserved. If there had been in every shire of England but one solemn library to the preservation of those noble works and preferment of good learnings in our posterity, it had been yet somewhat. But, to destroy all without consideration, a great number of them which purchased those superstitious mansions reserved of those library books ... some to scour their candlesticks, and some to rub their boots. Some they sold to the grocers and soap-sellers, and some over sea to the bookbinders, not in small number, but at times whole ships full, to the wondering of the foreign nations. Yea, the universities of this realm are not all clear in this detestable fact. But cursed is ... (he) which seeketh to be fed with such ungodly gains and so deeply shameth his natural country. I know a merchant ... that bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings' price, ... This stuff hath he occupied in the stead of gray paper ... more than ... these ten years, and ... hath ... enough for as many years to come.... neither the Britains under the Romans and Saxons, nor yet the English people under the Danes and Normans, had ever such damage of their learned monuments as we have seen in our time," pp. iii-iv.
restricted, and specialized field.

H. C. Wyld put the finger on the problem in an important and valuable article on the diction of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Writing about the wealth and variety of words and phrases belonging to the traditional stock-in-trade of the Anglo-Saxon poet, that is, a vocabulary, poetic diction and technique capable of developing genuine emotion and at the same time producing delight in the mind of the listener or reader, he expresses the opinion that it is difficult today to reach back through the centuries and grasp the precise shade of meaning which each of these apparent synonyms once expressed, to recapture the mood or emotion which they called up, or to be fully alive to the grace or glamour with which, for our forefathers, this or that word may have lighted up a line. It may be possible in many cases to discover the remote origin of words by the light of etymology. But even when this is reliable for one particular purpose, it may be but a misleading guide to the poetical and emotional value of a word in the mouth of a poet.21

The same can be said of many literary works which do not go back to Anglo-Saxon days and are much closer to the twentieth century. In the light of the last sentence quoted above, it is unnecessary to create and to multiply difficulties where they do not exist. That it is difficult

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to know for certain what Anglo-Saxon poets meant in particular passages of certain poems is normal; what they expressed in much of what they wrote is known. Wyld's statement, therefore, needs not be taken at its face value. Wyld's findings, like those of other scholars, throw considerable light on certain aspects of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction, and help to explain and understand what Anglo-Saxon poets wrote. As a matter of fact, Wyld's elucidation of much Anglo-Saxon material prompted him to observe that:

we can only go about our business of interpretation patiently and humbly, and hope to learn, by constant and sympathetic study of our old poetry, gradually to group poetic associations round these ancient words till they become for us the symbols of particular moods and emotions.

Since Wyld's article appeared in 1925, extensive ground has been covered through specialized research, and giant strides made in every aspect of Anglo-Saxon studies. These developments represent valuable contributions of great benefit to the students genuinely interested in the study of Anglo-Saxon, and are "the gateway to the appreciation of an extensive and interesting literature, ... to

the correct interpretation of important historical sources, and to an understanding of the later history of the English language.\textsuperscript{23} Any one considering to make objective judgements on any feature of Anglo-Saxon letters should take cognizance of what has been achieved in the field. Failure to be guided by these logical achievements will lead the critic astray. A case in point is Paul F. Baum’s essay on the poet of Beowulf.\textsuperscript{24}

In his article, of the calibre of those written forty years ago when the true value of Anglo-Saxon letters was still unknown, Baum brings back in a few pages the outdated, long refuted, and no longer valid opinions of the German romantic school of the last century. In addition, he makes literature scientific writing and the result of a mathematical process when he states, "knowing so little about whom the poet addressed, we cannot easily estimate the responses he expected.... It would help a good deal if we knew whether he wrote to please himself, to satisfy an inner need, or for recitation to a listening audience capable of following with pleasure and understanding...."\textsuperscript{25}


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 354.
In his opinion, Anglo-Saxon scholars are unable to evaluate the style of Beowulf, which he terms "cryptic" and "intricate;" he considers the poem to be existing in a "literary vacuum without historical perspective," the author to be unknown, and the manuscript to have little to offer.  

The questions raised by Baum and the obstacles he has encountered have been answered and clarified, in most cases, more than adequately. The views that he expresses that the poet of Beowulf "shows some knowledge of the Old Testament ... but none of the New," that the "Sermon on the Mount" and St. Paul's Epistles "have not touched him," that "the doctrines and dogmas of the Church - sin and redemption, revelation, a future life - have left little mark on his poem; at least he found no place for them," that no miracles are performed "for obvious reasons," are charges which have no foundation in reality. Baum's appraisal of Beowulf indicates that he has not understood the poem, that is, he has not grasped the logical sense. It should be remembered that a poet does not know what to write until he has written it, and his choice of what he writes is dictated by the nature and exigencies of his poetic intuition which, in


27 Ibid., pp. 357-58, footnote.
literature, is externalized through the medium of words and by means of the poet's craft.

It is inadmissible that a critic should censure a poet for what he has not written, since an essential part of a critic's work is to explain what the poet has written and why he wrote as he did. A case in point, the reason why the poet of Beowulf did not go beyond the Old Testament in his allusions is found in the meaning of eald riht - old law, of line 2331 of Beowulf. The moral laws of the Old Testament were binding on Christians of Anglo-Saxon times, as they are today, and were equated with the natural law, which was prior to the promulgation of the Mosaic law. It follows that Cain, to whom Grendel was brought into resemblance, came under the natural law, and sinned against the same law.

This applies also to the fallen angels. Adam and Eve, Abraham and Abel were saved by faith; Cain could have been also. As figures of pre-Mosaic Old Testament they were subordinated to pagan or natural law. They were not Jews, so to speak, but the ancestors of mankind in the eyes of

Jews and Christians alike and, as such, they opened the doors of salvation to the ancestors of the pagan Germanic and Celtic peoples. For indeed, if righteous souls were saved before Sinai, then good pagans like Beowulf could be saved. If bad men were damned before Sinai, then Grendel and his ilk could be damned without inconsistency.

All this is argued ... by Origen in his commentary on St. Paul's 2-pistle to the Romans, especially on Chapter VII in discussing passages like "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law" (verse 7) and "For without the law sin was dead" (verse 8). Origen points out that there was sin in the period from Adam to Moses and that Paul was not referring merely to the Old Law but to natural law in Chapters IV and VII.29

This explains why the poet of Beowulf could avail himself of Patristic thinking and blend pagan and Old Testament elements. Confining his figures of the Old Testament to pre-Mosaic personages there was nothing wrong in his procedure. Ealde riht refers not to the Old Testament, that is, to the Sinaitic Law, but to the natural law which was in the hearts of the pagans, "including the pre-Mosaic 'pagan' of the Old Testament." This should clarify and dispose of the problem of the blending of biblical and pagan elements in the poem, and answer Baum's accusation adequately.30

30 Ibid., p. 41.
By the same token it explains why the poet left out any reference to the New Testament and to the Church. Finally, several of the answers to Saum's difficulties are given in Brodeur's gigantic work, *The Art of Beowulf*, and are summed up in one general appraisal of *Beowulf*:

> the work of a great artist, a work carefully planned and organized, excellent in form and structure, and composed with a sense of style unique in the poet's age ... composed in writing, and the author as trained in the art of the scop and educated as a clerk. In him the best of pagan antiquity and of the Christian culture of his time had fused; and we have in his work an achievement unequalled in English poetry before Chaucer. 31

The discovery in 1939 of a royal treasure in the remains of an Anglo-Saxon ship burial in East Anglia on the Sutton Hoo estate near Woodbridge in Suffolk, England, is perhaps the most convincing answer to all the many questions raised by honest doubters about the origin, nature, and quality of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the civilization that produced it. The tremendous importance of Sutton Hoo to *Beowulf* will be mentioned later. It will suffice to point here, that the period of Sutton Hoo, about 650-670, was a time of expanding Anglo-Saxon intellectuality, of mounting

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interest in learning with the arrival in England in 668 of the great scholars Theodor of Tarsus and Hadrian, and of wide activities in the field of art collecting by Benedict Biscoe who gave rigid instructions on his death bed in 690 that the libraries he had assembled should be kept diligently, and not be spoiled by neglect or broken up and dispersed.\footnote{32}

The founding of schools at Canterbury and York, institutions which became educational centers for western Europe, were followed by others at Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, Hexham, Glastonbury, Bradford-on-Avon, Sherborne, Nursling, Frome and Salisbury, and became among the best of the Continent.\footnote{33} Later, these centers of learning produced men of letters of the calibre of Aldhelm, Cuthbert, Bede, Egbert, Boniface, Hildred of Worcester, Daniel of Winchester, Tornthelm of Leicester, Pecthelm of Whithorn, Alcuin, and others. Their work testifies to the widespread and high degree of intellectual attainment achieved in Anglo-Saxon England of the eighth century.\footnote{34}

The way of life of these men is a tribute to the

\footnote{33} H. V. Routh, God, Man, and Epic Poetry (Cambridge, 1927), Vol. II, p. 84.
\footnote{34} Blair, Anglo-Saxon England, p. 144.
Anglo-Saxon civilization which produced it, to cost Anglia which saw it flourished, and to Sutton Hoo which yielded the richest treasure find of Anglo-Saxon England. This unmatched civilization proves undeniably the "richness of culture and range of contacts the Anglo-Saxons maintained "with northern and southern Europe and the Mediterranean." It can be stated also that it was a civilization that saw Anglo-Saxon poetic style take roots and culminate in Beowulf in the following century. In the words of Bessin:er:

it can be argued that in some respects Old English poetic style at the time of Sutton Hoo and for a while afterwards was marvelously inventive, ingeniously original and experimental, and that it looked forward, not backward, to a development... after all, the period of Sutton Hoo was Caedmon's period; the discovery that one could sing Christian songs in alliterating stress-metres must have seemed to many, as it did to Caedmon and Bede, marvellous if not miraculous. ... the period which could foster such a successful experiment was not intellectually dull.


34 Blair, Anglo-Saxon England, pp. 142-47.


36 Ibid., p. 152.
3. The Oral-Formulaic Theory.

The theory advanced by Francis P. Magoun, Jr., that the language of Beowulf is formulaic, that is, that the writer or singer of this epic poem composed his work orally from language patterns, such as phrases, expressions and words already in existence and used by scops before him, must be rejected. To endorse Magoun's views would be tantamount to making the writer of Beowulf an unlettered scop when, in fact, he was not, and would defeat the purpose of this thesis. Far rather, the poet of Beowulf was a scholar and, as one critic puts it, Beowulf was composed or written pen in hand. It has been widely recognized that he had a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, and was well versed in Patristic writings, Greek, and Latin classics. This view is endorsed by many outstanding Beowulfian scholars who have dealt with the diction of Beowulf and with some other aspects of the poem. To name a few are Fr. Klaeber, 38

37 Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," Speculum, XXII (July, 1953), 446-67. Earlier, in 1949, Magoun had stated that the poet of Beowulf had made use at random of epithetic compound names, not using "the terms significantly ... or ... very sensibly," pp. 20-24 of Philologia: The Malone Anniversary Studies (Baltimore, 1949).

38 Fr. Klaeber, Beowulf and the Slaying of Hrothgar, ed., 3rd ed. (Boston, 1950), pp. ix-lxviii. All references to lines in Beowulf quoted in this thesis are from Klaeber’s unless indicated to the contrary.
ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTATION AND TECHNIQUE


42 C. L. Venn, ed., Beowulf with the Finnseburg Fragment, revised and enlarged (London, 1958, pp. 36, 40-41, 61-67, 76, 80-84.
43 William Witherle Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition (New York, 1963), pp. vii-xiv, 5-30, 54-55, 244-291.
More recently, the inaugural lecture delivered by Godfrid Storms in December 1957 at Nijmegen was reviewed by Kemp Halone. The singer theory supported by Storms in his address was opposed by Halone in the review which he made of it. He stated:

Here Dr. Storms has gone sadly astray. The Beowulf poet was no minstrel, strumming a harp and composing verse as he strummed. He was a sophisticated literary artist, who gave careful thought to what he was doing and did not rest content until he had found the right word for what he had in mind. The use of traditional diction is one thing; improvisation is something else again. The two need not go together and in Beowulf they most emphatically do not.  

In his inaugural lecture as professor of English at the University of Durham, G. V. Smithers spoke of the greatness of the poem Beowulf as a masterpiece and the beginning of English literature. He observed that the peculiar quality of Beowulf is a profuse splendour. The lavish scale, which accommodates leisurely episodes that may bear on but usually do not belong to ... its essential form; the


'circumambient' structure and the allusive style, designed to play on associations rather than to convey information; the elaboration of the settings; the richness of the texture, in which a mass of subsidiary strands are interwoven, and some of them easily missed - with the literary history of the story-pattern and of early Germanic heroic poem....

This is certainly not the echo of an extemporaneous work, that is, of an oral and improvised composition.

In his articles, Bonjour disproves and rejects the theory that the Beowulf poet was an unlettered singer, and his work, the result of oral-formulaic composition. Bonjour's views stem from the very heart of his opponents' findings. His approach was an investigation of the heroic poetry of the Middle Ages carried out in the light of H. M. Chadwick's book on heroic poetry, Sir Cecil's excellent work on the same topic, that of J. Aychner's expounding.


52 H. M. Chadwick, The Heroic Age (Cambridge, 1912).

his findings on the art of epic writing of authors of chansons de geste and mediaeval narrative verse-chronicles of heroic exploits, 54 Hagen's article, 55 and the survey made in Yugoslavia by Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord. 56

Bonjour points out that "L. Hagen ne cache pas que son article est essentiellement une tentative d'appliquer au domaine de la poésie anglo-saxonne les méthodes de Parry et de Lord." 57 Taking use of Rychner's findings, Bonjour points to flaws in the views advanced in favour of the oral-formulaic theory. The jongleur, that is, the mediaeval entertainer, introduced his subject by way of a prologue in which the chanson was announced, and the virtues of it praised, the didactic element in the prologue predominating always. The French epic Roland has no such prologue, nor have Anglo-Saxon poems.

54 Jean Rychner, La Chanson de geste, Essai sur l'Art épique des jongleurs (Genève, 1955), Société de publications romanes et françaises, LIII.

55 Hagen, "Oral-Formulaic Character."

56 This survey is represented by the Parry Collection of South-Slavic Texts comprising some 12,500 specimens of oral epic style called y Larry and Lord in Yugoslavia, between 1933 and 1935, mostly among unlettered Muslim singers. The collection is in the Harvard College Library, and the University Press of Harvard has already published part of the texts in the original with an English translation in Serbo-Croatian called Heroic Songs.

57 Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 152; Hagen does not conceal the fact that his article is essentially an experiment or endeavour to apply the methods of Parry and Lord to the field of Anglo-Saxon poetry.
The fact that the oral song of the jongleur was meant for oral transmission is reflected, according to Rychner, in the poor type of manuscript of quality inferior to later ones, Beowulf for example. Bowra is of the opinion that "the handsome manuscript of Beowulf suggests that some rich man wished it to be preserved in his library." 58

The chanson de geste, according to Rychner, lacks outline delineation; Bonjour calls it "absence de contours nets et précis." 59 This leads Rychner to the conclusion that it is

extrêmement difficile de croire à une composition orale de la Chanson de Roland; dans ce cas, à supposer qu'il y ait eu des chants épiques sur Roncevaux antérieurs à la chanson d'Oxford, leur mise par écrit a dû être très créatrice, coïncider, en fait, avec un acte de création poétique. 60

According to Bonjour, the same applies to Beowulf, a poem

58 Bowra, Heroic Poetry, p. 42.

59 Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 155: absence of clear and precise contours.

60 Rychner, La Chanson de Geste, p. 36: it is extremely difficult to believe in an oral composition of the Chanson de Roland: if this is so, supposing that there had been epic songs about Roncevaux prior to the chanson of Oxford, their being put in writing must have been very creative, in fact, coincide with an act of poetic creation.
which is three hundred years earlier than Roland. Rychner does not hesitate to show that Roland is unique from the point of view of unity and dramatic cohesion, whereas the chanson de geste proper contains episodes deprived of coherence, has parts of unequal lengths thrown and held together without logical sequence and balance, and contains contradictions evident in the light of written examples. Because of the oral nature of the songs, the incoherence was possible and was allowed, the audience paying no attention to it.

Rychner argues later that music was subordinated to the words in the chanson de geste, the music being more of the nature of an accompaniment than a song. Bonjour believes that it may have been used very effectively to mark a change of beat or tempo in the passage from one section to another. This could explain "l'authenticité des fameuses sections numérotées du manuscrit de Beowulf."

Commenting on Rychner's treatment of motifs and

61 Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 155.
62 Rychner, La Chanson de Geste, op. 41-47.
63 Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 157: the authenticity of the famous numbered sections of the Beowulf manuscript.
formulas, a section in which he discusses Hagoun's oral-formulaic theory, Bonjour lays stress on the fine character or feature of the improvised recitation or song. The chanson is not something put together haphazardly, but it is the result of tradition and style, of chosen formulas from a common stock without which oral heroic poets could not exist.\textsuperscript{64}

Hagoun and Rychner recall Parry's definition of a formula - a group of words employed regularly in the same metrical conditions to express a certain essential idea.\textsuperscript{65}

By way of illustration, Rychner sets up a list or table of the most popular motifs of the chanson de geste, and Bonjour elaborates on the formula with a compound, taken from Beowulf, expressing the idea king, the first element of the compound varying in accordance with the alliteration wanted:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \texttt{eor\c{c}yninges} - king of the land, 1. 1155;
  \item \texttt{heah\c{c}yninges} - great king, 1. 1039;
  \item \texttt{beoc\c{c}yninges} - king of the people, 1. 2694;
  \item \texttt{saec\c{c}yninga} - sea kings, 1. 2382;
  \item \texttt{wyrul\c{c}yning(a)} - earthly kings, 1. 3130.
\end{itemize}

It is significant that the formula is repeated more often

\textsuperscript{64} Bonjour, \textit{Twelve Beowulf Papers}, p. 159.

\textsuperscript{65} Hagoun, "Oral-Formulaic Theory," p. 449.
in *Roland* than it is in *Beowulf*, and one must remember that the Anglo-Saxon epic is an eighth century composition, whereas *Roland* belongs to the early twelfth century.

The discovery of the formula for Hagoun, who follows Parry closely, and the paramount rôle it plays in the *chanson de geste* has become the norm, *ipso facto*, for determining whether a text belongs to the oral or the literary tradition. He argues that with

the discovery of the dominant rôle of the formula in the composition of oral poetry and of the non-existence of metrical formulas in the poetry of lettered authors, we have suddenly acquired a touchstone with which it is now possible to determine to which of the two great categories of poetry a recorded text belongs - to the oral or to the lettered tradition.  

Hagoun arrives at this position on Parry's assumption that if a work has a proportion of oral formulas it belongs to the oral-formulaic, that is, the singer tradition, the author being unlettered.

That a work should belong to a given tradition be-

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68 Ibid., pp. 446-47.
cause it contains certain predominant elements associating it with that tradition, or because it was composed within the realm of a certain poetic diction, is nothing unusual. Conventions, clichés, formulas, stock phrases and words, a given poetic diction, are characteristics of all literary schools and periods, which serve as landmarks to identify writings and distinguish one school from another. To use the presence of the formula in a work as the only basis for determining whether the poet, its author, was lettered or unlettered, must be rejected. To accept such a view would be to admit that Beowulf and Roland were the products of unlettered singers. Such a theory will lead the critic astray. Storms, for example, was puzzled by his findings, and in his concluding observation stated:

We have discussed fifteen compounds, occurring in all twenty-nine times, and in each case we have seen that their use is justified, not only as far as sense and metre is concerned, but also as to poetic connotation and artistic significance. If we bear in mind that Beowulf was composed extemporé, and Hasegawa's analysis of the making of pre-literary oral verse is fully convincing, then the author's unfailing choice of the right word at a moment's notice cannot but excite our admiration.

69 Storms, Compounded Names of Peoples in Beowulf, p. 22.
Iagoson's theory, if endorsed, does away with much of the literary research about works produced in certain periods, and relegates to the fancy of the imagination the outstanding findings of critics who have discovered, in the writings analyzed, fine nuances and subtleties of vocabulary rich in allusions, rhetorical and syntactical accomplishments, and a masterly poetic dictation and technique. On the other hand, one must guard against another extreme in dealing with oral poetry, namely, that it is impossible for the author who composes orally to produce a polished work of art. This is highly improbable, but it is possible. Bowra presents the situation well when he states that heroic poetry has been misunderstood and misjudged in the past "because it works by rules different from those which apply to poets who write books.... the 'Homer Criticism' of the Homeric poems, Beowulf, and Roland suffers from the serious defect that its standards belong to a reading, not to a listening, public and that it takes no account of the special circumstances of oral composition." ⁷⁰

It is significant that Rychner recognizes the superficiality of the jongleur's art, for the technique he

⁷⁰ Bowra, Heroic Poetry, p. 239.
employed and the conditions under which he worked were not favourable. Rychner argues that:

Le métier de jongleur, le chant public, interdisent absolument la recherche patiente d'une expression singulière et originale. Le jongleur n'en a pas le loisir. S'il compose oralement, il ne peut se relire; il lui est impossible en récitant, en improvisant, de chercher longuement l'expression qui conviendrait le mieux.... En aurait-il d'ailleurs le loisir, que sa recherche passerait sans doute au-dessus de son public; auquel la récitation ne laisserait pas le temps d'apprécier toutes ces finesse. En réalité donc, le jongleur va traiter son thème de façon presque entièrement traditionnelle, grâce à des motifs, stéréotypes ..., toujours les mêmes, ... rendus de façon analogue par les mêmes formules. 71

71 Rychner, La Chanson de Geste, pp. 126-27: The business of the jongleur, the juggler of singing rhymes, leaves out categorically any patient search for an original and uncommon expression. The jongleur cannot afford it. If his composition is oral, he cannot reread it; it is impossible for him while reciting, while improvising, to hold on until he has found an expression which would characterize a given narrative or mood better.... Had he the possibility to do so, it would escape his audience, to whom the recitation would not provide the time to appreciate all those nuances. In fact, the jongleur treats his subject almost completely in the traditional way, thanks to stereotyped motifs..., always the same, ...according to established formulas.
Parry corroborates Rychner's views that the singer cannot weigh his work or memorize every verse, but must be satisfied with the words as they come to him, being helped in his choice by a stock of traditional groups of words and expressions from which he draws; even if he should commit his works to paper, they remain poor stereotyped specimens of *chansons de geste*, because the written examples fare poorly with the impromptu original versions. This confirms the belief that "la chanson de geste n'est pas dans le manuscrit que nous ouvrons, nous n'en tenons là qu'un reflet; elle était ailleurs, dans le cercle au centre duquel chantait le jongleur, soumise à des conditions très particulières." Rychner argues that we cannot apply to the product of an art that depends largely on clichés and motifs, norms which are applied to the criticism of written literature, which is the product of meditated efforts and repeated corrections of the written words. Why not?

Rychner does not state clearly what he means. If

72 *Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers*, p. 161.

73 Rychner, *La Chanson de Geste*, p. 155; the chanson de geste is not in the manuscript which we open, we open, we have there but a glimpse of it only; it was elsewhere in the centre of the milieu in which the jongleur sang, the song being subject to some very particular conditions.

74 Ibid., p. 155.
he has in mind a genre of writing, or a mode of composition and transmission, no objection is made; but his position must be rejected if, by criticism, he means the discovery of the nature and function of the work in question in relation to literature; in other words, whether the work is or is not literature. Regardless of the mode of its composition, literature, undeniably, is literature whether it be produced orally, as a song, or transmitted to paper where it is worked and reworked until it conforms to what the writer wants. The difference admissible, if any, in Rychner's argument, between two given literary works, a chanson de geste composed orally, that is, extempore, and a written work, that is, composed pen in hand, resides in the craft. This is the variation or difference Rychner noted existed between the chansons de geste, the Iliad, Beowulf, and Roland. The astonishment and admiration of Storms at the diction of Beowulf has already been mentioned. One concession is possible; if Rychner's assumption is correct, in presuming that the chanson de geste has lost through transmission, then there is a way in which the norms which he speaks of cannot be applied here.

Upon examination of the Iliad and the Roland, Bowra and Rychner were struck by the salient features of the

75 Vide page 32 of this paper.
quality of the craft. They saw in these works, as did Abercrombie, Tillyard, superior literary craftsmanship, particularly when seen side by side with the works of the jongleurs. This paper agrees with them, and places Beowulf in the same category of chefs-d’oeuvre. This view is endorsed by Klaeber, Brodeur, Bonjour, and Malone, who, while admitting far greater achievements of craft in the epics mentioned than in the chansons de geste, recognize in those chefs-d’oeuvre a strong flavour of the improvised technique of the jongleur’s song, the formula.

In other words, the Iliad, Beowulf, and Roland were composed, pen in hand, in the oral tradition of the chanson de geste, or its equivalent depending on the country of origin and the time of composition. As such, they are an improvement over the song, and are products of a transition period from oral to written works, or they may be considered having been written in a period when the oral-formulaic character was a popular convention, or they may have

78 Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. lxiii-lxiv, and lxviii.
79 Brodeur, The Art of Beowulf, p. viii.
80 Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 162.
82 Vide page 30 of this paper.
composed in a period when the oral formula was revived. In the opinion of this paper, Beowulf belongs to the so called transition period.

C. S. Lewis defines oral poetry, as that which "reaches its audience through the medium of recitation; a manuscript in the background would not alter its oral character." The poet writing, as opposed to the jongleur singing in the singer tradition, uses devices of poetic diction peculiar to and associated with the oral-formulaic technique of the jongleur. This is represented by the presence in his work of stylized phrases, expressions, stock words, and repetitions. Lewis points out that the most manifest peculiarity of an oral technique is its repeated use of stock words, phrase, or even whole lines.... these are not a second-best on which the poets fall back when inspiration fails them: they are as frequent in the great passages as in the low ones. In 103 lines of the parting between Hector and Andromache (justly regarded as one of the peaks of European poetry) phrases, or whole lines, which occur again and again in Homer are twenty-eight times employed (II. vi, 390-493). Roughly speaking, a quarter of the whole passage is 'stock'. In Beowulf's

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last speech to Wiglaf (Beow. 2794-2820) 'stock' expressions occur six times in twenty-eight lines - again, they are about a quarter of the whole.

The poet writing in the oral tradition, particularly at the time when the jongleur was gradually losing ground to the writer, was probably influenced by the jongleur's tradition. The critic viewing his works must interpret the formulas in them as representing a characteristic of the works which may be said as belonging to the oral-formulaic tradition. This is exemplified in the works of Cynewulf. The critic knowing that he composed with pen in hand is drawn to the conclusion that the presence of the oral formula, in his writings, is characteristic of the formulaic tradition; Bonjour confirms that Elene contains fourteen verses of oral formulas. Cynewulf took time to work out his signature in a rather complicated fashion; consequently, it seems logical to believe that others, such as the authors of Beowulf, Judith, Guthlac, The Phoenix, The Wanderer, The Seafarer, were capable of pondering compositions of greater or equal literary art using the tool of the oral singer, the formula; in other words, they were writing in the tradition of the jongleurs.

84 Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost, p. 18.
85 Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 162.
Magoun seems to overlook that the use of a large number of oral formulas in a poem does not necessarily make that work the product of oral composition. Bonjour comes to the point when he states that it is

justement le caractère exceptionnel du Roland qui ressort de l'étude de M. Rychner; pour cette chanson 'certes, il est permis de parler du chef-d'œuvre qui est en même temps principe et fin, de minute sacrée de la création poétique, bref, de la traiter en oeuvre d'art créée consciemment.' M. Rychner, nous l'avons vu, est trop prudent pour exclure une composition orale du Roland, mais il trouve néanmoins extrêmement difficile d'y croire.

This is exactly it; for Rychner, Storms also, the appearance of the oral formula in a work makes it the result of oral composition, but both are not convinced at all that such is the case. Bowra opines for a transition period, and his position brings the following remark from Bonjour:

Sir Maurice va plus loin encore. Voici ce qu'il écrit à propos du

86 Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, pp. 162-163; it is precisely the exceptional character of the Roland that stands out from Mr. Rychner's study; regarding this chanson de geste 'indeed, one is allowed to talk about a masterpiece which is, at the same time, the beginning and the end of a sacred minute of poetic creation, in short, to treat it as a work of art created consciously!' We have seen that Mr. Rychner is too prudent to exclude the Roland from oral composition, but, nevertheless, he finds it extremely hard to believe in it.
Cid et du Roland: 'Tous deux, pour autant que l'on puisse en juger, ont été composés par écrit. Il est certain que leurs auteurs savaient lire, et bien que ces poèmes fussent destinés sans doute à la récitation, il n'est pas question d'une composition purement orale.' Quant au Beowulf, 'il n'y a aucune raison de croire qu'il n'ait pas été écrit au moment de la composition.' Enfin il admet aussi qu'avec l'introduction de l'écriture, un poète a pu composer en y mettant beaucoup plus de soin et de temps, tout en conservant dans une certaine mesure l'habitude des formules traditionnelles. Si bien que 'la différence entre la poésie orale improvisée et la poésie semi-literaire (stade intermédiaire) n'est pas une différence d'espèce mais de degré.'

In the two kinds of compositions discussed, the oral and the written, the poet uses language in much the same way and for the same reason, which is, to externalize a poetic intuition. Thus, it is believed that the crux, that is, the essential part of the matter, in so far as
this thesis is concerned, resides in a degree of intensity of the poetry, and not in one of kind. In other words, the poet of Beowulf was an accomplished writer who performed the unique task of moulding Germanic alliterative oral elements of recitation, that is, the formula of the oral tradition, with the new style and diction of Anglo-Saxon poetry emerging in heroic contemporary times. The linguistic technique of the poem thus created embraces many of the elements which are dealt with in this paper; the overall emphasis, however, being placed on the connotation of the words selected by the poet of Beowulf to convey his artistic ideal.

It is most significant that the experiment carried out by Baugh, in which he examined Middle English romances in the light of the oral-formulaic theory, proved that the romances are replete with oral formulas and themes, comparable to those found in Homer's poems and to chansons de geste, that is, mediaeval narrative verse-chronicles of heroic exploits. No one will doubt that the romances were composed pen in hand, and were not improvised or made orally. If this truth were not known, Magoun's theory would apply, mutatis mutandis, to the romances as well, and the results would make romances the product of improvised composition.

Since the final objective of this thesis rests in an attempt to show the contribution of the verbs to the poetic diction of Beowulf, that is, that the poet's choice of the verbs was judicious, discriminating, felicitous, and added value to the diction, it was felt necessary to reject the improvised theory of composition in favour of the written.

Chapter I has considered Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique generally, has taken position in defining certain terms usually associated with it, and has rejected the view that makes Beowulf the product of an oral composition. These points are considered necessary building blocks or steps in arriving at determining the function of the verb in Beowulf. Chapter II will investigate the importance of semantics in Anglo-Saxon, and the influence of Latin and Christianity on Anglo-Saxon literature.
CHAPTER II

ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY

1. Importance of Anglo-Saxon Semantics.

A knowledge of generalities regarding Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique is a prerequisite for an understanding of Anglo-Saxon literary works; likewise, another equally valuable and indispensable asset is a thorough conception of Anglo-Saxon semantics, and the influence of Latin Christianity on the vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon.

Semantics, as opposed to phonetics, may be defined as the meaning of words, that is, the relationship between name and sense, and their historical sense, that is, the mental content, concept or idea represented. It should be immediately added that etymology, that is, the science which treats of the origin, history, and development of words as such, although different in nature from semantics, goes hand in hand with it, since the first step in arriving at the meaning of a word is often by way of its etymology.

Semantics must be taken seriously into consideration in learning any language, and it must be even more so
when studying Anglo-Saxon literature. The reason for this is because scholarship on the subject is limited, the language is removed from modern English, is different from it in many respects, offers many difficulties in the clarification of some of its vocabulary, and lexicography is restricted. As a result, the work of the student and the scholar is impeded and rendered difficult. There is also the usual danger that while the literal translation of a word from Anglo-Saxon into modern English is known, the historical meaning is not, and a wrong interpretation of the passage to which that word belongs may result. Even modern English is not free from that danger. An example will illustrate the case.

The expression - to get cold feet - means in modern English - to be afraid, to withdraw from difficulty, or to lose one's nerve. One hundred years ago a German writer of Plattdeutsch, Fritz Reuter, used the words in his novel Ut mine Stromtid - My Years of Roving, to describe a player who said he was getting cold feet as an excuse for leaving the game at which he was losing. In the language of several European countries, Portugal included, the historical sense of - to get cold feet - or - to have cold feet - means to get influenza, or simply, to get a cold or to have or catch a cold. In time, readers of the novel Ut mine
Stromtid not familiar with the correct meaning, associated the expression with being afraid or lacking perseverance, thus removing the associative value and fine allusion intended by Reuter, and coining, at the same time, an expression with an entirely new meaning.

In a similar way, the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon word wineleas - friendless or forsaken by friends, used in Beowulf line 2615, can be fully understood only when interpreted in the light of the meaning of wine - friend. Wine is used in preference to freond - friend, when the sense desired is that which is implied in the habits of mind and action associated with relations between lord and thane, that is, the comitatus spirit, including such ideas for the lord as power, prowess, prestige, protector, provider, ring giver, generosity, security, consideration, and for the thane or retainer, loyalty, devotion, courage, fame, reputation for bravery, exulting, boasting, feasting, and above all, for both - the joy of belonging and fellowship.

The comitatus spirit having passed out of fashion, its memory having disappeared, the wealth of associations and meanings, that is, the historical sense, inherent in the lord-retainer relations having been lost, the word

wineleas has come down to modern English with a meaning that is completely changed and can no longer convey the rich sentiments once so well expressed by the Anglo-Saxon wineleas - forsaken person in The Wanderer and Deor. To translate wineleas by friendless or forsaken, merely in the sense in which it is used today, is to miss completely the historical meaning it once had in Anglo-Saxon semantics. Furthermore, if the word wineleas is used in reference to lord, the sentiments it will evince will have slightly different nuances from those attached to the same word when applied in relation to retainer, just as the death of a man will bring sentiments of bereavement, the nature of which, mutatis mutandis, will be alike in two persons, yet, different not only in a degree of intensity of the feelings, because one is a mother and the other a brother, but also contrasted in the mode of experiencing depending on the relations between the three.

Another timely example is the word daegwoma or daegredwoma - dawn, from daeg - day, grēd or grǣd, from grǣdan: to cry, call out, and woma - sound or noise, used in Exodus line 344. Modern English describes dawn, among

other expressions, the coming of dawn, the breaking of dawn; in Anglo-Saxon, the rush of breaking day, or the noise of day. Rush is from Latin aurorae strepitus, translated into Anglo-Saxon by ðebbæt eãstan cwom ofer deóp gelæddegrœd-woma, wedertæcen wearm - until there came from the east over the deep way the rush of dawn, a warm weather-token.  

The true meaning of many Anglo-Saxon words is discovered by investigating their origin. For example, the word widow comes from Latin viduus - widower, meaning bereft or or deprived of, the Gothic form is widuwo, the Old Saxon - widows, the Old High German - wituwa, and the Anglo-Saxon widew. The word foul is related to Latin puteo - I smell bad, and to Greek, I make to rot, the Gothic from fûls, the Old Icelandic - full, the Old High German - fûl, and the Anglo-Saxon fûl.  

The discovery of the origin of many other Anglo-Saxon words becomes a revealing and interesting study. A few cases will serve as illustrations. The Anglo-Saxon word lencten is translated by springtime or simply spring, the

93 Ibid., p. 21.
word having originated from the season called lent, that is, the forty week days preceding Easter Sunday and beginning with Ash Wednesday. As it happens, it is the period of time which coincides with the end of winter and the beginning of the season known today as spring. It is so called because nature is rising or springing into being or existence in relation to the verb spring, that is, to bound, leap, jump up, start up or forth as the time when young shoots spring or rise out of the ground. The word spring was recorded as a substantive for the first time in 1530 in the expression - spring of the year.

The word lencten had a different meaning for the Anglo-Saxons, and it was not known to them as spring in the sense that it is today. Bosworth gives several examples:

"paes sylfan lentenes hē fór tō Rōme - in the course of the same spring he went to Rome, Chr.1048;...sunnan glāem on lenctenne lifes tācen wecep - the sun's gleam in spring wakes signs of life, Exon.59b...bone lencten waerōn him on Cent - during the spring they were in Kent, Chr.1009...nis nān blōdlǣstīd swā gōd swā on foreweardne lencten - there is no time for letting blood so good as in the early

In order to give the word a modern equivalent, *lencten* was translated by *spring* in all the examples cited, but it was *lent* to the Anglo-Saxons, not *spring*. The following exemplify: *lencten-ād* - a fever, typhus fever, tertian fever; *lencten-bryce* - a breach of Lenten fast; *lencten-daeg* - a day in Lent; *lencten-eorbe* - land ploughed in the spring; *lencten-faesten* - the fast of Lent; *lencten-līc* - vernal, lenten; *lencten-sufel* - food for the spring or for Lent; *lencten-wicu* - a week in Lent.

An interesting word is *cealdheort* meaning cruel, from *ceald* - cold and *heort* - heart. He who was cruel was described by the Anglo-Saxons as having a cold heart. By far one of the most intriguing words in Anglo-Saxon, Middle and modern English has been the word *brown* when used to describe weapons, helmets, and coats of mail. For lack of understanding and explanation, *brown* was believed by many to be used in a figurative sense. Examples of this are found in *Beowulf*, line 2578: *brūn* - brown, meaning sword, and line 2615: *brūnfræne helm* - brown brilliant (hued) helmet; in *The Battle of Maldon*, line 163: *brunececg* -

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97 Ibid., p. 628.
98 Klaeber, *Beowulf*, p. 97, and 98.
with brown (gleaming) blade; \(^99\) in Judith, line 317; brûne helmas - brown (shining) helmet; \(^100\) in the ballad "Gil Brenton", line 22; my bonny brown sword; \(^101\) and in Sir Ferumbras: "Wyp ys swerd of style brown;" \(^102\) King Arthur's sword is referred to as "Brounsteele" in Arthur, lines 95-97: "Arthour was chafed & wexed wrothe. / He hente Brounsteele and to Frollo gothe; / Brounsteile was heuy & also kene." \(^103\) Later, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, swords were referred to as brown bills. Dr. Samuel Johnson describes the word in his Dictionary:

brownbill: The ancient weapon of the English foot; why it is called brown, I have not discovered; but we now say brown musket from it.

And brownbills, levied in the city, Made bills to pass the grand committee. _Hudibras._ \(^104\)


\(^102\) Sir Ferumbras, _EETS_, ES, XXXIV.

\(^103\) Arthur, _EETS_, Vol. II.

Shakespeare refers to brown bills in *King Lear*, IV, vi, 92 and in *Henry VI*, Part II, IV, 13.  

Strangely as it may seem, the swords, helmets, and bills referred to as brown by Anglo-Saxons were really so, at least for anyone familiar with the tempering of steel. No one, it seems, had discovered the reason why the colour brown was used to describe weapons until W. S. Walker clarified what had become a mystery for modern readers. The answer to the problem turned out to be simple and logical. In his opinion "If blacksmiths had undertaken to annotate *Beowulf*, they could have assured philologists that *brún* in descriptions of metal meant 'brown,' just as it does elsewhere in Old English." The name is acquired from the colour steel takes in the tempering process. Because of its simplicity this technical knowledge probably escaped lexicographers whose eyes caught the bright, shining, or glistening appearance of the sword rather than the...
brownness of it which is a product of the forge and continues to exist as long as the weapon is used.

Steel is hardened and tempered according to the use which is to be made of it. The ancient blacksmith and armourer had none of the modern equipment found in mills today for processing steel, particularly for measuring the temperature during the heat treatment of a blade to serve as a sword. Experience had taught him that a sword had reached its ideal stage in the forge when tempering to a point had turned the metal to brown. If the metal should be allowed longer time, the colour would turn to purple, and the weapon would become brittle and would be unable to sustain a sharp blow without breaking. Obviously, it had to be hard enough to do its work in the hand of the thane, and at the same time adequately 'soft' to receive dents from blows, which could be removed after the battle through retempering and, naturally, rebrowning.

Modern technique shows that during the tempering process, steel undergoes gradual colour changes. As its temperature rises, it becomes pale yellow at 220 degrees Centigrade, straw at 230, golden yellow at 243, brown at 255, brown dappled with purple at 265, purple at 277, bright blue at 288, pale blue at 297, dark blue at 316, red in the dark at 400, red in indirect sunlight at 525,
red in sunlight at 580, and when the temperature is 700° Centigrade, steel becomes dark red. Carpenters' cutting tools, butchers' knives, and bushmen's axes are tempered between 230 and 265 degrees Centigrade, or as Weland, the famous smith of Germanic legend whose name is mentioned in Beowulf, line 455, would say, at colours ranging from straw to purple brown. There was no 'in between,' so to speak, for swords; any armourer skilled in the tempering of steel, and he had to be if he wanted to continue in the employ of the same lord or thane!, could produce swords that would be a credit to his technical ability, better called craftsmanship, would bring fame on him, honour to the warrior his master in whose hands it would be wielded, and spread terror among the enemies of his lord, his foe recognizing and fearing the micel brunecg - the great sword.

Cruxes, similar to the brunecg - (brown) sword, come to light every now and again, and contribute to Anglo-Saxon semantics. For example, before the Sutton Hoo discoveries, no one, including the great Beowulfian scholar Klaeber, knew the exact meaning, purpose and function of the wala - raised comb of iron, D-shaped in cross section, which

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Denison Bullens, Steel and Its Heat Treatment
runs over the helmet from back to front. The *wala* is mentioned in line 1031 of *Beowulf*. This knowledge came to light following the discovery of the Sutton Hoo helmet, and supplied a clear explanation of the words *wirum bewunden* - wound about (inlaid) with (silver) wires, appearing in the same line with *wala*.

The importance of Anglo-Saxon semantics is emphasized by B. Lindheim as a vehicle for knowing the language and thought of Anglo-Saxon writers, and the nature, extent, and origin of their culture. His article is of particular interest to this paper because it illustrates by way of thirteen Anglo-Saxon words the amazing variety, in terms of modern terminology, of relationships between name and sense attached to the concept of joy in Anglo-Saxon.

Building up on Lindheim's work, the following words are expanded fully to their known English possible meanings and etymology, in order to show how difficult it is to determine, in translation, the correct choice, and how care—

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112 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
fully the text must be read and interpreted before that choice can be made. The words are:

**dream** -
1) joy, pleasure, gladness, mirth, rejoicing, rapture, ecstasy, frenzy, from Latin júbilum, laetitia, gaudium, delírium;
2) what causes mirth, an instrument of music, music, rapturous music, harmony, melody, song, from Latin organum, from Greek mousike (tekhnē), giving música, concertus, harmonía, from Greek harmonía, harmeín, giving modulátio, modus, melódia, from Greek melóidia, melos, aeidein, giving cantus.

**bliss or blīde** -
1) bliss, joy, gladness, exultation, pleasure, from Latin laetitia, gaudium, exultatión, beátitas.
2) friendship, kindness, benevolence, grace, from Latin cómitas, benignitas, benevolência, grátia.

**gefea** -
joy, gladness, glory, favour, from Latin gaudium.

**myrge or mlirge** -
pleasure, joy, delight, sweetness of sound.

**wyn** -
1) delight, pleasure;
2) a delight, that which causes pleasure;
3) the best of a class, the pride of its kind;
4) the name of the W rune F.

Two verbs:
**dryman** - and blissian -
to rejoice, exult, be glad or merry, from Latin laetari, gaudere, exultare, ovare.

Two adjectives:
**wynsum** -
1) winsome, agreeable, pleasant;
2) joyous.

**blīde** -
1) joyful, glad, merry, cheerful, pleasant, blithe, from Latin laetus, hilaris;
2) gentle, kind, friendly, clement, mild, sweet, from Latin mansuetus, benignus, comis, clemens, mitis, suavis;
3) quiet, calm, peaceful, from Latin *tranguillus*, *plácidus*.

The list is made complete with:

**gamen** -
- game, joy, pleasure, mirth, sport, pastime, from Latin *jocus, oblectamentum, gaudium, júbilum, laetitia, ludus*.

**gleow** -
- glee, joy, music, musical accompaniment of a song, mirth, jesting, sport, from Latin *gaudium, música, facétiae, mimus, ludibrium*.

**glaed** -
- as a noun: gladness, joy;
- as an adjective: glad, cheerful, joyous, bright.

**glaedness** -
- gladness, joy, cheerfulness.

As can now be verified, the choice of a word transmitting exactly the meaning of what the writer had in mind is difficult and can only be arrived at from a thorough knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, particularly, when thirteen Anglo-Saxon words have a total of eighty-seven possible modern English equivalents. In most cases, however, final interpretation rests with the passage in which the word appears, that is to say, the meaning of a word is ultimately deter-

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114 Félix Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé Latin-français illustré (Paris, 1936), pages corresponding to the Latin words mentioned.
Anglo-Saxon writers were punctiliously precise in their choice of words, and did not pile on, as some critics would have it, one synonym on top of another for the sake of words. Synonyms were often developed from other Anglo-Saxon dialects. Words in the West Saxon dialect, for example, would acquire new meanings, and vice versa, when they became associated with synonymous words in the Anglian, Mercian, or Northumbrian dialects that had already developed semantically in some other direction, and had taken on new meanings analogically. Another form of semantic borrowing was from synonyms belonging to a foreign language, such as, Greek and Latin, to which the Anglo-Saxons were strongly exposed in the seventh and eighth centuries.115

It is without saying that Anglo-Saxon poets were hampered at times by alliteration, but they were not generally guided by it solely. Taking the concept of joy as an example, it is logical to believe that alliteration may have been responsible for the large variety of terms to choose from, including, in addition to the list already drawn, the many compounds made from the base words, such as...

swegeldream - music. It is more likely that the principle of idealization or perfection accounted for meticulousness and exactness in wanting to render the thought, and resulted in the diversity and variation of the fine distinctions existing in Anglo-Saxon vocabulary.

The reader of Anglo-Saxon is constantly slowed down in his efforts, first to discover the correct meaning, and then, the precise sense in which it is used in the sentence, as one may infer from the terms used for the concept of joy. It should always be remembered that lexicons give but the meaning of words, the sense being arrived at or derived from the context in which the words appear. Even lexicographers are not free from oversights. Bosworth defines swegeldream - heavenly joy;\textsuperscript{116} this is not so, the correct meaning being - music.\textsuperscript{117} The exact meaning of swegeldream was pointed out much earlier by Friedr. Kluge by way of etymology. Swegl or swegel - sky, heavens, ether; the sun; music?,\textsuperscript{118} in the compound swegeldream - music, is a word completely different. Its cognate is Gothic swiglon - to play the flute, swiglja - flute player.

\textsuperscript{116} Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 947.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 330.
and Old High German *swega* - flute.\(^{119}\)

Another striking aspect of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, which illustrates the importance of semantics in the study of Anglo-Saxon literature, is the use made of colour words in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the terminology that describes them. The word - colour - is used in a generic sense, in this section, and refers to the nature of colour vision which comprises four distinct sensations. The first is concerned with hue, the other three, with 'colour' proper; when the latter sense is intended, the word colour is placed in quotes, meaning that it is used in opposition to hue.

There is a marked contrast in Anglo-Saxon poetry between the small number of colour words and the great number and variety of terms expressing light and darkness. When the two latter groups of words are taken out, there is little colour left. The total number of passages in Anglo-Saxon poetry in which brightness is mentioned has been estimated to exceed 800, darkness 450, thus giving an average of one word suggesting light or darkness in every 24 lines in a total exceeding slightly 30,000 lines of Anglo-Saxon poetry extant.\(^{120}\)

It has been said that the sense of colour in Anglo-Saxon poets is feeble, and their descriptions lack in vividness and richness of colour. This is misleading to anyone familiar with the famous colour passage in lines 291-313 of The Phoenix. Even Moorman, who misjudged the colour sense of the earliest Anglo-Saxon poets and termed it "obtuse," recognised the fine "discrimination" and "spendour" of The Phoenix passage. Simply because the Anglo-Saxons expressed their perception of colours in terms of brightness and darkness, thus giving the erroneous impression of being more receptive to light and dark than succeeding generations were, it does not follow logically that they were less sensitive to colours; on the contrary, they were just as sensitive. Mead actually puts his finger on the problem without realizing it when he notices that in Anglo-Saxon poetry

the appeal to the senses is common enough, but some of the best passages of Beowulf or The Battle of Maldon, though almost Homeric in

121 Ibid., pp. 203, and 206.
123 Frederick W. Moorman, The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare (Strasbourg, 1905), p. 45.
life and vividness, are well-nigh destitute of color. Yet they have a vigor of conception and a depth of feeling that amply compensate for the lack of superficial glitter. A brilliant instance occurs in Beow., 1896-1913, where the voyage of Beowulf is described, yet there is not a word of color in it, unless we count the phrase fleat famig-heals.... The Old English mind was evidently fixed upon something else.

The mode of perception and of apprehension of external objects and sensitiveness to them being the same in every normal human being, it would seem that the apparent limitations of contemporary terminology to translate precisely the colour words used by Anglo-Saxon poets indicates that the present generation lacks knowledge of what the Anglo-Saxons actually meant by the terms they used, or that the modern way of describing colours is more practical and precise. Opinion in favour of the more modern method is expressed by Lerner in these terms:

The modern method makes precision easier - by splitting up the sensation into its component parts and reserving our vocabulary for hue, the most diverse and perhaps the most important of these, we obtain an exact terminology that makes possible the scientific study of colour

vision. Yet at the same time we have moved further from experience. Anglo-Saxon colour words probably describe more truly what are actually the commonest colour sensations, simply because they were not concerned with their analysis and classification. 125

The Anglo-Saxon poet's method of description of things in nature, by way of degrees of lightness and shades of darkness, is less clear and far more confusing to the modern reader who is familiar with the more practical analytical way of breaking colours into their three qualities, namely, hue or tone, value of luminosity, and chroma, also called purity or intensity. The following Anglo-Saxon terminology will illustrate how difficult it is, in terms of modern English, to form an image of what is precisely meant by the colour words the poets use.

The words used by Anglo-Saxon poets to describe colours are: graeg - grey; hasu - dusky (grey); har - old (grey); fealu - fallow which can range from green through yellow to a reddish brown, but the essential quality of fealu is a peculiar brightness which almost approaches obscure hue; hiw - hue, but not in terms of modern terminology no equivalent has been found to render the word exactly;

salu or salo - sallow; brūn - brown which may shade through various degrees of duskiness into black or red. Words depicting brightness are: beorht - bright; hādor - clear or bright; lēocht - light of day (not heavy); lēoma - gleam or glare; scīma - light or brightness (twilight or gloom); seīr - bright or clear (resplendent or translucent); sunne - or sunna - sun; scīne or scīnnes - radiance or brightness; torht - clearness or brightness (radiant); Words describing darkness are: blaec - black; deorc - obscure; dimm - dark or obscure; heolstor - dark or shadowy; mirce - murky; niht - darkness; sceadu - shady or darkness; scuwa or scua - shadow or darkness; sweart - dark; ōostre or p̄ōostre or bystre - darkness; wann - wan; and earp - dusky.126

In view of the foregoing, it should not be assumed that because Anglo-Saxon poets showed a marked preference in their poetry for references to the brightness and the darkness of the things they saw in nature, they did not know colours. Anyone familiar with the rich and striking multi-coloured illuminations of The Lindisfarne Gospels written on purple parchments in letters of gold, with page-size portraits of the evangelists painted in the most inviting colours; the dark red leather binding made of African

goat skin of *The Stonyhurst Gospels*; the zoomorphic coloured patterns on some of the designs of *The Lindisfarne Gospels* and the Sutton Hoo jewellery; the cloisonné technique of the garnet-encrusted gold jewels, and the spectacular pieces of inset chequers of blue, white, and red mosaic glass also found at Sutton Hoo, is satisfied to accept these examples as many convincing indications that Anglo-Saxon craftsmen, and by extension poets, knew about the colours of the spectrum.

Volume II of *The Lindisfarne Gospels* contains a highly revealing and instructive section concerning colours, tints and shades used in the Lindisfarne scriptorium, how pigments were obtained, ingredients used, tints made, and colours applied. There is hardly any doubt that the average educated Anglo-Saxon knew his colour scheme as well as any. Remembering that the writing and decoration of *The Lindisfarne Gospels* were begun before the year 721, and were likely finished by the end of the same century, it is amazing and a credit to the advanced technique of Anglo-Saxon colour making that the work has survived so astonishingly well. It is equally significant that Aelfric, the great Anglo-Saxon homilist, who was born about 955, and

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died sometime after 1005, treated colours in one of his vocabularies; this is called *Nomina Colorum*. How is it, then, that Anglo-Saxon poets who probably knew the component parts of the spectrum chose to represent their perception of colours by emphasizing light and darkness in their works? The answer may be in the complex operation of colour sensation.

Colour may be defined as the sensation produced on the eye by rays of decomposed light, or the effect of light of different wave-lengths on the retina, or the quality in virtue of which objects present different appearances to the eye in respect of the kind of light reflected from their surfaces or, finally, the effect pro-

128 Mentioned by William Mead in "Color in Old English Poetry," p. 170. The first modern edition of the *Nomina Colorum* was by:

Thomas Wright, ed., *A Volume of Vocabularies* (London, 1857-73), Vols. I and II. The second edition was by:

R. P. Wülker, 2nd ed., *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies* (London, 1884), Vols. I and II, Latin-English. These two editions are mentioned in:

Charles Gross, ed., *The Sources and Literature of English History from the Earliest Times to about 1485*, 2nd edition contains various Latin-English vocabularies and glossaries from the 8th century onward. One of these (this is the one containing the *Nomina Colorum*, vol. I, pp. 304-36 (not pp. 104-67), was compiled by Abbot Aelfric about the end of the 10th century,) and is referred to by Mead in his article.
Perceiving colour involves four sensations: wave-length accounts for hue, that is, a variation, modification, or quality of a particular colour. When white is added, a colour becomes or is made pale or intense, and is said to have degrees of lightness. When black is added, a colour becomes or is made dark or intense, and is described as having shades of darkness. Finally, the amount of light falling from colour, or given up by colour in the sense of emanation, is brightness.

Modern perception of colour is mostly concerned with hue, so much so, that the other qualities have to be described by adverbs placed before them, with the result that hue and 'colour' are assumed to be the same; they are not. Surely, a light olive green differs much from a dark olive green. The modern emphasis on hue has been to the detriment of the perception of the other elements of colour sensation. As Lerner so rightly points out, the modern eye fails:

129 These various definitions have been inspired from:
Robert Edward Breman, Thomistic Psychology (New York, 1942), pp. 14, 16-17, and 118.
to realize the great similarity between a very pale yellow and a very pale green, hues which would be very different if more intense; and, more important, we tend not to notice that different hues of a similar brightness may give very similar sensations. A piece of green corduroy, well rubbed and caught by the sun at the right angle, will be almost indistinguishable from a similar piece of yellow, orange or even red material. (They are all, in fact, fealu). In this fact may lie the clue to the understanding of Anglo-Saxon colour words.131

White, a surface that causes to be produced upon the eye a proportional combination of all the visible rays, that is, light rays, of the spectrum without absorption, and black, a surface absorbing all light, are not colours scientifically speaking, but Anglo-Saxon poets considered them colours in the same manner as modern popular convention does. Consequently, in this paper, when black and white are mentioned in connection with Anglo-Saxon works, they are understood as colours in accordance with the vernacular convention.

It is perhaps significant that Anglo-Saxon poets had much in common with Roman writers in their description of colour sensations. Cicero, Virgil, Plautus, Ovid,

131 Ibid., p. 246.
Horace, Tacitus, Cornelius Nepos, Seneca, Plinius Secundus, Firmicus Maternus, Pompeius Festus, Quintilian, Albius Tibullus, Gellius, Lucretius, and others, unlike modern writers, had the tendency to describe the other complex sensations of colour in preference to hue. Four Latin words will illustrate.

**Fulvus** is defined by Gellius as jaunâtre, fauve, d'or, or brown with a touch of gold. **Fuscus** - noir, sombre, is defined by Cicero as purpura paene fusca - pourpre presque noir, and by Virgil as basané (brunir, noir-cir), a dark murky hue. **Rúbidus** - rouge brun, is defined by Plautus and Pompeius Festus as rúbidus panis - (de couleur) pain brun, something between red and black. Finally, **spadix** - rouge brun, is defined by Virgil as spadix équo - (couleur) cheval bai-brun, chesnut colour; and Firmicus defines spadicárius as teinturier

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133 Ibid., p. 694.
139 Gaffiot, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français*, p. 1461.
Latin rufus is another term for red, that is, russet, and it is used by Gellius as rougeâtre, roux, and by Plautus as rouge (de cheveux), roux, rousseau.

It is evident that Anglo-Saxon colour-word terminology has certain points of resemblance with the vocabulary of Latin authors. For example, grey may be a simple graeg, or hasu - dusky grey, as applied to the dove, the eagle, and leaves of plants, or hār - hoary old grey; fealu - fallow may go from yellow to red or brown; brūn - from dark to black or red; fāmig may be used for hwīt - white, as in fāmīgheals - foamy necked, as applied to a ship at sea in line 1909 of Beowulf; blaec - black, as in black sea-roads; salu - sallow, as applied to the raven and the eagle; gæad - red for gold, a shining sword-edge, and a patch of fading colour on stone.

To many modern readers, the Anglo-Saxon poets do not establish clear enough a distinction between black and dark. This may be so from the modern way of looking at colours, but they were understood in Anglo-Saxon times. It must be

141 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire Latin-Français, p. 1461.
142 Ibid., p. 1372.
remembered that the Anglo-Saxon poets were not generally using hue words and, therefore, were not contrasting black with red, yellow with blue, as it is done today. In the case of dark and black, although the sensation perceived is almost the same, the words are not usually interchangeable.

The difficulty of interpretation of Anglo-Saxon descriptions of colour sensations in terms of shades of light and degrees of darkness rests, it would seem, in that the present generation is limited with a vocabulary that describes hues only. Consequently, it may be indirectly exposed to preconceptions resulting from modern colour-word terminology, so precise and fine, as to be able to establish unmistakable distinctions between rosé, claret, burgundy, plum, and garnet. Is it not a case of hue-blindness for one group - the Anglo-Saxon poets, versus colour-blindness for the twentieth century? It seems very much so.

One thing is certain. The marked influence of Christianity and Latin on Anglo-Saxon vocabulary has long been established. To what degree, however, from a point of view of language and mode of description, is Latin influence noticeable in the use of colour words by Anglo-Saxon poets, remains an interesting topic for a thesis in Anglo-Saxon.

To round off this survey of Anglo-Saxon colour
words, in terms of colour vision, a summary will be given of colours and their frequency of appearance in Anglo-Saxon poetry.\(^{144}\) Of the primary colours, four only are mentioned, and the most frequently used are green, followed by red and yellow; blue turns up once only, while orange, indigo and violet are not mentioned at all. The others appearing more often are fealu - fallow, brūn - brown, and hwīt - white.\(^{145}\) Terms expressing light and darkness have been shown to be far more numerous than hue-terminology, and they indicate clearly the common interest of the Anglo-Saxon poets in the more complex 'colour' sensations, and their preference for 'colour' vocabulary. Anglo-Saxon colour words may be collected under seven headings: white, black, grey, brown, red, yellow, and green.

The following colours are identified under white. Hwīt appears thirty-one times to describe brightness or light, as in line 298 of The Phoenix;\(^{146}\) or to bring out the shining effect or glitter known to have light, a roof, a helmet, a gem, or silver, as in line 1448 of Beowulf; or

\(^{144}\) In "Color in Old English Poetry" to which reference has already been made, William Mead has contributed an invaluable piece of research work with a classified inventory, including references to individual works, of all colour words mentioned in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The above result has its foundation in this work.


\(^{146}\) Krapp & Dobbie, The Exeter Book, p. 102.
to describe the colour of objects between white and shining, as the clothing of the elect, in lines 447 and 454 of *Christ*; or to refer to angels resplendent in the shining light of heaven, as in lines 603 of *Genesis*, and line 290 of *The Judgment Day II*.

Blæc is described by Bosworth as bright and shining, and bleak, pale, palid, livid, as in death, with attention being called to the difference existing between the meaning of blæc, and se blæca - the black; blæc - shone, is also the preterit of blīcan - to shine, glitter, sparkle, twinkle, and to shine by exposure, as the bones.\(^{147}\) It is employed twenty-eight times with emphasis on brightness rather than whiteness. Blæc fits also the description of fire, as in line 245 of *Daniel*; of fire-light, in line 1517 of *Beowulf*; of red flame, in line 808 of *Christ*; of lightning, in line 380 of *Daniel*; the light of stars, in stanza four of line 8 of *The Meters of Boethius*.

It is revealing that blæc refers also to the shiny bright spots on the tail of the bird, in line 296 of *The Phoenix*; to shiny clothing and armour, in line 212 of *Exodus*; and to the fair-faced (pale cheeks) maid, in line

128 of Judith. In addition there are the compounds flōdblāc - pale as water, as in line 498 of Exodus; heoroblāc (hrēas - heoro - blāc) - battle-pale, mortally wounded, as in line 2488 of Beowulf; wigblāc - splendid (shining) with warlike equipment, as in line 204 of Exodus. There are instances of the use of the verb blācian - to grow pale, as in line 121 of Exodus, the etymology of blācian being traced to Latin verbs pallere and pallescere.

Another word suggesting white, fāmīg or fāmīg - foamy, appears nine times, as in line 19 of Riddle 3. Compounds, like fāmī(g)heals, are used three times to describe a foamy-necked ship, as in line 497 of Andreas; and fāmīg-bosma - with foamy bosom, as in line 494 of Exodus; fāmīgode - comes from fāmīgian, the Latin cognate being spumare - to foam, as in line 482 of Exodus; flōd flamgōde - the flood foamed; and fāmīg bord - with foaming banks (of a stream), as in line 26 of stanza 26 of The Meters of Boethius; the last mentioned four compounds occur once each.

Finally, blāt is another word used for livid, pale,

149 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 408.
150 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 106.
151 Ibid., p. 270.
wan, or ghastly, from blātian or blātan - to be livid, pale, as in line 771 of Christ, and lines 1088 and 1279 of Andreas and blātende nið - livid hatred, in line 981 of Genesis.\textsuperscript{152}

Black, as a group, offers difficulties when it comes to differentiate it from terms that belong to darkness, such as scealu - shady, dim - obscure, deorc - obscure, mirc - murky, scua - shadowy. Mead saw the problem when he wrote "Just as the words of the white group pass by insensible stages into meanings that suggest light, so the words of the black group shade insensibly into those suggesting a mere absence of light."\textsuperscript{153} The words in the black category will be limited to blaec - black, sweart - swarthy from sweartian - to make or become black, wann - wan, salo - Sallow, earp - dusky, sweorc - cloudy.

Black is rarely used as such. In line 1262 of Andreas it refers to the blaece brimrade - black sea-road, from Latin maris cursus - the sea road, and to the hrefn blaca - the black raven, in line 1301 of Beowulf; to blace naedran - black snakes, in line 472 of Solomon and Saturn; to swabu swipe blacu - pathway very black, in line 3 of Riddle 51; to blace swelge - black abyss, in line 18 of Riddle

\textsuperscript{152} Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 176-81.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., p. 181.
88; and to evil spirits, as in blāce - black (their beauty marred referring to angels), in line 71 of Christ and Satan; blācan feond - black fiends, in line 195 of Christ and Satan; blāc bealowes gast - black evil spirits, in line 718 of Christ and Satan, line 27 of Salomon and Saturn, and line 896 of Christ.

Sweart - black or swarthy occurs eighty-four times; it is the most frequently used in this group. It applies to sweartan helle - black hell, in line 312 of Genesis; to sweartne grund - black abyss, in Psalm 142, verse 7 of The Paris Psalter; to sweartum sawlum - black souls, in line 1606 of Christ; to sweartre niht - black nights, in line 872 of Christ; to sweartan hrefn - black raven, in line 61 of The Battle of Brunanburh;154 to sweart lastas - black tracks, in line 2 of Riddle 51; to sweartan mistas, in line 391 of Genesis; and to sweart waeter - black water, in line 1300 of Genesis.

Sweart appears also nine times with lēg, līg, lieg or lēg - flame, and describes the pitchy or smoky appearance of it. Milton may have had this in mind, in line 64 of Paradise Lost, Book I, where he describes the flames of the great furnace as having "No light, but rather darkness

Visible."_155 Lēg or līg occurs also in līg ealle forswealg - flame swallowed all, in line 1122 of Beowulf; in lēg-draca - dragon vomiting flames, in lines 2333 and 3040 of Beowulf; in līgfyr - fire flame, line 77 of Exodus; and in se swearta līg - the dark flame, line 966 of Christ.

Wann - dark or dusky is another term appearing often. It is used thirty-seven times and fits the description of se wonna hraefn - the wan or dark raven, in line 3024 of Beowulf; of wannre niht - wan or murky night, in line 702 of Beowulf; of wann under wulcnem - wan, gloomy or pitchy night under the sky, in line 55 of Dream of the Rood; and of se wonna leg - the wan flame, in line 713 of Christ and Satan.

Salo - dark or yellowish dark is used for the raven, as salwigpad - dark plumage, in line 37 of The Fortunes of Men; for the earn - eagle, as salowigpada - darkcoated plumage, in line 211 of Judith, and salowigpadan, in line 61 of The Battle of Brunanburh; _156 for the hraefn - raven, as salwigfēðera - of dusky plumage, in line 1448 of Genesis; and for salopade - dark coated in line 3 of Riddle 57.

In addition to wann and salo, blaec and sweart there


_156_ Anderson and Williams, _Old English Handbook_, p. 255.
occurs the combination sweart ond saloneb - swarthy and
dark brown, in line 35 of The Light at Finnsburg. The list
of terms in the black category is made complete with earp -
dark or dusky, in esorp werod - dark army or multitude, as
in line 194 of Exodus; and earpan gesceafa - the dark
creatures, as in line 42 of Riddle 3.157

The next group is concerned with various terms
denoting grey. Grey, much more than white and black, be-
sets the reader with difficulties when it comes to deter-
mine the exact meaning of the colour, and to give it an
equivalent in modern terminology. The white and black
colours cease to create problems when the degree of light-
ness of the white becomes heavy, or the shade of darkness
of the black becomes light, the problems being transferred
over to the grey colour. The difficulty, however, seems to
be in knowing when a colour ceases to be white or black and
becomes grey. The object described will always help, but
it remains a serious obstacle for the reader, student, or
translator of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Grey proper is used seven times and twice in com-
pounds. As graeg - grey, it appears in aescholt ufan graeg-

the ashwood (spear) grey above, in line 330 of Beowulf; in graegmæl - grey coloured (referring to coat of mail), in lines 334 and 2682 of Beowulf; in graega maew - the grey sea-gull, in line 371 of Andreas; in wulf se græga - the grey wolf, in line 150 of Maxims I; in grægan sweorde - the grey sword, in line 2866 of Genesis; in græge deor wulf - the grey animal, the wolf, in line 64 of The Battle of Brunanburh; and in sæ græge glæashlūtor - the sea, grey and as clear as glass, in lines 7-8 of stanza 5 of The Meters of Boethius; it also describes the grey bark on spears, frost, and curling smoke. The compounds refer to flintgraegne flōd - flood grey-like flint, in line 19 of Riddle 3; and to flōdgraeg - grey flood, in line 31 of Maxims II. Graeg is applied also to graeghiwe or graeghaewe - of a grey hue or colour; to græghama - a corselet or coat of mail; and to græggos - grey (wild) goose.

Hār - old grey or hoary, appears twenty-seven times and refers to a sword in Welandes geworc hēarne - the grey work of Weland, in lines 2-4 of Waldere I; to armour in hāre byrnan - old grey byrne, in lines 327 of Judith, 17 of Waldere II, and 2153 of Beowulf; to stone in hārne stān - hoary stone, in line 2744 of Beowulf; to clīfe hārum - grey

cliff, in line 13 of stanza 5 of The Meters of Boethius; to sē hāra wulf - the grey wolf, in line 82 of The Wanderer; to forst hāre - grey frost, in lines 1257-58 of Andreas; to hār hilderinc - a grey warrior, in lines 1306 and 3135 of Beowulf; and in line 38 of The Battle of Brunanburh. Har is used as a compound in three passages; as old age in Hroðgar saet eald ond unhār - Hrothgar sat old and grey, in lines 356-57 of Beowulf; to describe an old wall in ruins raeghār - grey with lichen, in line 10 of Ruin; and to refer to a feaxhār cwēne - a grey-haired (fair-haired) woman, in line 1 of Riddle 74.

Hasu, haso, or heasu - ashen or dusky grey is used ten times including three compounds. It describes bone haswan earn - the grey eagle, in line 4 of Riddle 24; rēcas stīgād haswe ofer hrōfum - smoke rises up grey over the roofs, in lines 6-7 of Riddle I; haswe culufran - a livid (grey) dove, in line 1451 of Genesis; haswe blōde - grey foliage, in line 9 of Riddle 13; and haswe herestrāsta - grey (dirty) highways, in line 284 of Exodus. The compounds are hasufag - grey coloured, as in mín hasufag - my grey railment, in line 1 of Riddle 11; hasupād - grey-coated, as in bone hasupādan - the grey-coated one (the eagle), in line 62 of The Battle of Brunanburh; and haswigfeāre - grey-

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159 Anderson & William, Old English Handbook, p.255
160 Ibid., p. 255
feathered, in line 153 of The Phoenix.

One other term is included in the grey group; this is *blondenfeax* or *blandenfeax* - having mixed hair or grizzly hair or being grizzly-haired, from *geblandan* - to blend, mix, mingle, trouble, disturb, corrupt, and *feax* - head of hair. It is used seven times, as in lines 1594-95 of Beowulf: *blondenfeaxe, gomele ymb gödne ongesador spræcon* - the grizzly-haired (meaning Hrothgar), the old, about the good warrior together spoke; and again in Beowulf, in lines 1791, 1873, and 2962; in Genesis, lines 2343 (referring to Sara), and 2602; and in *beorn blandenfex* - the grey-haired warrior (man), in line 45 of The Battle of Brunanburh. Another term for grey is *gamolfeax* - hoary locks or grey-haired, from *gamol* - old or aged, and *feax* - hair. It appears three times, as in *bā waes on sālum since s brytta, gamolfeax ond gūrof* - then was rejoiced the distributor of treasure grey-haired and brave in battle (war-famed), in lines 607-09 of Beowulf; and in *ylde him on fareo, onsyn blaca, gamolfeax gnornad* - old age overtakes him, his face turns pale (from *blācian*), grey-haired he laments, in lines 91-92 of The Seafarer. *Gamolferho* - aged, advanced in age,

161 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 51.
grey by age, appears three times, as in \textit{gamolferhrō goldes brytta} - the aged dispenser of gold, in line 2868 of \textit{Genesis} in this passage, there is no literal reference to grey, but it is certainly implied.\footnote{163}

The mere mention of brown immediately brings to mind a problem similar to that encountered with grey. At what point does a colour stop being brown or begin to assume that name? In almost every case, the reader must take his cue from the context in which the word appears, pay particular attention to the object to which it applies, and form a picture in his mind. The same applies to modern poetry, but in the case of colours the images are already there. An interesting study would be to investigate if the Anglo-Saxon poet when describing colours expects a greater effort from the imagination of the reader than does a modern poet.

\textit{Brun} - brown, appears eleven times, and five times in compounds. Several examples were given on pages 50 and 51 in the section discussing a plausible explanation for the use of brown for describing swords. Brown may go from dark to red. In this group when brown is applied to moving metal objects giving off much luminosity, the poet emphasizes the metallic lustre of it, the flashing or glittering effect

\footnote{163 Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 189-93.}
the object has, as in brunag - a shining brown, from fagian to change in colour, vary, be variegated, as in the compound brunfagne helm - a brown shining helmet, in line 2615 of Beowulf. Other compounds occur in niht - brunwann oferbraed - the dusky (brown-like) night overspread, in lines 1305-06; and sealobrun or salubrun - dark rusty or dull brownish black, in hraesfen wandrode sweart ond sealobrun - the hovering raven swarthy and dark brown, in lines 34-35 of The Fight at Finnsburg. Other usages are brune leode - the dark (brown) complexioned nation, as in line 70 of Exodus; brune yda - brown waters (dirty waves of the flood), in line 519 of Andreas; and most interesting because of its Latin background is the description of the shining effect of the 'brown' feathers of the tail of the bird, in line 296 of The Phoenix: sum brun - somewhat (part) brown. The Latin original reads: fulvo distenta metallo - tawny heavy (fully laden) metal-like; the word fulvo was translated on page 69, as French jaunatre, fauve, d'or, and English brown with a touch of gold, that is, the yellow metal called gold. The translation of French fauve is:

1. a. (a) Fawn-coloured, fulvous; tawny (hair, etc.); (od deer) fallow. Orpington fauve - buff Orpington.

164 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 11.
Ciel fauve, lurid sky. (b) Odeur fauve, musky smell. L’odeur fauve de son corps, the musk of her body.

2. s.m. (a) Fawn (colour). (b) Le fauve, les (bêtes) fauves, deer. (c) Les (grands) fauves, (fulvous) wild beasts (lions, tigers, etc.)

Fulvous, according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, is given as reddish-yellow, dull yellowish-brown or tawny, the etymological root being Latin *fulvus* - reddish-yellow, plus -ous. It should not be surprising then if difficulty is experienced in knowing exactly the meaning of fulvous. The Latin *Phoenix* - *Carmen de ave phoenice* describes the colours of the bird's tail as being *cauda porrigitur fulvo distenta metallo* - the tail spread (with) heavy metal-like brown or tawny, *in cujus maculis purpura* - in which purple spots, *mista rubet* - (is) mixed red. The Anglo-Saxon *Phoenix* uses three words to produce the effect desired: *brūn* - brownish, *basu* - purple, and *blācum* - bright. The word *splottum* - spots, blots, or patches, which follows *blācum*, is apparently used in the sense of splashes, as the Latin *mista* could suggest. It would seem logical to argue that

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the Anglo-Saxon poet used blācum - bright, shining, glittering, or flashing, in order to emphasize the shining brightness of the overall effect which, in fact, splashes of yellowish brown and purple on the feathers of a bird exposed to sunlight would produce.

Red - red is mentioned twenty times as such, and appears three times in compounds. The terminology for blōd - blood is much greater, the more common terms are: blōddryne - bloodshed; blōden, blōdig, or blōdgeotende - bloody; blōdfag - blood-stained; blōdyte - bloodshed; blōdlēas - bloodless; drēorig - gory; heoldfor - bloody; heolfrig - bloody; and swātig - bloody; and a few others.

Red is used to describe the blood on the cross, in sīo rēade rod - the red rood, in line 1101 of Christ; and ecgum rēōdan - red swords of Isaac's sacrifice, in line 413 of Exodus. Fire and flames are described as race ond rēade lēge - smoke and red flame, in line 44 of Genesis, and lig ...rēad rēdē glōd - red fire fierce and glowing, in lines 44-46 of The Fortunes of Men. Roses are referred to as rosenha rēade - red roses, in line 288 of The Judgment Day II. The Red Sea is said to have rēade strēamas - red waters, in line 296 of Exodus. Red is applied to dress ornaments, in

hyrste beorhte, rēde ond scire on rēafte minum - bright decorations, red and gleaming on my garment, in lines 1-2 of Riddle 11. It describes reddish yellow metal, in gērē-
node rēadum golde - adorned with reddish gold, in line 338 of Judith. In the Middle Ages gold was often referred to as red probably because it was darker than modern gold from a higher percentage of copper alloy.

Geolu or geolo - yellow occurs only four times, and fealu, feale, fealwa, fealwes, fealwes, fealuwes, or fealo - fallow, yellow, tawny, yellowish brown, or yellow-
ish green and their compounds are used nineteen times. 170 Usually, when yellow is the more noticeable shade, the object is described as being fealu. Geolu - yellow is found in geolo godwebb - fine yellow web, in line 10 of Riddle 35; twice in Beowulf, in past ic sweord bere opde sīdne scyld, geolorand to gūpe - that I bear a sword or large shield, a yellow buckler (the shield being the colour of the linden-wood) to battle, of lines 437-38, and in geolwe linden - yellow linden (shield made of linden-wood), of line 2610. Fealu - fallow is used preferably to describe the green sea water, as in fealone stream - the fallow stream, in line 1538 of Andreas; on fealone flōd - on the

the fallow flood, in line 36 of *The Battle of Brunanburh*;

fealewe wæsgas - the fallow waves or billows, in line 1589 of *Andreas*; and ofer fealone flōd - over the fallow flood, in line 1950 of *Beowulf*.

Can the sea be really yellowish green? A low partial overcast of thin cloud texture will allow a certain amount of sunlight through and, indeed, give that impression. The shadows cast by the clouds over the sea make the water appear of different colour. With fog and rain among the most prevalent atmospheric conditions of England, Scotland, and Ireland, any one sailing into Belfast harbour or into any other seaport of the British Isles and Eire after sunrise, in early morning or late afternoon, is likely to experience such a phenomena. Pilots flying over the sea and about the seashore know that.

The compounds made with fealo are fealchilte swurd - the yellow (golden) hilted sword, in line 166 of *The Battle of Maldon*, and last weardod, aappelfealuwe - followed the apple-fallow track, in lines 2164-65 of *Beowulf*. A road is referred to as fealwe strāete - fallow road (street), in line 916 of *Beowulf*, and to steeds, in fealwe mearas - fallow horses, in line 865 of *Beowulf*. The colour fallow

applied to horses brings the question of scire - shining, blāc - flashing, and beorhte - bright, back to light again. A brown horse is brown no matter how exercised the imagination of the viewer might be, but the amount of sunlight striking that horse may change the light caused to be reflected from it, and make it appear yellowish brown. This was the case of the piece of green corduroy exposed to bright light, reference to which was made on page 68. Finally, flame is described as fealo līg - yellow flame, in line 218 of The Phoenix.

It comes as no surprise that gold - gold, the most precious Anglo-Saxon metal to be associated with treasures, should be counted as a colour word in Anglo-Saxon terminology. The difficulty, however, arises in distinguishing it from yellow. The word gold and its compounds is used over one hundred times.\(^{172}\) Appearing more frequently are: gold-blēoh - a golden colour or golden-hued (object); gold-beorht - bright with gold, as in line 33 of The Ruin; goldfāh or goldfāg - variegated or shining with gold, as in lines 308, 994, and 1800 of Beowulf; goldfellen - of gilded leather; goldtorht - bright like gold; and goldhoma or goldhama, as in line 991 of Elene.

Grēne - green was the colour most popular with Anglo-Saxon writers; most references are found in religious poetry. Would this point to a liturgical influence, green being the conventional colour of hope? Green does not occur in Anglo-Saxon heroic poems. It is found in eordan eallgrēne - the earth all green, in line 798 of Andreas; in grēne folde - the green earth, in line 1561 of Genesis; in grēnewongas - green fields, in line 5 of Riddle 66; in grēne grass - green grass, in line 6 of Riddle 15; in synd on worulde grēne geardas - in the world are green regions, in lines 510-11 of Genesis; in heafod hindan grēne - on back of head, green, and sē hals grēne - the green neck, in lines 293 and 298 of The Phoenix; and lēaf bōd grēne - the leaves are green, in line 314 of Solomon and Saturn.

This limited survey of the use of colour words in Anglo-Saxon poetry has demonstrated the continued need and importance of semantics which must be used to determine the exact meaning and correct interpretation of words used to describe colours. This study has made clear also that the dictionary can assist only in establishing a foundation for discovering the meaning of a word, that is, the proper relationship between name and sense, the concept or idea the word implies being determined by its historical development.

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Lindheim was conscious of the problem involved when he pointed that few people would deny that the range and power of any vocabulary cannot be adequately reflected in a dictionary. Dictionaries are incapable of presenting other than purely formal links between words owing to their alphabetical arrangement; their space is too restricted to permit printing of words in adequate context; and finally, it is beyond their scope to show why ideas are expressed in a certain way.  

Lindheim's statement implies that the dictionary cannot give the historical sense or development of a word; this can only be arrived at by experience, and by bringing expert knowledge to the text being read or translated. In the case of Anglo-Saxon religious works, for example, the Latin originals should be consulted when possible. Furthermore, a word should be examined to discover if it used conventionally, symbolically, figuratively, or literally; to have developed this aspect of colour words in Anglo-Saxon poetry in this thesis would have entailed going far beyond the limits of this paper. There is no doubt that some Anglo-Saxon colour words were determined by convention, others were symbolic of the objects described, several were used figuratively, and various literally. To investigate every

Anglo-Saxon colour word, and determine its use under these terms remains another attractive topic for a thesis.

Much more research has been done for this part on semantics in relation to Anglo-Saxon, and much information culled. A detailed discussion of that information is not possible here because of the already long treatment given the topic. The purpose of this section on Anglo-Saxon semantics has been to show that without a deep knowledge of the language and its historical background, a true, that is, correct interpretation of Anglo-Saxon literature is not possible. Baugh mentions that a contemporary of Samuel

Among the topics investigated and found to be of particular interest to this paper are:


... Syntax and Style in Old English (Cambridge, 1940), p. 31 (doubt as to principal or subordinate clauses may affect the meaning).

Wilfrid Bonser, The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England (London, 1963), pp. 117-67 (the pagan background); pp. 216-20 (colour); pp. 246-49 (the Lorica); pp. 306-40 (herb remedies); pp. 381-402 (the body, from the head downwards); and pp. 403-18 (other diseases).


Butler described the first part of Hudibras, as "the most admired piece of drollery." In this century drollery is synonymous of jesting, humour, or oddity. Butler's work had all that, but it was primarily what the word implied in Restoration semantics, "an attack - or a miscellany largely filled with attacks." This exemplifies the importance of knowing the historical meaning of words. Similarly, many of Chaucer's works cannot be given a correct interpretation unless the courtly love tradition on which they are based is understood. To expect a correct understanding of Anglo-Saxon literature on the basis of the words as they appear today, translated in many cases without the benefit of semantics and other Anglo-Saxon scholarship, is making a drollery of what is literature.

2. Influence of Latin and Christianity

Upon Anglo-Saxon.

The reader, student, or scholar of Anglo-Saxon who pays a genuine attention to semantics in his interpretation


177 Ibid., p. 734.
of Anglo-Saxon literature will soon discover that Latin and Christianity had a marked influence on the Anglo-Saxon language. In many cases difficulties of interpretation will solve themselves in the Latin background of Anglo-Saxon. This is illustrated very clearly in pointing out the origin of certain Latin themes in Anglo-Saxon writings, such as the ubi sunt theme, and rhetorical figures, as the exemplum, interrogatio, repetitio, and consolation, some of them exemplified in the homilies, and in The Seafarer, The Wanderer, The Gifts of Men, The Fates of Men, and Christ. The underlying power of Latin on the language of the Anglo-Saxons has been recognized by scholars of all ages. Every complete history of the development of the English language devotes some space to it. Bosworth found it useful to

178 Cross, Latin Themes in Old English, pp. 3-9.
179 This list is restricted to the works which have been consulted for this paper:

Edwin Lee Johnson, Latin Words of Common English (Boston, 1931), particularly, pp. 3-34.
accompany many of his definitions by Latin equivalents.\(^{180}\)

In an article on *Beowulf*, Malone emphasizes the rôle of Latin in Anglo-Saxon literary works, which "are rooted and grounded in the Latin Christianity which dominated the culture of western Europe from the post-classical period" on.\(^{181}\) The Latin tongue, he remarks, was not a novelty when Aldhelm and Caedmon began to compose, and by "the seventh century a large body of Latin Christian prose and verse had come into being."\(^{182}\) With Aldhelm's *oratio simplex* - straightforward prose, and his *oratio perpetua* - ornate and artistic style, the tradition was continued with Wilfrid, Ceolfrith, abbot of Monkwearmouth and Bede's teacher, and throughout the eighth century with Bede, Egbert, Boniface, and Alcuin.\(^{183}\)

The influence of Latin on the Anglo-Saxon language is also noticeable in Latin borrowings throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, although the amount of Latin loan words is surprisingly small.\(^{184}\) The nature of this borrowing throws considerable light on the understanding of the language. Borrowing was done directly when an Anglo-Saxon word could be used to translate a Latin meaning, word for word, as the

\(^{180}\) Bosworth, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*.
\(^{182}\) Ibid., pp. 161-63.
\(^{183}\) René L. M. Derolez, "*Anglo-Saxon Literature*;
Anglo-Saxon word *gifu* - gift. *Gifu* has its origin in the runic symbol $X$ exemplified in line 19 of The Rune Poem: $X$ gumena byp gleng ond herenys - a gift is the honour and praise of men, the rune $X$ representing the Anglo-Saxon letter $g$, the name of which is *gifu* - gift or favour. In this case the word *gifu* is used to describe the Latin gratia in the sense of divine grace or undeserved favour, and is called a direct borrowing from Latin.\textsuperscript{185} *Dryhten* - lord, king, or chief, is another word which is an exact parallel of the corresponding Latin; because its native meaning could be easily applied to describe the Christian God, and was found, indeed, adequate to translate the Latin dominus, it was used as such.

The rendering of abstract ideas was often done indirectly by coining native compounds, so much so, that when a word shows that the idea expressed is not a Germanic concept, it is usually safe to regard it as a borrowing from Latin. The abstract word religion, for example, was rendered by eæfaestnes, from eæ - law, statute, custom, rite, marriage, faest - fast, fixed, firm, stiff, solid, constant,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Lindheim, "Problems of Old English Semantics," p. 73.  
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p. 75.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
fortified, and *nes* - a suffix for feminine abstract nouns. Another case in point is the Anglo-Saxon word *wyrd*, which eventually became identified with fate, from Latin *fatum*, but originally it was found inadequate to convey the idea of Latin *providentia* - divine providence. This was too vague, and the strange, abstract, and ambiguous concept was made clear in the word *fœrscæwung* - contemplation, foresight, from *fœrscæwian* - to foresee. Such loan-translations are easily recognized because they express an idea taken from a foreign culture, are originally identical or partly so with the corresponding Latin terms, and the prefixes, stems, and endings are very similar to the Latin.\footnote{Lindheim, "Problems of Old English Semantics," pp. 73-75. Kroesch, "Semantic Borrowing in Old English," pp. 50-51.}

Another type of borrowing which actually falls under the coining of new words, is the analogical transference of ideas. A Latin word made of a single form is translated into Anglo-Saxon by one word made up of two or more elements expressing the same idea. For example, Latin *apostolus* - apostle becomes the Anglo-Saxon compound *ærendwreca* or *ærendraca*, from two words: a) *geærendian* - to go on an errand, carry a message, send word to, and *ærende* - an errand, a message, an embassy, news, tidings, a mission; and b) *wrecan* or *reccan* - to unfold a tale, to narrate, recite, tell, say,
to unfold the meaning of anything, to explain, interpret, expound, to rule, direct, guide, and to correct, to wield authority, give judgement, to take care of, and be interested in. Finally, there is borrowing by synonymic analogy, that is, association by analogy, in which the meaning only is affected in the analogical process. This happens when an Anglo-Saxon word is associated with a Latin synonym and takes on another meaning by extension in addition to those the Latin synonyms are known to have. Such words are edreccan—chew, ruminate, and by extension consider, from Latin ruminare; and tacn—token or sign, and by extension, a prognostic, sympton, standard, banner, from Latin signum.

The Anglo-Saxon borrowing habit from Latin has a parallel in the Old German literature extant. A prominent feature of that literature is its bilingual character, the second language element being Latin or Greek. It is recognized that much of the older Germanic literature is a product of translations from those languages into Germanic idioms. In translating from Latin, the translator was often hard put to it to find in

187 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 18, and 788
188 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 9, 278.
his dialect adequate expression for the ideas of the foreign tongue. If he borrowed the Latin term he was less likely to be understood; so he more often attempted to express the idea by using a native word or combination or words, at times in word-for-word translations, at other times more freely by native circumlocutions. These semantic borrowings represent largely ideas that had not previously found adequate expression in the native language, and this probably accounts for the large number of compounds in this type of words. Latin was a tremendous force in the modification of the Germanic language.

The same procedure was followed by the Anglo-Saxons. There is no doubt that a knowledge of the borrowing methods of Anglo-Saxon writers enables a clearer understanding and an easier interpretation of their works by tracing certain words to their roots and determining their precise meaning.

The influence of Virgil in Anglo-Saxon England of the seventh and eighth centuries has left a lasting imprint on the writings of that period, and the effects cannot be underestimated. In describing the style of Beowulf as truly "admirable," W. S. Mackie remarks that "the author was, like Virgil, a lord of language." Jack D. Ogilvy, in his

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189 Krosch, "Semantic Borrowing," p. 52.

190 W. S. Mackie, "Notes Upon the Text and The Interpretation of 'Beowulf'," MLR, XXXIV (1939), p. 515
painstaking and valuable compilation of books known to Anglo-Saxon writers of Latin, from the period 670 to 804, reports that, according to his anonymous biographer, Alcuin was so much enthused and given to Virgil in his youth that he had to be "recalled to studies more befitting a churchman by infernal intervention somewhat reminiscent of Jerome's anti-Ciceronian dream." It is significant that Virgil is among the few pagan names mentioned by Alcuin in his catalogue of the York library. That the Anglo-Saxons knew Virgil as well as any one in the Middle Ages should not be surprising; it was the fashion of the time. To draw a complete list of uses of Virgil by Anglo-Saxon writers is another thesis topic worth considering. It is known already that

every Englishman of whose work we have more than a page or two - and some ... only a few lines - shows some acquaintance with the Aeneid. Boniface, Lul, Milret of Worcester, Egburg (a learned lady of Boniface's

circle), Tatwine ... the author of
Beowulf ... knew the Aeneid ...
Aldhelm and Bede, Boniface, Lul, and
Alcuin seem to have known the Ec-
logues, and Tatwine and Alcuin the
Georgics. Vs. 2 of Tatwine's twenty-
eighth Riddle may echo Ciris, 122;
but Aldhelm's quotation of Culex
comes by way of Donatus' Vita
Virgilii. 192

There were other reasons why Virgil was so popular
at that time in Anglo-Saxon England. With the coming of the
scholars Theodore and Hadrian in 669, the establishment of
centers of learning, the flowering of the golden age of
Anglo-Saxon libraries, between the coming of Hadrian and
Theodore and the death of Benedict Biscop in 690, the
eighth century was receiving the impetus that was to make
it one of the greatest periods of England's intellectual
history.

Ogilvy lists some 250 authors known, or whose
writings were available at that time, representing well over
a thousand works including, among other topics, theology,
biblical commentary, hagiography, grammar and rhetoric,
history, mythology, philosophy, astronomy, natural history,
jurisprudence, and medicine. 193 It is known from these that
the aggregate of patristic works in Latin and Greek formed
an extraordinary library, and the belles lettres collection
of pagan and Christian Latin poets was unique. Latin clas-

192 Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin, p. 89.
sics, however, were the inspiration and guidance of Anglo-Saxon writers in the formation of their style and diction, Virgil and Cicero being the most popular authors, with Virgil remaining the master of poetic form, and the model grammarians and rhetoricians emulated. Aldhelm's quotations from Virgil have been gathered and show even distribution through his prose and poetry.

Virgil's moral teachings were held in high admiration by the Church of the Middle Ages, and churchmen looked upon the pagan divine as a "Roman Isaiah," and made every effort to reconcile the poet's pre-Christian sentiments with Christian doctrine, transforming often Virgil's sayings, such as, non, mihi si linguae centum oraque centum not if I had a hundred tongues and mouth (referring to the terrors of hell), to the praise of God, as Alcuin's semper honors nomenque tuum laudesque maneunt; your glory, name and renown will endure forever. Earlier, St. Boniface had written in line 568 of his Aenigmata: et poenas Erebi

196 J. W. Mackail, ed. The Aeneid (Oxford, 1930), VI 625, p. 239. All references to The Aeneid are from this edition, and translations are personal unless indicated to the contrary.
lustrent per devia Ditis -198 may thus bless even the poems of Erebus through the wildernesses of Dis, echoing very strongly Virgil's Aeneid VII, lines 568-69: hic specus horrendum et saevi spiracula Ditis / monstrantur - here is revealed a dread cavern and the windings (maze) of cruel Dis.

Anglo-Saxon literary ecclesiastics could choose from a gold mine of similar Virgilian phrases, such as the following lines from the Aeneid: I, 604: mens sibi conscia recti ... - a mind avail within itself of the Right; III, 57: auri sacra fames - accursed hunger for gold; IV, 412: improbe amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis - cruel love, to what extremes do you not impel human hearts; I, 349: auri caecus amore - blind with love of gold; V, 815: unum pro multis dabitur caput - one head (life) will be given (sacrificed) for many; and there were many more. It is relevant to remember that

Zappert says of classical allusions found in the writings of the clergy that, unless there is definite proof that the author had access to another poet, the natural conclusion is that Vergil is the most probable source.... Countless quotations from the

197 Haber, A Comparative Study, p. 6.
198 St. Boniface, Aenigmata, line 568, mentioned by Haber in A Comparative Study of the Beowulf and the Aeneid, p. 9.
letters of ecclesiastics of all ranks show how great an influence Vergil really possessed during the Middle Ages in Britain. 199

Finally, Anglo-Saxon kings who were scholars contributed also to Vergil's popularity, and liked to think that their ancestry could be traced back to the kings of early Rome. 200 There were Aethilwald, King of Mercia, whose writing style was as brilliant as that of his master Aldhelm; King Geolwulf of Northumbria, to whom Bede dedicated his History of the English Church and People; and King Aldfrid of Northumbria, to whom Aldhelm addressed his De Metris. 201

With Latin learning very popular, Vergil's prestige running high, and Anglo-Saxon scholars bent on giving their writings the Virgilian touch and flavour, it should not come as a surprise to anyone, if contemporary experts of Anglo-Saxon writings should recognize and point to the classical technique which Anglo-Saxon works have inherited from Virgil and other Latin classics. 202 Commenting on Beowulf Klaeber states:

199 Georg Zappert, Virgil's Forleben im Mittelalter (Vienna, 1851), mentioned in Haber's A Comparative Study, pp. 6-7.
200 Haber, A Comparative Study, p. 5.
201 Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin, p. 105.
Latin influence ... is perceptible in the figures of antithesis, 183 ff., anaphora, 864 ff., 2107 ff., polysyndeton, 1763 ff., 1392 ff. Also Latin models for certain kennings and metaphors (e.g., appellations of God and the devil (Grendel), and for terms denoting 'dying' and 'living') ... in the use of certain appositive participles (thus in 815, 916, 1368, 1370, 1913, 2350) and, likewise, in the predilection for passive construction (in cases like 642 f., 1629 f., 1787 f., 1896 f., 3021 f., ...). The use of the plur. form of the neuter ealræ 1727, is no doubt a Latinism.

To an informed Latinist, many idioms appearing in Anglo-Saxon are recognized to be Latin renderings of similar Latin expressions; for example, Latin ill vero - but he, is used frequently by Aelfric, and is translated into Anglo-Saxon by - he sōlicé. Some other Latinisms discovered in stylistic devices are the doubling of sentences with antithetical content, a rhetorical figure so prom-

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203 Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. lxviii, and xciv. The rhetorical figure anaphora is the repetition of the same word or phrase in several successive clauses; the polysyndeton consists in the use of several conjunctions close together or the repetition of the same conjunction, and is the opposite of the asyndeton, that is, the rhetorical figure that omits the conjunctions, as I came, I saw, I conquered.

204 Aelfric's Homilies, ed. Thorpe, I 462. 12, mentioned by S. O. Andrew in Syntax and Style in Old English (Cambridge, 1940), p. 53. Other pure Latinism mentioned are: nec mora; ne quidem; ne tum quidem; ne sic quidem; ne ic; nec ego; nec ... nec; p. 65.
inent in Latin homiletic style, and exemplified in *Beowulf*, lines 183-88; the paratactic construction which will be discussed in Chapter IV, under rhetorical patterns; the anaphora found in the parallel group, as in lines 2105-14 of *Beowulf*, with the anaphora **hwīlum** - sometimes; the paranomasia or wordplay; the chiasmus, a rhetorical figure having a pair of similar expressions, the second being an inversion of the first, for example, he rose and down sat she, showing command of balance and echo. To these examples may be added macaronic passages written in a blend of Anglo-Saxon and Latin, as in lines 667-77 of *The Phoenix*, *The Lord's Prayer III*, *A Summons to Prayer*, and some of *The Metrical Charms*. Riddle 90 is written in Latin only.

Latin contributed also to the understanding of certain Anglo-Saxon inflexions and to the phonology of the language, that is, the science of speech sounds and their history and changes. Certain Latin words when introduced into Anglo-Saxon were subjected to inflexional and phonological changes. Such are the Latin **mensa** - table, which became Anglo-Saxon **mǣse**, the weak feminine retaining the original **a** ending at the time the word was introduced; Latin **strata** - street, became Anglo-Saxon **strǣt**, the **a**
being dropped; and Latin candela - candle, for Anglo-Saxon candol and candel, with the ending being changed to ol or el. Some of the phonological phenomena are represented by the change of the short vowel e into u before nasals, as in Anglo-Saxon pund - pound (in weight or in money) or pint, from Latin pondo, and munt - hill or mountain, from Latin mons; the Latin diphthong ia, in diabolus - devil, becoming eo, in deofol. There are many similar changes, but the purview of this paper does not allow to elaborate the topic.

Influence of Christianity.

The deep rooted influence of Christianity on Anglo-Saxon letters comes to the surface every time new scholarship is added to the fast growing volume of Anglo-Saxon research. It has been shown that Christian literature in prose and verse in the Latin language was popular at the time of Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin, that is, during the seventh and eighth centuries, when Latin Christianity dominated the culture of western Europe. Regarding the effects of this scholarship on Anglo-Saxon England, it should be remembered that the Church had developed alongside a strong

and enlightened pagan civilization and culture which were exhibited in Roman classical antiquity, and that the

Roman and Irish missions of the sixth and seventh centuries planted the Church of England in the midst of another pagan culture. The new religion did not scorn the literary tradition either of classical or of Germanic paganism. Aldhelm, the first... to compose religious verse in Latin, and Caedmon, the first... to compose religious verse in English, were contemporaries... Each sang the praises of the Christian God in an artistic medium inherited from paganism. Each poured new wine into old bottles. 207

In the case of classical antiquity much Greek and Latin literature was bequeathed to succeeding Christian generations who were able to draw comparisons of value with contemporary writings, and follow the evolution of words and their meanings under Christian influence. This was not the case with Anglo-Saxon writings whose total destruction was avoided by chance only. The relatively small number of influence writings extant demonstrate already a marked influence of Christianity on the thinking and writing of Anglo-Saxon writers, an influence that almost every one concedes. Had the contents of the libraries of so many monasteries and centers of

learning for young men, and the valuable manuscripts turned out at the busy scriptoria throughout Anglo-Saxon England survived in their totality, the evidence of the influence of Latin Christianity would most likely emerge much greater.

The healthy spirit of the Roman Church was soon to permeate the life of the Anglo-Saxons, their mode of thinking, and their language. It is too often forgotten that the strength of Christianity lies in its endeavour to reveal ultimate truth in the speech of man. In so doing, the medium of expression, language, is developed to a considerable degree of perfection, and becomes a powerful instrument for transmitting the new religion, its spiritual doctrine and meaning, and the philosophy of life and general culture the new faith engenders.

The Church of Rome made a great impression on the Anglo-Saxon heathens because the new religion appealed to them with its emphasis on external representation, and particularly with Pope Gregory's tolerant approach toward heathen worship and practices. In addition, the Anglo-Saxons discovered in Latin Christianity a unique organization which, to their Teutonic minds, appeared superior to their own in its ethical ideas, its order of companions or comitatus and, in many other ways, a religion that could fit their way of life, so much so, as to become their own and
something real to which they could contribute with their body and soul. The great missionary movement of the eighth century was a direct result of that influence.

The influence of Latin Christianity on Anglo-Saxon religious vocabulary is tremendous. This is shown convincingly in two excellent works by H. MacGillivray and A. Keiser. MacGillivray was inspired in his endeavour by the works of three scholars, R. von Raumer, Karl Weinhold, and Bernhard Kahle, who had studied Old High German, Gothic, and Old Norse respectively with reference to the same influence. MacGillivray inherited from them the idea for the topic, and copied their method for the classification of the material; he undertook the gigantic task

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209 R. von Raumer, Die Einwirkung des Christentums auf die Althochdeutsche Sprache (Stuttgart, 1845).

210 K. Weinhold, Die Gotische Sprache im Dienste des Christentums (Halle, 1870).


of tracing the influence of Christianity in all Anglo-Saxon poetry and prose pieces. Part of his work was published in 1902, but fourteen years later he declared that his hopes for the completion of the work begun had been abandoned.212

Keiser limited his field of operation. He took on the research begun by MacGillivray, made ample use of his predecessor's material, and completed a survey of the poetic works only. The prose work, however, has been left unfinished since MacGillivray's initial work. As a result, many details have remained incomplete with the exclusion of prose from Keiser's study, and many important words have been omitted. A few examples will illustrate. Cyoere, from Greek martus - witness, and by extension martyr, that is, one who bears witness by his death, this word appearing in poetry as Anglo-Saxon martyre, martyr, martir, or martr, and as prowere, from prowian - to endure, suffer, die, pay for. An attractive word is leornigcnht, leornigcnht, or leorningcild - a youth engaged in study, scholar, disciple, or student, from leornian - to learn, study, read, and leornung - learning, study, meditation, reading, and cnihht - a boy, youth, attendant, servant, from knight, one who serves.

212 Keiser, "Influence of Christianity," p. 5
As it was so rightly affirmed

the exclusion of prose from this study has resulted in most regrettable incompleteness at many points.

... Considering the prose of the Anglo-Saxon period from the Cura Pastoralis to the great homilist Aelfric, what 'literature' could reflect more inevitably and more completely the 'Christian Influence on the language? Prose, not poetry, is primarily discursive, argumentative, persuasive, just the medium to express popular thought. Poetry does not systematize thought; for that one looks to prose. For an enumeration of the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit we do not look to Cynewulf's Christ ... but to the homilies and tracts of Aelfric .... So too for the heafod-leahtras, the 'Deadly Sins,' we turn to Aelfric ....

The value of the research done with Anglo-Saxon poetic works does not lose in merit because of the incompleteness of the prose investigation. On the contrary, the scholarly nature and importance of Keiser's study emphasizes the necessity of looking at both prose and poetry for a complete analysis, since without one, the other cannot be a representative and definitive work on the influence of Christianity on the language of the Anglo-Saxons.

Hundreds of religious words, that is, words owing

213 James W. Bright, "Brief Mention," MLN, XXXVI (May, 1921), Review of Albert Keiser's work, p. 317. It should be remarked that Bright confuses the nature of
their origin from contact with Christianity, including derivatives, synonyms and kennings, compounds, and several hundred Biblical proper names, are now known to have come directly from Latin by way of borrowing, imitation, or translation. It is logical that these words should be found in terms relating to religion or pertaining to it. God, the angels, faith, the soul, the Virgin Mary, saints, martyrs, liturgy, church buildings and services, the sacraments, the elect, the damned, heaven, hell, devils, death and judgement, are some of the many topics which have yielded words owing their origin to Latin Christianity. The following words will exemplify.

**Haeden** - heathen, pagan, gentile in contrast to Christians, appears in *haebenra hyht* - the heathen's hope, in line 179 of Beowulf. **Crïsten** - christian, from crïst - the anointed one, was originally borrowed directly from the Hebrew word meaning messiah, and in Anglo-Saxon it was taken directly from Latin *christiani*, a word which in turn comes from the Latin verb *catachizare*, the *prima signatio* of the catechumens, distinguished from baptism itself, the Anglo-Saxon equivalent being *crïstnian* - to make a Christ-

literature, or at least seems to do so. One goes to scientific writing, in preference to literature, to learn the truth about things. The main purpose of the homilist is generally to communicate. Most sermons of Bossuet are pieces of scientific writing; this, in no way, excludes the homily from literature.
ian or to baptize; this word is found in crīstnað and claensad - (water which) christianizes and cleanses, in line 397 of Solomon and Saturn. Hēahfaeder comes probably from Latin pater excelsus - the high or great father, that is, God is thought of in terms of a patriarch, a word which is translated by hēahfaeder, from hēah - high, tall, lofty, sublime, and faeder - father.

Marian maessan - Mary's mass or Marymas, in line 20 of The Menologium, has to do with Candlemas, the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary; it is the most ancient festival in honour of the Mother of Jesus. It is interesting to observe that, at first, Candlemas was celebrated on the 14th of February, forty days after Christ's birth, but with Christmas being moved back to December 25, Marymas fell on February 2. In the East, the feast was primarily a festival of the Lord, but in the West, Mary was eulogized and became the centre of attraction. Anglo-Saxon maesse - mass has its origin in Latin messa or missa. Amen is borrowed directly from Latin.

Terms denoting God's word are many. An example is bod or gebod - command, message, precept, preaching; another is bebod - commandment, injunction, order, decree, as in we ... bine bodu bræecon - we broke thy commandments, in line 109 of The Lord's Prayer II; ac min bibod bræece -
but my commandment break, in line 1393 of Christ; and swa bebuge gebod - as the commandment extendeth, in line 230 of The Menologium.

An exceedingly interesting word that points to the teaching of Christianity is middangeard or woruld - the earth, that is, the middle dwelling situated between heaven and hell. The doctrine of the Church teaches that there is a place called heaven for the elect, a home termed hell for the damned, and the dwelling of man living on earth, being a temporary abode for man awaiting, in the physical sense, to go to one or the other place. Latin used mundus and saeculum - the world, as opposed to heaven, while Old High German used mittilgard or mittangeard for Latin mundus and saeculum. Middangeard appeared also to describe mankind, as in middangeardes weard - the guardian of mankind, in line 596 of Daniel.

An equally striking word is maegen meaning strength, power, vigor, and might. It was used by the Church to translate the Latin virtus - virtue, as in maegn ond modcraeft - virtue and intelligence, in line 408 of Elene. Other words used for virtue are duguda - virtue, from power, as in line 57 of The Panther; cyst - meaning freewill, election, the choicest, moral excellence, virtue, as in cystum, in line 106 of The Gifts of Men; and the plural of beaw - usage,
custom, habit, conduct, disposition, and in the plural, virtues, good manners, morals, as in crîstenum bēawum - christian virtues, in line 1210 of Elene. Keiser lists 343 religious terms which he considers exclusively poetical words, excluding Biblical names, kennings in general, and many derivatives. 214

The examples given in this section serve to illustrate, in a partial way only, the considerable influence of the Church on the language of the Anglo-Saxons, and how the beliefs of the new faith found expression in the everyday vocabulary of the people. It is to the credit of the high ideals and doctrine of the Church that Christianity with its solution of the problems connected with life and the hereafter had once more won over virile Teutonic tribes. And a people that could glory in the learning of Bede and Alcuin, did not lack poets to set forth the anxieties the aspirations, and the hopes imparted by the new religion. In the remains of that poetry we find mirrored the consciousness of sin and guilt, the firm trust in the powerful Redeemer, the world-weariness and melancholy yearning for a future life with its pleasures and blessings - in

short, all the important features and ideas connected with Christianity. 215

A typical illustration of the effect of the new religion on the life of the Anglo-Saxons, and the genuine concern they had for final things is the constant appearance of the after-life theme in poems which have been described as belonging to non-religious poetry, that is, poetry whose subject matter is not something related to religion. To a people who depended so much on nature for everything about them, and looked upon the world with mixed feelings of pleasure and bitterness, the reawakening of plant life in the spring when winter was past, symbolized death, resurrection and judgement. This symbol is found exemplified in The Seafarer. The description of winter, representing death, is followed by spring, portraying the resurrection of man, and Judgement Day. The emotions of the seafarer are overcome at the thought of death, resurrection and judgement, and act as an incentive to give him strength to face the life voyage ahead, and to look to his salvation when there is still time. This serves as a prologue; what follows deals with the certainty of death along with the importance and necessity of leading an exemplary

life in good deeds. This Anglo-Saxon approach to life is in no way strange to a civilization steeped in the faith and the doctrine of the Church, and it reflects clearly the effects of patristic and Latin writings upon the people. The seed which dies and by its death brings forth new life is paralleled to Christ in death and to man who will rise from the grave with a 'new' body. This was a very familiar theme with the Fathers of the Church, and was certainly in the mind of the poet of The Phoenix.

The keen interest of the Anglo-Saxons in hagiographic works is another strong factor which contributed, in no small way, to the influence of the Church doctrine and precepts on the way of life of the people. Some of the lives came from Ireland, and many more were brought back from Rome by Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop to be later copied in scriptoria for distribution to new houses. Extensive collections of saints' lives are known to have existed at

216 N. F. Blake, "The Seafarer, Lines 48-49," Notes and Queries, IX (May, 1962), pp. 163-64. The above treatment of The Seafarer has been inspired by the views expressed in this article. Patristic references are: Gregory of Tours in his De cursu stellarum expresses the theme in this way: Aequa est enim et arborum natura, quae, ut puto, ipsam resurrectionem signat, cum in hieme nudatae foliis tamquam mortui habentur, verno vero tempore ornantur foliis, decorantur floribus, pomisque aestate replentur. Gregory is following in a tradition here which goes back ultimately to I Corinthians xv. 35-38. It is found also in Origen's Contra Celsum, V. 18; Clement, the Roman's First Epistle to the Corinthians, XXIV; Tertullian's De resurrectione, XII;
that time. Ogilvy lists 46 different lives known and recorded for the period 706-735.  

The many specimens which have survived bear witness that the writing of the lives of saints became a popular form of literary endeavour in the seventh and eighth centuries. Bede mentions the lost life of the sister of Bishop Earcomwald, Abbess Aedilburgae or Ethelburga of Berecingum (Barking) in the East Saxon district; she died in 664 and the anonymous Vita Guthberti which he rewrote, one in prose and the other in verse; these scarcely could have been later than 700. The oldest life of St. Gregory the Great was written by an anonymous monk of Whitby in 713. There were lives of Wilfrid, Guthlac, Ceolfrith, Martin, Felix, Bede's History of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and many others. Any civilization interested as the Anglo-Saxons were in the deeds of sacrifice and abnegation of holy men, their contemporaries, cannot but reflect the influence of a strong faith animating

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Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechesis, XVIII, 6; and Dracontius' Carmen de deo, 621 ff. This is not an exhaustive list.
it. This was the lot of the Anglo-Saxons of the seventh and eighth centuries.

The student of Anglo-Saxon is usually amazed at the considerable amount of Biblical quotations he finds throughout Anglo-Saxon literature. This habit of the Anglo-Saxon writer to refer to the Bible is another convincing evidence of the far reaching influence of Christianity on the thinking of Anglo-Saxons who knew the Old and the New Testaments well, and were "thoroughly acquainted with the Christian religion" and its dogmas.221 The imposing and colossal chrestomathy of Biblical extracts from all Anglo-Saxon prose works, the result of painstaking efforts on the part of A. S. Cook,222 represents a useful Anglo-Saxon magnum opus of unlimited practical value in offering considerable material for the study of Anglo-Saxon semasiology, "a study which like that of English semasiology in general has been too much neglected."223

A careful examination of those Biblical extracts

222 Albert S. Cook, ed. Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers (London, 1898). After the publication of a second book of quotations this work has been known as the 1st Series.
223 Ibid., 1st Series, p. ix.
shows the tendency of Anglo-Saxon writers to vary their expressions when paraphrasing or rendering a passage although the Latin original is the same. It demonstrates also the author's range of vocabulary and synonyms for a given idea, the peculiarities of his diction, how early Anglo-Saxon evolved in relation to the language of the tenth and eleventh centuries, the extent of semantic changes, and how syntax was affected. Above all, those Biblical excerpts

224 C. E. Bale, The Syntax of the Genitive Case in the Lindisfarne Gospels (Iowa University, 1907).
M. Callaway, Jr., The Absolute Participle in Anglo-Saxon (Baltimore, 1889).
The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon (Washington, 1913).
A. S. Cook, A Glossary of the Old Northumbrian Gospels (Lindisfarne Gospels or Durham Book) (Hall, 1894).
Mattie A. Harris, A Glossary of the West-Saxon Gospels, Latin-West Saxon and West Saxon-Latin, Yale Studies in English, VI (Boston, 1899).
J. P. Kinard, A Study of Wulfstan's Homilies; Their Style and Sources (Baltimore, 1897).
are a permanent tribute to the permeating influence of the Church and the doctrine of Rome on the minds and writings of the Anglo-Saxons.

It is now widely accepted that the influence of St. Augustine of Hippo was greatly instrumental in moulding Christian culture in early mediaeval times, and was not long in taking roots in Anglo-Saxon England soon after the conversion of the country to Christianity. Among the forces responsible for imitating, shaping, and orienting the vernacular writings of the early Anglo-Saxons towards Christian concepts were, undoubtedly, two of St. Augustine's important works, Civitas Dei and De Doctrina Christiana. Christian poetry, that is, poetry whose subject matter deals with a Christian topic, was to flourish from Caedmon on and become among the most important writings of the period.

The Anglo-Saxons regarded St. Augustine's writings as second only to the Scriptures in authority, and on the

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A. S. Napier, Old English Glosses (Oxford, 1900).

same footing as the works of St. Jerome and St. Gregory
the Great among the Fathers of the Church.226 There were
76 different writings of St. Augustine known to the Anglo-
Saxons.227 According to St. Augustine, "a man speaks more
or less wisely in so far as he is more or less proficient
in Holy Scriptures,"228 a view which was probably responsi­
ble for stimulating the wide interest which developed in
Anglo-Saxon England for knowledge of the Old and the New
Testaments, sacred writings, the lives of saints, religious
poetry and writings generally characterized by a religious
flavour, such as the works of Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin
testify.

Operating over a wide range of action in literary
experiments, the language was bound to become enriched with
a host of religious terms and expressions. Furthermore,
under Augustine's theory of Christian culture, the allegory,
the fable, the paranomasia, the kenning,229 the trope, the
metaphor,230 the simile, the allusion, the parable, the

228 Augustine of Hippo, Patrologiae, Sancti Aurelii
Augustini Hipponensis episcopi, Opera Omnia, ed. J. P. Mi­
gne (Paris, 1861), De Doctrina Christiana 4, 7(5).
229 H. van der Merwe Scholtz, The Kenning in Anglo-
Saxon and Old Norse Poetry (Utrecht, 1926).
230 James Walter Rankin, "A Study of the Kennings
in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," JEGP, VIII (1909), pp. 357-422, and
JEGP, IX (January, 1910), pp. 49-84.
the symbol, are necessary instruments which must serve a Christian purpose to arrive at the truth in words, not words themselves - in verbis verum amare, non verba. Augustine encourages the use of rhetoric, but deplores rhetoric for the sake of rhetoric. According to his theory, activates the muscles of the mind, which must play a vital rôle "beyond the ordinary" in realizing the beauty of truth as the strain imposed by the 'obscurity' of the language will provide "a specific literary pleasure not of the sensibilities but of the mind." With this in mind, one looks back at Anglo-Saxon literature, discovers the origin of rhetorical figures, acquires knowledge of the use which is made of them, and is able to trace the extent of the influence of Christianity in the works, and facilitate an understanding of the effect of the new faith upon the language, thought, and style of the

Francis B. Gummere, The Anglo-Saxon Metaphor (Halle, 1881).
Blanche Colton Williams, Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon (New York, 1914).
Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 28, and 40-41.
Ibid., p. 11.
Ibid., pp. 9-11.
Anglo-Saxons.

It has been demonstrated that Anglo-Saxon literature is a composite of Germanic background, classical structure, Latin and Christian influences. Discussing Anglo-Saxon rhetoric, a scholar has compared the combined elements found in Anglo-Saxon literature to a poetic tapestry filled with greatly elaborated pictorial groups, and heavily en-crustated with superimposed ornaments contributing to make it a tapestry ... not purely Germanic but ... woven from both Germanic and classical threads and ... Germanic and classical patterns. The threads stretched up and down on the loom, the warp, may be mostly Germanic; but some at least of the cross threads, the weft or the woof, are classical. The fabric is a mixture, which in some lights appears heathen and Germanic, in others Christian and Latin.

Surely, some of the cross threads, heavily steeped in Latin Christianity, are responsible for the Christian and Latin aspect of the fabric, and remain the colours predominantly emerging from the tapestry.

The importance of Anglo-Saxon semantics and etymol-

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 109.
ology, for understanding the Anglo-Saxon language and arriving at an accurate interpretation of Anglo-Saxon literature, has been demonstrated in Chapter II. In addition, Latin and Christianity have been shown as two significant influences in the development of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary. Chapter III will investigate mood in Anglo-Saxon poetry, will examine how Anglo-Saxon poets interpreted and reacted to nature, and will inquire into the spirit of the age as a possible influence on their writings.
CHAPTER III

MOOD, NATURE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

IN

ANGLO-SAXON POETRY

The meaning of a word in a piece of literature is determined, it has been seen, by its etymological and historical sense, and its contextual background. In Anglo-Saxon literature, the meaning of a verb, more than any other word, is greatly influenced by the context in which it is used. Consequently, Chapter III will examine mood, nature, and the zeitgeist in Anglo-Saxon poetry for their contextual relation to the meaning of words.

1. Mood in Anglo-Saxon Poetry.

An important aspect of Anglo-Saxon literary tradition is the technique employed to convey a required mood or tone. This is achieved indirectly and suggestively by the enumeration of external objects from which the mood emerges, and by the handling of a highly select diction rich in fine distinctions. The description preceding the
appearance of Grendel's dam in Heorot, in lines 1251-78 of Beowulf exemplifies the case. The poet prepares the setting: Heorot has been in festivities celebrating Grendel's death, night has come, and reced — the hall, remains weardode — guarded, by unrim eorla — many warriors (thanes), sigon bā tō slēape — who (they) sank to sleep! But joy is ephemeral; sum sare angeald aefenraeste — one sorely paid for his night's rest, and foreboding is in the air; baette wrecend bā gyt lifde — that an avenger yet lived. The contrast is perfect. Peace and joy are replaced by the uneasy and qualmish atmosphere which has developed, and the audience is prepared for the mounting mood, one of consternation and terror. It is known how Grendel was horrible; the mother is no better and she is shown to be just as terrible. Using the indirect and suggestive method, the poet gives the passage, lines 1258-66, a fiendish touch by establishing the ides āglāscwif — woman monster's genesis from Cain, and relating her to the first murderer.

The above-mentioned passage is immediately followed

236 Beowulf, 11. 1237-38.
237 Ibid., 1. 1251.
238 Ibid., 11. 1251-52.
239 Ibid., 11. 1256-57.
240 Ibid., 11. 1259-60.
by Grendel's experience at the hands of Beowulf, lines 1266-76. The purpose is to suggest, by association, something dreadful to come, and to heighten the idea of fear and danger which falls like a hammer blow at the close of the passage when the mood unfolds completely and the audience is left in suspense: and his moder hā gyt / gifre ond galgmōd / gegān wold / sorhfulne sid, / sunu dēco wrecan -241 and now his mother, yet greedy and gloomy, would go a sorrowful undertaking, to avenge her son's death. The opening lines of the passage immediately following leave no doubt in the minds of the audience, and confirm the mood: cōm hā tō Heorote, / ëaer Hring-Dene / geond past saeld swāsfum -242 came she to Heorot, where the Danes slept throughout the hall. Consternation is now general, fear and terror reign supreme.

The choice of appropriate diction with subtle shades and nuances of meanings was a valuable asset to the Anglo-Saxon poet in his technique for developing the desired mood. The passage just examined, lines 1251-76, is packed with words having deep associative connotation and, placed in the context as it is, and seen in the light of the preceding pas-

241 Beowulf, ll. 1276-78.
242 Ibid., ll. 1279-80.
sage, is highly suggestive of the evil, fear and terror the poet wants to evoke.

Expressions like ob paet ende becwōm - until an end came; swylt aefter synnum - death after sins; baette wrecend ba gyt - that an avenger yet; yrmbe gemunde - remembered (her) misery; cealde streamas - cold (bitter) streams; tō eegbanan - the murderer; hē bā fāg gewāt - he then blood-stained departed; morbre gemearcod - by murder marked; wēsten warode - in the desert (waste) inhabited; hecrowearh hetelīc - the accursed foe hateful; wīges bīdan - the fight awaiting; drēame bedǽled - of joy bereft; dēapwic sēbr - the abode of death to see; mancynnes fēond - the foe of mankind; gifre ond galgmōd - greedy and gloomy; sorhfulne sīb - a sorrowful undertaking; sunu dēoc wrecan - her son's death to avenge, contribute much to impart the mood, and teem with suggestive allusions and related associations. Some of these allusions will be illustrated.

The end came, refers to the death of Grendel and to the terrible things monsters were associated with in the minds of the Danes, and by extension, the Anglo-Saxons. Death after sins, cold streams, and the desert inhabited

243 Parts quoted are from the following lines of Beowulf in order of appearance: 1254, 1255, 1256, 1259, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1264, 1265, 1267, 1275, 1275, 1276, 1277, 1278, and 1268.
meant hell, and had Biblical affiliations well known to Anglo-Saxon audiences. Ecgbanan -244 is translated by murderer, from ecg - edge (sword) and bana - slayer, that is, slayer with a sword or simply murderer, and the word is pregnant with associations. Blood-stained, morpre -245 the accursed foe, and the foe of mankind, refers directly to Grendel, and by extension to Cain and hell. Of joy bereft, gloomy, and sorrowful remind the Danes of the terror attending Heorot with Grendel's night raids. The power of the diction is strengthened by such words as goldsele - gold-hall (Heorot), unriht - unrighteousness, gūdeceare - war-care (grievous strife), āglācwif - demon (fiend), waeteregesan - water-terror, and (helle) gast -246 spirit of (hell).

In addition, there are many overtones to the passage, lines 1251-76. A case in point, the custom almost sacred with Anglo-Saxons to square a murder with a killing. The obligation of a father having to avenge the killing of his son, or a brother that of a brother, and vice versa, with almost no end to the feud, gave rise to some of the

244 Beowulf, l. 1262.
245 Ibid., l. 1264.
246 Ibid., parts quoted are from the following lines in order of appearance: 1253, 1254, 1258, 1259, 1260, and 1274.
bitterest blood-feuds in Anglo-Saxon history. When the poet followed Aristotle's law of probability and necessity and brought Grendel's mother out of her mere to avenge the killing of her son, the audience was given a development it expected and looked for.

The ability of Anglo-Saxon poets to develop mood as a third dimension from contextual use of diction is demonstrated by Storms in an instructive essay on the style of Beowulf, in which he discusses subjective and objective emotive connotation as an aspect of Anglo-Saxon literary craftsmanship. The author was apparently familiar with the works of Ogden and Richards; he adopted their choice of descriptive terminology, but not their conclusions.

The word murky, in the expression ofer myrcan mór — over the murky moor, in Beowulf line 1405, describing the approach to Grendel's mere, is typical of the adventitious


meaning Anglo-Saxon words take on in the hands of poets. Mirce is translated by murk or murky. The following breakdown clarifies the meaning of mirce:

adj. I. dark, murky: Ba mircan geseaft (hell), .... Gang ofer myrcan mör - her course o'er the dark moor ....
II. in a metaphorical sense (of sin, crime, etc.) dark, black, evil:
Mirce maegencraeft män-womma gehwone - dark power, each sinful stain ....
Beäh ðù drype bolige, myrce mändæde ....
Leahtras mirce mänslaga - crimes, black deeds of wickedness .... Mircast mänweorca - blackest of crimes ....
(Havel. mirke; Chauc. Piers P. merke; Prompt. Parv. myrke obscurus, tenebrus; O.Sax. mirk; Dan. Swed. mörk.) ....
n. Darkness: - Se de hié of dam mirce (the fiery furnace) generede .... Myrce (or adv?) gescryred shrouded with darkness .... (Piers P. men þat in merke sitten; Scot. mirk; Icel. myrkr; n. darkness; mörkvi darkness, thick fog; Dan. mørke. 250

The meaning of mirce is clear enough, but no mention is made of its origin and association with the darkness, that is, the lack of light, that accompanies an eclipse. 251

The average Anglo-Saxon was a great admirer of the wonders of nature, which he associated with the supernatural. Some, he longed for, like spring; others, he dreaded. The eclipse with its darkening clouds was an omen of evil and struck him with terror and consternation. He did not understand

natural phenomena, but knitted about them a rich vocabulary and unique expressions, denoting his wonder and remaining, at best, a tangible way of showing his belief in them. Murk or murky in modern English means dark, darkness, obscure, or heavy darkness; in Anglo-Saxon it could take on an added sense depending on the context and the situation in which it occurred.

It has been seen that the figurative sense of murk is monstrously or diabolically wicked; this is the contextual emotional connotation implied in the use of it, in line 1405 of Beowulf, the adscititious meaning being arrived at by way of association. Storms calls it "emotional coloring" which can be objective or subjective. The objective emotional meaning is stated to be:

the emotive sense ... directly conveyed and ... always present with the word. Happy, cheerful, sad, grievous, fearful, horrible, angry, etc., have as reference a particular emotion; they have an objective coloring. A word like dark on the other hand has no

252 Ibid., p. 174.
253 Ibid., p. 174.
objective, no permanent and inherent emotional coloring, but it may assume an emotional connotation by the context or the situation in which it occurs. The so-called figurative meaning is frequently characterized by an added emotional sense; dark prospects, dark looks, the powers of darkness, etc. In many instances both an objective referential sense and an emotive sense may be present and the borderline is often difficult to draw. 254

The subjective emotional colouring is the meaning a word takes from an emotional tone or from the contextual situation. "The intensity of the emotive element is usually subjective. 'Darling' has an objective emotional quality, but it has also a wide subjective range, dependent on the person who uses it, the tone of the speaker, the situation that evokes it, etc. An incongruous situation, or an incongruous tone, may even change the objective quality, as happens for instance, when it is applied in sarcasm." 255

The denotation of moor probably meant originally, dead or barren land, and its connotation evolved in time to designate an unenclosed and waste ground; 256 this is the objective emotional meaning. The use of moor, in line 1405 of

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255 Ibid., p. 174.
Beowulf, has also a subjective emotional colouring from the contextual arrangement. To the idea of moor the poet adds that of gloom and terror through his choice of murky used with a number of associations, namely, the evil doings of a monster, Grendel's dam, the savage and brutal death of Aeschere, and the fear of what may happen to Beowulf's expedition. This contributes to impart an atmosphere of consternation reminiscent of the extreme dread which seized the people upon witnessing an eclipse.

Is barren or dead land, in a particular atmosphere, frightening? It can be! Experience in the jungle of Mozambique reveals that at the sight of a hyena crossing a stretch of barren land, in mid-day-swelltering weather of sub-equatorial Africa, to enter a thicket of scorched vegetation, sun-baked earth, decayed and fallen trees, one slowly feels the air no longer reaching the lungs, is suddenly seized with dread and loneliness, and with the thought that he should not have ventured there! Dark and menacing skies would complete the picture and convey the atmosphere. This is the mood the poet developed, in line 1405 of Beowulf, through the use of ofer myrcan mœr - over the murky moor.

Mood in Anglo-Saxon poetry is also developed through the "method of indirection and suggestions." It is not

257 Walter Morris Hart, "Ballad and Epic A Study
done through one word, but the atmosphere is gradually built up through the enumeration of events, circumstances, causes, consequences, and external objects to which the mood is transferred and from which it unfolds. A good example is found in lines 250-96 of Judith, in the passage describing Judith's incredible feat, the Hebrews' joys and regain of heart, the uneasiness of the Assyrians seeking to reach their leader Holofernes, whom they believe to be in his tent with Judith, and the stark confusion that followed. The passage exhibits the art of the poet through his ability to convey a mood of distress, consternation, fear, even pity among the Assyrians, and the utter deceit and ensuing chaos which climax the discovery of their slain captain.

Nervousness dominates the sight about the tent of Holofernes. No soldier dares disturb the leader, although it has become imperative that someone should with the Hebrews advancing upon them. Who will be brave enough to enter the tent to warn the leader? Something must be done! The poet relates that beornas stodon - the warriors stood, ymbre hyra peodnes tīaef - around their prince's tent.

in the Development of the Narrative Art," Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, Vol. XI (Boston, 1907)
bearle gebylde - very excited, sworcendferhœ - 258 sad at heart. Hi da somod ealle - they then all together, ongun-non cohhetan - began to cough (that is, to make noise to draw attention), cirman hlude - to cry out loudly, ond gristbitian - and to gnash their teeth, göde orfesorme - of good destitute, id toðon torn poligende - 259 showing their anger (with teeth in grief) suffering.

From line 273 the reader learns that the eorlas - earls, did not succeed in their efforts to awake the chief, until finally, someone gathered enough 'courage' to venture inside the tent only to discover his goldgifan -gold-giver, lifes belidenne - 260 of life deprived. Immediately, he gefeoll freorig to foldan - fell cold to the ground, hreoh on mode - mad (furious) in mind, ongan his feax teran - began to tear (off) his hair, ond his hraegl somod - 261 and his armour as well. Finally, struck with fear he informed his companions of the impending catastrophe. Seized with panic and fright, the warriors threw down their weapons, took flight, but were destroyed in death at the hands of

259 Ibid., lines 269-72, pp. 30-31.
260 Ibid., lines 279-80, p. 31.
261 Ibid., lines 280-82, p. 31.
the Hebrews.

It should be kept in mind that the poet has already told the reader of the death of Holofernes, in lines 153-175, before he relates how the Assyrians discovered it, and how they reacted to it, in lines 278-91. The reader, in fact, has already read through lines 186-246 how the Hebrews, after learning of the fate of Holofernes, prepared for battle under the leadership and encouragement of Judith, gave chase immediately after to the Assyrians, engaged them in battle and defeated them. However, before the final battle, which will see the complete destruction of the enemy, the poet chooses to narrate how the Assyrians sought Holofernes, lines 256-77, how they discovered him, lines 278-89, and what effect his death had on them, lines 289-296. All this time the reader is aware of the death of Holofernes, the subsequent disorderly retreat and rout of Assyrians. The poet shows his skill in being able to develop the desired mood after the event has been made known before it actually happens.

The passage in lines 2232-70 of Beowulf, describing the plight of the owner of the hoard and the last survivor of his family, contains another excellent example of how mood is developed indirectly from the enumeration of external objects. So an ða gēn boda duguðe, se ðæer længest
The mood reaches a climax when the poet recalls:

262 Beowulf, lines 2237-38.
263 Ibid., line 2232.
264 Ibid. In order of appearance are lines: 2245, 2246, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2252, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2260, and 2261.
Naes hearpan wyn,
ne god hafoc
geond sael wingsed, ne se swifta meareh
burhstede beateo. Beajocwealm hafa ford onsended:

The poet could not have brought back to memory anything more powerful, dearer to the hearts of the Anglo-Saxons, that could have pleased them so much, that they could understand so well and, at the same time, that could leave them so sad, saudades - sweet sorrows as the Portuguese would say, as the mention, by allusion, of the comitatus spirit. It was throwing wide open the doors of their imaginations, to allow a flow of the sweetest memories: of cherished fellowship, loyalty and devotion to one's lord and kinsmen, joys of the meadhall, gift receiving, boasting, singing by scops, and recital by gleemen of noble deeds and achievements of valor. Such were the good days in the life of the Anglo-Saxons, but they had passed, and sadness is all that remains now!

The poet knew precisely what cord to touch to bring out the desired music. He did that most impressively and artistically in describing the joy of the last survivor at the sight of his treasures, gi)mormöd gihoo, mænde ën

Beowulf, lines 2262-66: There is no joy of harp, / no mirth of the glæe-wood (harp), / no good falcon / flies through the hall, / nor the swift steed / the castle court tramps. / Baleful death has / many living beings / sent forth.
sad of mind his sorrows complained of one after all, that is, sad of mind, he complained of his sorrows one after the other, feeling, as Deor did, tender regrets and longing for the past he had known and loved so dearly. Memories of yesterday brought back the sweet sound of the harp, the swift swish of the falcon's flight breaking the air overhead, the mead-heavy staccato laughter across the hall, the unsteady tramping of impatient steed in the courtyard, the muffled jingling of coats of mail approaching, and the deaden din of spears, swords and helmets being pulled off and lined against the wall for an emergency. Death, he reflects, has silenced it all, and a door has forever been closed over it all! Such were the sad thoughts of the last survivor of the last days when the end was near and heart 267 until death's surge seized (touched) him at heart.


Anglo-Saxon poets are often accused of having been unable to react to certain things in nature. This is in-

266 Beowulf, lines 2267-68.
267 Ibid., lines 2269-70.
interpreted the result of shortcomings, which are usually explained in terms of obtuseness, inability to be attracted or impressed by certain phenomena, dulness of the eyes and, generally, a lack of aesthetic appreciation, poetic feeling, and subtlety. Such an appraisal, of the Anglo-Saxons' inability to react to certain things in reality, is erroneous, and is tantamount to an acknowledgement that the poet and the forces that rouse him to activity are part of a mechanical or mathematical process. This is not the case, and the real reason why Anglo-Saxon poets interpreted nature as they did lies in another direction. Why did Shakespeare choose drama in preference to other genres? Why did Chaucer not write dramas? Why did the Restoration and early 18th Century writers prefer satire? Why does a poet write about certain topics in preference to others? The answer to these questions is found in the nature and function of the poetic process, and in the writer's particular general experience which is often conditioned, among other things, by the conventions of the time and the spirit of the age.

A close examination of Anglo-Saxon poetic records reveals that poets responded persistently to some aspects

of nature, and less frequently to sunsets, colours in the modern sense, the moon, the stars, the scent of flowers, spring, summer and extreme heat, fruits and flowers, odours, hills and mountains, and vegetation in general. The display of colours peculiar to sunsets does not seem to have been recorded. Reference to the beauty of the departing day is found in general terms only and in the occasional poem, for example, in lines 68-71 of The Order of the World, lines 1247-48 of Andreas, and lines 136-38 of Genesis. Colour, in relation to sunset is dull, and describes the incoming darkness in line 1306 of Andreas: brunwarm - dusky, from bruman - to become brown; lines 1279-80 of Guthlac: swearc ... won under wolcnun - became dark, from sweorcan - to become dark, and wan under the clouds.

Only one reference is made to sunset in The Phoenix where the sun is described in lines 141-42: sunne on sud- rodor / saeged weorpe - the sun in the southern sky is made to sink, from saegan - to cause to sink. In lines 2449-51 of Genesis, one finds a reference to the evening glow departing: ford gewat / aefencinapa com aefter niht / on last daege - forth went (disappeared) the evening glow then came night on the track of day.

Mona - the moon is mentioned thirteen times without any description attached to it. The stars are referred to as tungol - a luminary, as in line 933 of Christ, and as steorra - star used by itself four times and occasionally to describe the sun or the moon.

Allusions to the scent of flowers are in general terms wanting in specific details. Such is the case of lines 1272-74 of Guthlac: him of mude cwom / swecca sweetost, / swyle on sumeres tid / stinca on stowum - from his mouth came the sweetest smells, such as in summer time places exhale; of line 356 of Christ and Satan: blotman stences - the smell of flowers; and of lines 44-47 of The Panther: stenc ... wyrta blostmum - smell of plant blossoms.

Two flowers only, the lily and the rose, are mentioned by name. In lines 24-27 of Riddle 41, the enigma is said to be stronger in fragrance bonne ricles obbe rose than the incense or the rose, and more delicate than be li-

271 Ibid., pp. 459-60.
272 Ibid., p. 442.
273 Ibid., p. 442.
lie - the lily. Other references to flowers are general. The delight at the sight of blossoms is expressed in The Riming Poem, line 4: blissa bleoun, blotwma hlwum - the joy of colours, the hues of blossoms. Flowers are mentioned several times in The Phoenix but always in a general way, as in lines 71-75 where they are described a holy ornaments of the wood and fair (beauty of the trees) blossoms.

Fruits are rarely mentioned and, when they are alluded to, the reference is made in general terms. They are acknowledged as the blessings of autumn prosaically in The Phoenix. The apple appears several times in religious poems in relation to Adam and Eve.²⁷⁴

There are few references to spring and summer in the Anglo-Saxon poetic records, and those are mentioned in a conventional way with little colour. In Beowulf, spring is described: wuldor-torhtan weder -²⁷⁵ gloriously bright weather. Hrim - frost is associated with spring in lines 35-36 of Menologium: hrim gehyrstan - with frost covered (adorned, from gehyrstan); in line 6 of Maxims II; and is referred as lencten hrimigost - spring is the frostiest of seasons, in the Gnomic Verses. References to sumor - summer are also deprived of any colour. The extreme heat of

²⁷⁵ Beowulf, line 1136.
summer, referred as the burning of the sun, is rare outside The Phoenix, and Christ. Summer is described in lines 88-90 of Menologium: bringe / sigelbeorhte dagas ... / wearme gewyderu - bringing sunbright days, and warm weather; and in lines 209-10 of The Phoenix: on sumeres tid, sunne halost - in summer time, the hottest sun.

Odours are not mentioned often in Anglo-Saxon poetry; when they are, scent is used to describe them. Mountains and hills, likewise, are referred to sparingly and always with the commonplace description of green, high, and steep. A passage of The Phoenix, lines 21-26, echoes a note of fear.

Apart from the references to flowers and fruits mentioned earlier, vegetation is usually represented by the generic term wyrt - plant, and wudu - wood. For example, one finds in lines 10-12 of Riddle 5: laececynn - physicians mid wyrtum wunde gehaelde - with plants heal wounds. With the exception of brerum - briars, mentioned in line 31 of The Wife's Lament, and dorn - thorn (thistle), in line 7 of The Rune Poem, other references to plants are limited to corn, as a seed, in The Phoenix, lines 252-53: burh cornes

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277 Ibid., p. 441.
278 Ibid., p. 454.
279 Ibid., p. 443.
gecynd, / be aer claene bid / saed onsawen - through (by virtue of) the nature of corn (grain), which is at first sown as pure (clean) seed; in line 25 of The Rune Poem: hwitust corna - whitest of corns (seeds); and graes - grass appears in some passages, as in line 1881 of Beowulf: graesmoldan - greensward.

If the Anglo-Saxon poetic records lack in descriptions of certain things in nature, the alleged deficiency is greatly compensated by details given about winter, trees, storms, the sea, the wind, hail, frost, snow, ice, rain, mist, moors and fens, the sun, eclipses, night, the coming of day, and clouds. A list of poems with specific line references could be given, but it is too long for inclusion here. Furthermore, the article referred to in footnote 280 gives a general idea of the extent to which Anglo-Saxon poets went in their treatment of certain aspects of nature. What seems more to the point is an endeavour to discover, in the light of what is known about certain things of the Anglo-Saxon period, some of the reasons why poets wrote about nature as they did.

It should always be remembered that many Anglo-Saxon works were lost. If the corpus of works extant were larger,
it is possible that some works might reveal songs to the morning, to spring, to the beauties of summer, sunsets, and the treatment of other subjects in nature. It is known from available works that the interest of Anglo-Saxon poets in nature was focused on certain objects and particular aspects of nature. It has been pointed out that the Anglo-Saxon people admired certain 'mysteries' in nature, and were attracted to them without having any knowledge of what caused them. The manifestations of those phenomena filled them with awe or terror. They talked about them, discussed them, coined expressions to describe them, just as the present civilization discusses cancer, hurricanes, fall-out shelters, and orbiting the earth in manned satellites.

Men of the twentieth century understand the workings of nature which produce mist, wind, hail, frost, snow, ice, storms, clouds, and eclipses; the Anglo-Saxons did not. What may appear very childish to this generation was replete of secrets and riddles to the Anglo-Saxons. In addition, most of those phenomena brought them sufferings. Winter, for example, was the worst season of the year with its long bitter nights of darkness. The North Sea was a challenge at all times, the route of invaders they had once followed, and the majestic and mad giant which separated them from the Continent. Moors and fens were uninviting in their appearance and full of dangers in the eyes of the onlookers.
Today, the average man on this hemisphere lives in a modern world of luxury in comparison to the average Anglo-Saxon. Few there are who suffer year after year from the inclemency of nature; few Anglo-Saxons were ever protected against raw nature. It is not surprising, then, that their reactions were in most vehement terms. Why? The answer rests in the fact that the Anglo-Saxons reacted more spontaneously and vividly to what touched them most sensibly. They used personification for their weapons, ships, and war gear, that is, things intimately close to them, but feeling and emotion were not generally attributed to nature in describing certain objects, and there is hardly any trace of pathetic fallacy in their approach to nature-observation.

The Anglo-Saxons' view of nature was realistic or physical, not sentimental or anthropomorphic. As one writer described it, nature "n'inspire le poète qu'autant qu'il en a l'expérience directe." In other words, not a


283 Emile Pons, Le Thème et le Sentiment de la Nature dans la poésie anglo-saxonne (Strasbourg, 1925), Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, Fascicule 25, p. 156: nature inspires the poet only in as much as he has experienced it directly, that is, personally.
sentimental reaction, but one that is a direct response to physical experience. The hardships the Anglo-Saxons faced were a challenge to their endurance, and a claim on their initiative and ability to overcome them. In keeping with the custom of the age, they glorified in the success achieved by extolling the deeds performed, and praised the virtues exhibited. Anglo-Saxon poetic records abound in such eulogies: The Seafarer, Beowulf, The Wanderer, The Battle of Maldon, The Menologium, Deor, The Wife's Lament, and in another field, but in keeping with the same approach to nature, Judith, Daniel, Andreas, and Guthlac, to mention a few only.

It is sincerely believed that Anglo-Saxon poets, who could master passages as those mentioned from The Phoenix, and The Seafarer, or could describe ice, as it is done in lines 29-31 of The Rune Poem: I (is) byþ oferceald, unge- metum slidor, / glisnap glæshluttur, gimmer gelicust, / flor forste geworwht, faeger ansynæ - ice is excessively cold, immeasurably slippery, glistens as transparent glass, like precious stones, a floor by frost wrought, a joyful sight, could not be obdurate to the sensible manifestations of nature or indifferent to them, and fail to admire glorious sunsets and other beauties of nature. That the light of the ice attracted the Anglo-Saxon poet more than another aspect
of it, or that he preferred to write about the hardships of life at sea instead of the grandeur of the Milky Way, must not be charged against him as shortcomings. A critic of Anglo-Saxon writings should always remember that one sees because and as others have seen. There is still much truth in the old saying that we see that which we have eyes to see; but we have eyes to see that which we have been taught to see, and largely that which others have seen.\(^{284}\)

Anglo-Saxon poets, as it has been mentioned, reacted to things in nature close to them, always the result of a priori experience. It is now stated that their attitude towards nature, that is, their feeling for nature, took a form already modern and a very rare thing, if at all existing, at that time in France and Germany.\(^{285}\) Reasons for the Anglo-Saxon poets' interpretation of nature appear now, in the twentieth century, far removed from the works they produced. The critic who fails to turn to Anglo-Saxon civilization to discover what spirit animated the age, and neglects to familiarize himself with the forces that likely influenced the writer, will fall short of a correct appraisal of the works examined. One goes to literature to discover something unrevealed until then about the author.


\(^{285}\) Ibid., pp. 439-41.
and common to all men. Before this is possible, it becomes sometimes necessary to investigate the circumstances under which a work was produced, and the conditions attending at the time, remembering that the more remote in time the work is, the greater the difficulties. It must be emphasized, however, that the influences which may have affected a writer do not explain the nature of literature, although they contributed to the making of it, but may help to understand it.

In studying Anglo-Saxon literature, it is important and relevant to view it in the light of the Christian writers' frame of mind, which was no longer under the influence of the pagan myth, but was animated by a rationalism inherited from a recent Christianity, alive, dynamic, realistic and contemplative. It was seen that the importance of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon thinking and writing was tremendous particularly in the seventh and eighth centuries. The critic must never lose sight of this when studying the literature produced in that period. Emil Pons, whose work has already been mentioned, has made a valuable contribution to Anglo-Saxon studies through his investigation of nature.

Marcotte, The God Within, p. 33; "Consequently, the 'part' of Self which the maker of literature expresses in his work is precisely that 'part' which he cannot know, even himself, in any other way, and, at the same time, it is a 'part' of that 'part' of himself which he shares with every other man."
in Anglo-Saxon poetry. One should remember, he says, that the soul of the Anglo-Saxon

\[\text{a reçu trop fortement l'enpreinte du christianisme pour revenir aux joies bruyantes et vives, aux impulsions irrésistibles, aux insouciances et aux ravissements d'antan; elle a appris à s'exprimer d'une autre voix ... par la nature du 'Charme' le sujet s'élève, comme dans l'incantation contre une terre inféconde, et aussitôt les vers se christianisent avec une aisance surprenante ... parce qu'à la multiplicité des bons ou mauvais génies se substitue plus facilement, dans son unité, l'idée de Dieu ou de la Providence. ... de ces survivances païennes au milieu d'œuvres chrétiennes, telles que la description des tourments de l'enfer, dans le Christ, au moyen d'images ou de conceptions païennes (serpents, torture du froid) ... nous observons que ces survivances sont dans la forme et non dans le sentiment...} \] 

Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, pp. 59, 80, and 81: The soul has received too strongly the imprint of Christianity to return to the turbulent and riotous (dissolute) joys of life, to irresistible impulses, to freedom from care, and ravishing delights of yester years; it (the soul) has learned to speak with another voice .... by nature of the 'Charm' the topic becomes dignified, as in the incantation against a barren land, and immediately the verses become Christianized with a surprising ease ... because to the multiplicity of the good and bad spirits is substituted more easily, in its unity, the idea of God or Providence. ... of those pagan beliefs in the midst of Christian works, such as the descriptions of hell, in Christ, by means of pagan images or concepts (serpents, torture through cold) ... we note that those survivals (customs) exist in form and not in sentiment (feeling).
The new Christian faith was imbued with a keen sense of death, no longer wrapped in myth, but seen through a Christian rationalism which appears everywhere in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and is inseparable from Christianity. This may explain in part why poets turned to the sea to give vent to their poetic feelings, painting it, as they did, in all its glory and terror, in powerful alliterative verses which have remained to this day among the best descriptions of the sea in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The sea was probably that which they fancied most, because it was more alive than anything they had experienced in nature; that which they admired most, because they knew it better than anything else in life; that which commanded their respect most, because danger and death lurked more there than anywhere else; and finally, that which attracted them most, because it was more mysterious than anything they knew and, at the same time, it remained the greatest challenge, for beyond it lay eternal myth.

The sea in Anglo-Saxon poetry had priority over many subjects, and to the Anglo-Saxon poet, nature meant

presque uniquement la mer, la mer ou ses alentours tels que les sombres falaises, les promontoires escarpés dépeints par Beowulf ou les lacs, les

288 Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, p. 156.
etangs qui lui ressemblent ou la rappellent, la mer sous tous ses aspects, la mer propice et riante, mais beaucoup plus la mer furieuse ou glacial, menaçant et torturant l'homme et cependant toujours aimée.

The sea storm topic was paramount in the poet's imagination, and he returned to paint it constantly because

c'est dans ces descriptions de tempête que se déployait le mieux sa force. La mer est la grande inspiratrice, non seulement parce qu'elle répond mieux que tout autre aux secrètes et primitives aspirations des Anglo-Saxons, à leur passion ancestrale pour la lutte et les dangers.

The physical joy of the conquest of the sea shown by the Anglo-Saxons was neither primitive nor pagan. Truly human and permanent, it was second only to another sentiment equally dear to their hearts and which they cherished even more, a deep feeling for the terror of the sea. Under the influence of Christian thought they gave precedence to it as a literary theme.

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289 Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, p. 98: Nature, in Anglo-Saxon poetry, is particularly and almost solely the sea, the sea or its surroundings such as the dark cliffs, the steep headlands described by Beowulf or the lakes and pools which resemble it or recall it to mind, the sea under all its aspects, the sea auspicious and smiling, but much more the enraged and frigid sea, menacing and torturing man, and yet always cherished.

290 Ibid., p. 99: it is those sea storm descriptions which best displayed his skill. The sea is the great inspiring force, not only because it is the most familiar and best known sight, but also because, better than any other, it satisfies the hidden and primitive yearnings of the Anglo-
Seen in this light, the critic is in a better position to recognize three important influences underlying most Anglo-Saxon poetry: 1) a deep Christian feeling about death and a propensity for probing the mysterious nature of it; 2) a realism, based on an active and genuine contact, free from the sensual and steeped in the idealization of every experience; 3) the appearance of some of the effects of the pagan myth, no longer primitive and savage but much faded and transformed through rationalism influenced by Christianity. These neo-pagan effects are manifested principally as an expression of passionate love in domestic life, of devotion to the comitatus spirit in the lord-and-thane relations, of longing for heroism through war and danger, of delight in the magic of runes, charms, and heirlooms, and of the use of certain forms of language as the riddle. Almost every poem in Anglo-Saxon literature can be shown to come within one of the three influences.

A more detailed explanation is needed about the spirit of idealization exhibited by the Anglo-Saxons in Saxons for their ancestral passion for struggle and dangers.

291 Ibid., p. 99.
292 Ibid., pp. 62-93.
their contacts with life, and which they so predominantly reflected in their poetry. Every experience was idealized, the result, no doubt, of a soul thoroughly imbued with Christian principles. This attitude acted as a purifying agent in the life of the Anglo-Saxons elevating their approach to nature and interpretation of what attracted them in life to an intellectual and spiritual level, thereby eliminating the mere satisfaction of the senses which, otherwise, could go uncontrolled and degenerate into voluptuous appetites. Thus, love having been idealized, there are no poems dealing with the physical aspects merely of lover-and-maid relations as are found in modern poetry. Woman is mentioned occasionally, and she appears as the "noble, honored spouse, chaste and dignified. She is her husband's best and dearest friend, bone of his bone." This reticence did not come, in any way, from a cold heart. The Anglo-Saxons were capable, on the contrary, of the noblest and tenderest love feelings, as exemplified in The Wife's Lament, and The Husband's Message. To some modern critics this mode of expression of sentiments of love is antiquated; this is simply because the world today is not accustomed to see love interpreted in that sense and described in the delicate and spiritual nuances the heart of the Anglo-Saxon,

purified through a new Christianity, could express.

Taine was probably under the influence of Barbe-Bleue when he so erroneously wrote that the Saxon poets represented warfare "as a murderous fury, as a blind madness which shook flesh and blood, and awakened the instincts of the beasts of prey." 295 Ironically, as this may be, no such description exists in Anglo-Saxon literature. As a matter of fact, war was heroism to the Anglo-Saxons, not slaughter. War was highly idealized, as the accounts given in some passages of Anglo-Saxon poetry attest, as in Beowulf. Poets stress in great detail the preparations before battle scenes, and delve at length into the causes and consequences of the conflict. The physical aspect of fighting, slaughter, wounds, and the death of the hero are mentioned usually in brief generalities, leaving the rest to the imagination. Even the harsh sounds of war and grief were idealized into songs. 296

The idealization of the comitatus spirit resulted in a spiritual affinity reminiscent of the tender love of Christ for his apostles, and the strong affection of the disciples for their Master and their holy attachment to Him.


In Anglo-Saxon life, the love of man and woman was superseded by the love of lord and retainers, and became one of the noblest and most sacred conceptions in Anglo-Saxon life, so well expressed in The Wanderer, and The Battle of Maldon. A fine example is also given in Beowulf of the devotion of the followers for their lord: Beowulf for Hygelac, Wiglaf for Beowulf; in the care, protection, and favours dispensed by the lord to his followers; and the lord's concern for the well-being of this thanes or retainers: Hrothgar for his people and Aeschere, Beowulf for his people.

Drinking in the meadhall was closely linked to the comitatus spirit and, likewise, was idealized. Drinking mead was not mere sensual pleasure, but part of a ritual which played an important rôle in the retainer's life as the supreme occasion for recounting his exploits of heroism and for boasting. Their boasts, to perform deeds of valour, were not mere words thrown to the wind to impress, but sprang from noble hearts who would fight to the last rather than abandon their lord and companions. How difficult it is to understand this today when lip service is the common practice!

Etiquette occupied a prominent place in Anglo-Saxon life and came under idealization. In Beowulf, Hrothgar's

queen, Wealhþeow, offers the drinking cup to Beowulf as a good hostess would normally do; Wulfgar, official of the court of Hrothgar, knew the etiquette of high society. There are many other references in the poem to court and warrior life. With idealization permeating Anglo-Saxon life and bringing out noble sentiments from ordinary daily activities, subjects treated in Anglo-Saxon poetry are usually in elevated terms free from vulgar expressions, and "nothing gross appears. Every person and object is exalted almost to a stage of perfection, or is dismissed from sight and mention as completely bad."  

3. The Spirit of the Anglo-Saxon Age.

It cannot be stressed too often that Anglo-Saxon literature, like all others, can best be understood through a knowledge of the period in which the works were produced. Writing about Latin themes in Anglo-Saxon poetry, James Cross expressed this opinion in clear terms stressing that the critic of mediaeval literature faces difficulties caused by the passing of

298 Beowulf, line 359.
time between the creation of that literature and his reading of it. Symbols can fade so quickly, allusions pass with the society which knew them, and the logical connections of one age can become incomprehensible to a later time. Thus, knowledge of appropriate modes of behaviour, patterns of thought, and ways of expression is an obvious adjunct to the criticism of Old English poetry. A critic should be prepared to understand the medieval attitude, while yet remembering that the knowledge which he gains is merely of the age, and that it may not always be applied to a poem under review.

Certain modes of behaviour of the Anglo-Saxons, influences to which they responded, attitudes towards certain things in life, patterns of thought and expressions have been discussed and shown to belong to the life of the Anglo-Saxons. A word, in general, will now be said about the spirit that animated the Anglo-Saxons of the seventh and eighth centuries, the age that produced Beowulf, is reflected in it, and with which this paper is mostly concerned.

It is known from Bede's Ecclesiastical History and

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300 Cross, Latin Themes in Old English, p. 1.

301 Morin, Beowulf: A Christian Poem. The spirit of the Anglo-Saxon age was discussed at length in pages 81 to 102, with special emphasis on the epic nature of Beowulf, learning, manuscript illuminations, and the great missionary activities carried from Anglo-Saxon England to the Continent.
from the works of writers of the twentieth century that
the age was unique in intellectual enlightenment and achievements, and an age that produced some of the greatest names
of the Middle Ages. Among the men responsible for the
spreading of a strong Christianity on the Island were St.
Augustine of Thanet, Bishops Justus of London, Paulinus of
Some of the illustrious scholars who endowed the period
with their knowledge were Theodore of Tarsus, Hadrian,
Aldhelm, Egbert, and Alcuin. There were men, like Benedict

302 Some of the works which treat the subject are:
Bonser, The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon
England.
Brodeur, The Art of Beowulf.
R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, The Sutton Hoo Ship
Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind.
Eleanor Shipley Dukett, Alcuin Friend of Char-
lemagne (New York, 1951).
Gareth W. Dunleavy, Colum's Other Island
(Madison, 1960).
Gerald Ellard, Master Alcuin, Liturgist (Chi-
cago, 1956).
Ritchie Girvan, Beowulf and the Seventh Century
John Godfrey, The Church in Anglo-Saxon England
F. E. Harmer, Anglo-Saxon Writs (Manchester,
1952).
R. H. Hodgkin, A History of the Anglo-Saxons
Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry Augustine's Influence
on Old English Poetry.
Kenneth Jackson, Peter Hunter Blair, Bertram
Colgrave, Bruce Dickins, Joan and Harold Taylor, Christopher
Kendrick, Codex Lindisfarneensis.
Biscop, keenly interested in the collecting of European works of arts, who arranged the coming of craftsmen from Europe, and gathered and set up imposing libraries in the spirit of Cassiodorus. There were writers like Bede who illuminated the period with their works.

It was the golden age of the conversions with missionaries like Wilfrid and Willibrord, Boniface and Willibrord. Holy men like Cuthbert, and hermits and martyrs gave the period the name of - Age of English Saints. Outstanding clergymen continued the work of Augustine: Mildred of Worcester, Daniel of Webster, Torhthelm of Leicester.

Morin, Beowulf, A Christian Poem.
L. Elizabeth Martin-Clarke, Culture in Early Anglo-Saxon England (Baltimore, 1947).
Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers.
H. V. Routh, God, Man, and Epic Poetry (Cambridge, 1927).

... ........, The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period (Oxford, 1955).

........., Audience of Beowulf.
........., Changing Currents.

Hodgkin, History of the Anglo-Saxons, pp. 340-43

Chambers, Man’s Unconquerable Mind, p. 54.
and Pecthelm of Whithorn. Monastery schools at York, Canterbury, Jarrow, and at other places became famous in Europe. Scriptoria of the reputation of Lindisfarne produced works, such as The Lindisfarne Gospels, a manuscript which has remained to this day among the greatest achievements in manuscript illuminations. The manuscript was wrought in letters of gold and silver on purple parchment, and was encased in gold and silver cases set in precious stones. Aristocrats made history as well. Among the most prominent were Kings Aethilwald or Aethelbald and Offa of Mercia, Ceolwulf and Aldfrid of Northumbria, and Oswin of Deira. Altogether, it was an outstanding period in intellectual, social, religious, and artistic attainments which saw

a new heaven and a new earth ... a new language, a new writing ... books and an education based on books. It opened to them the literature of Rome, and a civilization ... from all the Mediterranean world .... What was impossible to a Christian people when old and young had their visions, and when signs and wonders were reported from every quarter? Even the relics of native saints were ... as efficacious as those ... from Rome. And the

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305 Routh, God, Man, and Epic Poetry, p. 84.
other miracles - the stone churches, Aldhelm's Latin style, Bede's Ecclesiastical History, the art of the Lindisfarne Gospels, and of the sculptured crosses - are not these enough to demonstrate that the Anglo-Saxons ... were as much alive and as gifted as the Elizabethans. 306

No single incident could develop into wider and far reaching effects, do more good to Anglo-Saxon studies in general, and clear the air of the whole background of Beowulf in contributing to the reassessment and enlightenment of the poem, than the discovery in 1939 at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, East Anglia, of a ship cenotaph from the third quarter of the seventh century. A treasure, the richest yield ever given up by British soil, 307 was discovered in a burial chamber amidships, and was conjecturally valued at some half a million pounds, 308 approximately one million and a half dollars. Historically, this discovery had the salutary effect of eliminating, in one majestic stroke, the unfounded and false beliefs that Anglo-Saxon England belonged to "a dark age," and its civilization was the product of a "universal and slovenly individualism, without

307 Bruce-Mitford, Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, p. 11.
restraint, without discipline, without education, and without effectual contact with Continental civilization."

Only an advanced and refined civilization could have developed an atmosphere beneficial to the production of poems of the calibre of Beowulf, Andreas, Guthlac, Christ, Judith, Elene, and favourable to the type of Latin prose writings left by Aldhelm and Bede. It is not surprising, therefore, that the same civilization witnessed the collection of works of art of the value and wealth found in the Sutton grave treasure, "of a magnificence unequaled in Western Europe," considered to be "the greatest gift ever received by the British Museum from a living person," and "one of the most remarkable and splendid" donations ever made to the British national archaeological collections.

The items discovered at Sutton Hoo include a sword with golden pommel and hilt encrusted with garnets. A

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311 Ibid., p. 116. The treasure was declared not to be "treasure trove" at a coroner's inquest, and became the property of the finder, Mrs. E. M. Pretty on whose estate it was discovered. She then presented it to the British Museum.
312 Bruce-Mitford, Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, p. 3.
large shield of Swedish workmanship is considered to be of
great age and of the type mentioned in Beowulf. It is made
of iron and gilt-bronze, with gold leaf and wood, and orna­
mental figures showing a bird of prey, a dragon, a human
face, and twelve animal heads. There is a great ceremonial
whetstone with four carved faces and two carved lobed knobs
surmounted by bronze saucers, one at each end, and held in
place by bronze ribs; and a royal iron standard mounted
with a bronze stag with spreading antlers reminds one of
Heorot in Beowulf. From Alexandria in origin, there is a
heavy bronze bowl with drop handles and a base ring on which
are engraved four animals: a camel, a donkey, a lion, and a
large feline. A beautiful hanging-bowl, identified to be
of Celtic manufacture, is made of thin bronze with eight
enamelled escutcheons, the centre one supporting a bronze
fish, and another in the form of an animal head with eyes
set with garnets and gold discs; the bowl has patches of
fine silver plates which were riveted to it at some time,
and are decorated with birds' heads. The discovery of the
remains of a six-stringed rectangular harp ornamented with
bronze plaques in the form of birds' heads is most revealing.
The harp occupied a place of prominence in Anglo-Saxon times.
It is known from Caedmon's story, and it is referred to in
Beowulf and in other poems. The silver objects yielded are
of classical designs and Mediterranean origin. They include
a set of ten silver bowls with cruciform designs, two silver baptismal spoons of Byzantine type, one dish with assay stamp of the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius I, dated 491-518, a fluted bowl with classical head, and a silver cup.

Of particular interest to the Beowulfian student is the huge iron and gold helmet of old Swedish workmanship, with silver-covered metal crest, grooved in chevron-pattern, bronze eyebrows inlaid with silver wire, gilt-bronze boars' heads, embossed symbolic sword-dance Wodanistic figures, and square-cut garnets set in metal cells. The helmet is complete with iron visor, a gilt-bronze nose in relief, mouth, upper lip, and a close-trimmed moustache, iron cheek pieces, iron neck-guard thrust out and back, a riveted crown inlaid with silver wire (mentioned in line 1031 of Beowulf) made of narrow tin ribs fluted, gilded, embossed with figures, and a gilt-bronze animal head with gnashing teeth and garnet eyes.

From what is believed to be a harness, the Sutton Hoo find gave up forty-one individual pieces of solid gold, garnet encrusted. Under a purse-lid with jewelled gold frame and seven ornamental plaques of blue and white or red and white mosaic glass with garnets of the highest grade jewellery, were forty Frankish gold coins and two gold billets.
The finest piece artistically is a native Anglo-Saxon great belt-buckle of solid gold decorated with interlacing animal pattern and birds' heads. Strikingly remarkable for the skill of its work are the clasps in cloisonné with long thick gold pins, animal heads encrusted with filigree and tiny garnet eyes, gold chains and staples in design of linked boars, bird and snake figures in filigree to complete them.

The Sutton Hoo treasure yielded also vessels and large drinking horns with silver-gilt mounts, iron-bound wooden buckets, and sheet bronze cauldrons. Altogether, there are four thousand individually cut garnets in the jewellery, most of them backed by patterned gold foil and fitted into gold cells, representing the excellent craft work of Anglo-Saxon goldsmiths and gem-cutters.\textsuperscript{313}

The munificence and sumptuousness of the Sutton Hoo treasure is an indication of the wealth avail-

\textsuperscript{313} The Sutton Hoo treasure is discussed in the following works:
- Peter Clemoes, ed. \textit{The Anglo-Saxons}, pp. 201-03.
able in Anglo-Saxon times, the comfort of living the people enjoyed, and is an undeniable proof of the culture of the age. Sutton Hoo serves even more convincingly to prove that the Anglo-Saxon civilization which cultivated the arts and religion to an eminent degree, and produced advanced artistic achievements, fostered conditions equally favourable to the encouragement and development of letters. Indeed, it was a period of "learning and enlightenment," and one of "the eminent ages of English scholarship." Anglo-Saxon literary works extant, although few in number but, like the Sutton Hoo finds, of superior quality, represent fragments and samples only of the literary products of the age. Nevertheless, they reflect, in a striking manner, the heroic times of Anglo-Saxon England of the seventh and eighth centuries when a civilization built on high standards and ideals flourished in a unique blend of Christian, Germanic pagan, Classical Mediterranean, and Celtic environment.

The other important centers of learning, in addition to the monasteries and their schools, were the courts where

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314 Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind, p. 65.
culture was at its height, with an important court poetry developing an atmosphere favourable to the production of great poetry. In an article on Beowulf and Sutton Hoo, Nora Chadwick refers to Beowulf as our only great Anglo-Saxon narrative poem on a secular theme... an ambitious composition. Its specialized diction and elaborate style are the late product of a mature school of court poetry. The tone is formal and exalted, suited only to a highly refined milieu, to whom the dignity and high seriousness of epic themes and spiritual values are familiar. The poet is well acquainted with court life, and has moved familiarly in aristocratic circles... The metre and form of the poem, the note of reflection and the 'elegiac' tone, the leisurely pageantry and the quiet dignity of the grand theme, suggest that the tradition had long been known in the milieu in which the poet of Beowulf composed.

The permeating influence of the teaching of Christianity made headway in bringing forth men of valour imbued with wisdom of mind, gentleness of heart, and mildness of manners, and resulted in general happiness, charity, and

317 Many examples are cited by Bede in his Ecclesiastical History, for example, Oswin, King of Deira.
enthusiasm soon to bear fruits far beyond the confines of Anglo-Saxon England, in an eagerness and ambition for the propagation of the faith and a manifestation of bold courage, and unremitting self-sacrifice in missionary work. This was an age of heroic times, and with advanced social, aristocratic, and religious customs, it was fertile ground for heroic poetry. Anglo-Saxon poetic records show that much was produced.

Chapter III has elucidated, by way of selections from poems, the technique employed in Anglo-Saxon poetry for developing mood. This, as it has been explained, was done by the enumeration of external objects, by using highly suggestive diction in contextual arrangement, and by indirection and suggestions. The Anglo-Saxon poet’s interpretation of nature has also been discussed. Things which seemed to attract him most were mentioned, and some reasons given for this preference, namely, the poet’s realistic approach to nature, his outlook on some “mysterious” workings of things about him, the Christian frame of mind he brought to nature, which was responsible for the keen interest in death and in the sea, and the spirit of idealization. Finally, the spirit of the age was exemplified by the Sutton Hoo treasure, and was shown capable of stimulating the production of great literary works in an age when the in-
centive to create was being constantly activated and encouraged. As a result, Chapter III throws additional light on Anglo-Saxon poetic technique, and prepares the way further for an investigation of the contribution of the verb to the poetic diction of *Beowulf* by removing certain difficulties. Chapter IV will now consider certain Anglo-Saxon stylistic characteristics in order to continue the task of disposing of more difficulties in the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon poetic style.
CHAPTER IV

SOME ANGLO-SAXON

STYLISTIC AND SYNTACTICAL

CHARACTERISTICS

An understanding of the most important stylistic peculiarities and linguistic data of Anglo-Saxon style and poetic technique will help towards an interpretation of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Klaeber was already well aware of that in the article he wrote in 1905 dealing with the style and language of Anglo-Saxon poetry, as the basis for the elucidation of certain passages in Beowulf. He explained:

I propose on the following pages first to review certain stylistic and linguistic facts which, though familiar enough in a general way, are still in need of especial, careful observation to insure a more accurate interpretation of the text. That the phenomena discussed are not peculiar to Beowulf, but may be found throughout the Anglo-Saxon poetry - and even beyond the Old English limits of the Teutonic literature - need not be urged against the usefulness of these collections, for is not the poem of Beowulf the great classic representative of this literature, including matters of form?
Klaeber's approach stands to reason since few will deny that it is normal for a poem to be, usually, in the style of the period in which it was produced. In addition, Beowulf is the chef d'oeuvre of Anglo-Saxon poetry extant, and an examination of poetic features peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon age must take one back constantly to the masterpiece. Consequently, Chapter IV will examine certain stylistic and syntactical characteristics, including rhetorical patterns, the intensity and conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon line, the scarcity of articles and pronouns, the repetition technique, climax and transition, the use of the pronoun, the roundabout approach, the order of words in the structure of the Anglo-Saxon sentence; this survey will be completed with a few words about Anglo-Saxon metrics and alliteration.

1. Rhetorical Patterns.

The method of Beowulf, in relation to rhetorical patterns and devices used in Anglo-Saxon poetic technique, is "the method of all Anglo-Saxon epic ... the more ... verse patterns are studied, the more they help to interpret the design of the whole poem." 319 Verse patterns are sections or groups of verses of a poem, irregular in struc-

but unified, complete in themselves with a beginning and an end, of various lengths according to thought and design, forming logical little units within the larger whole. Verse patterns are constructed on traditional rhetorical patterns such as the repetition, the parallel, the balance, the antithesis, the chiasmus, and the contrast. They are not stanzas or strophes as we know them in modern English versification; in fact, all Anglo-Saxon poetry, with the exception of Deor and perhaps Wulf and Eadwacer, is non-strophic verse.

The verse pattern is believed to be traceable to Old Germanic or from Latin or Hebrew, through the Vulgate. Its existence in Anglo-Saxon poetical records is evidence that the poet saw beyond the end of the line, and was not merely concerned, as many have believed it, with alliteration and kennings. One who fails to recognize the verse pattern as a stylistic device of the age, deprives himself of a medium for the comprehension of the poem in which it is used, and may lose the nuance of the thought it helps to convey, as well as the logical and structural unity of the passage. There are several kinds of verse patterns according to the predominant rhetorical device it employs. The most characteristic are the envelope, the parallel, the incremental, and the rhythmical patterns. The following examples will illustrate.
When words or/and ideas are used at the beginning and are repeated at the end of a group of verses, the pattern thus developed is called an envelope, the collection of lines forming a logical whole in thought content as well as a unit to the ear and the eye. A fine and simple example was singled out by Hart in 1907, and was termed "envelope figure," a name which has remained to designate this type of verse groups. An example is found in the following lines of Beowulf:

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Dead is Aeschere,
Yrmelæfes
mín rûnwa, yldra brôbor,
earlgestaella, ond mín ræðbora,
hafelan weredon, bonne wê on orlege
[æbeling] aërgöd, bonne hniton fêpan,
[ænysædan. Swy(lc) scolde eorl wesan,
[ænysædan. Swy(lc) scolde eorl wesan,
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This verse pattern is built on two contrasted parts, dead - swylc and is - waes. The second part contains an antithesis formed by the present tense of TO BE thrown against the

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320 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 7, 8, and 107. Included under decorative inset are gnomic, homiletic, elegiac, runic, and macaronic passages; also, the ecphrasis of a lyric-descriptive nature, and narrative digressions. Under conventional device, the formal introductory and concluding passage used often in Anglo-Saxon poetry is put down as a formula and is discussed along with the speech or dialogue.


322 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 11.

323 Beowulf, lines 1323-29: Dead is Aeschere, /
preterit of the same verb. Important also, and usually lost to the unprepared or uninformed reader, is the rôle of swyle on which veers the descriptive content of the pattern, and the sound effect developed from the juxaposition of *waes* echoing *dead*. Thus, the beginning and the end of the passage are wrapped up in the idea of loss.324

Another example of this type of pattern built on an ordinary chiasmus, that is, the order of the words in one verse form a kind of parallel and are inverted in another or second verse, is found in *Maldon*:

1.25  *pa stod on staede*  
1.26  *wicinga ar,*  
1.27  *se on beot abead*  
1.28  *aeraende to bam eorle,*  

In the first half of line 25, the words *pa stod on staede* are inverted to *on ofre stod* in the second half of line 28. In the second half of line 25, the words *stidlice clypode* are replaced by *wordum maelde*.

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Yrmenlaf's / elder brother, / my trusted confident / and my counselor, / my shoulder-marshall / when we in war / our heads defended, / when troops clashed, / and boar-crests smote. / Such should a nobleman be, / good in the making, / such was Aeschere.

324 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 10.

325 Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Records, Vol. VI, p. 7, lines 25-28: Then stood on the shore, / sternly shouting / the Vikings' messenger, / words spoke, / who menacingly (threateningly) delivered / the Viking / the message to the earl, / where he on the shore stood.
are related to the first half of line 28, ærendæ to bam eorle, so that the idea of the message being transmitted is completed with the content of the second half of line 26, wordum mælde, and the first half of line 27, se on beot abead. Finally, the first half of line 26, wicinga ær, and the second half of line 27, brimlibendra form a chiastic disposition. A diagram helps to a clearer understanding of this pattern arrangement:

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Line 25
Line 26
Line 27
Line 28
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Thus: A- the place idea, B- the message, and C- the Vikings' messenger, while lines 27a and 28a, placed in parentheses as (B), are considered incomplete and indirect expressions of the idea of the Vikings' messenger. Reading the passage aloud will bring out the arrangement even better.

It is immediately evident that a number of combinations are possible within the envelope pattern itself depending on the rhetorical approach followed. Such are found

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326 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 10.

Most remarkable is the double envelope pattern not infrequently used by Anglo-Saxon poets; an example is the passage contained in lines 853-917 of Beowulf. Few editors have taken these sixty-five lines as a single paragraph, yet, a careful reading of them will bring out the rhetorical divisions. The scheme is built as follows: a) the praise of Beowulf, in lines 856-57: Beowulfes mærend mæned Beowulf's fame celebrated, and line 872: sio Beowulfes snyttrum styrian - Beowulf's undertaking to relate with skill; b) the joy of the Danish warriors, in line 854: of gomenwabe - the joyous journey, and line 863: glaedne Hrothgær - the joyful Hrothgar; and finally, c) men riding, in line 855: mearum ridan - to ride on horses, lines 864-65: hläpan lêton, on geflit faran, fealwe mearas - let gallop and race in contest their bay steeds, and lines 916-17: hwilum flîtende fealwe strêste mearum mæton - sometimes contending they measured the grey road with their horses. A closer look at the poem reveals that the passages immediately preceding this double envelope pattern, lines 837-52, and immediately following it, lines 917-24, present two different parts of the story, both being introduced by line
837: Ba waes on morgen - then was in the morning, and line 917: Ba waes morgenleocht - then the morning light was, thus forming a parallel in keeping with the poet's habit of rhetorical composition. Another double pattern exists in lines 491-646 of Beowulf, dealing with the Breca episode.

The parallel pattern is perhaps better known, as an Anglo-Saxon stylistic device, than the rhetorical. It consists in the doubling of individual sentences or groups of sentences, the parallelism thus built having syntactical peculiarities, similarity in form, and relationship in content, with repetition, balance, and antithesis being the elements on which the pattern is built. An example from lines 355-60 of The Phoenix will serve to illustrate this pattern.

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 11-23.

Ibid., pp. 29-33.

Krapp and Dobbie, Vol. III, p. 104, lines 355-360, The Exeter Book: God alone knows, / King almighty, / what the species is, / whether woman or man; / this no one knows / of the race of men, / nobody but God, / how the rulings are / remarkable, / beautiful ancient decree, / about the bird's birth.
The parallel exists in the negative statement contained in the second part beginning in the second half of line 357:

\[\text{baet ne wat aening / monna cynnes, / butan metod ana - none of mankind knows, nobody but God, viewed in relation to the statement of the first part beginning line 355: God ana wat - God alone knows, although here, the negation is one in appearance only.}\]

Other specimens are found in lines 161-64 of Judgement Day II, 95-102 of Soul and Body I, 10-19 and 1-8 of The Meters of Boethius 21 and 27, 1450-69 of Christ, 236-42 of Christ and Satan, 79-87 of Guthlac, 1-10 of Elene, 272-82 of Juliana, and lines 210-28, 331-47, and 2016-24 of Beowulf. The parallel pattern has been used freely by the psalmist, particularly in Psalms 79, 104, 113, 117, 134, and 135. The most outstanding of the parallel group is the pattern containing an anaphora, that is, "the repetition of the same word or phrase in several successive clauses," thus forming a series of parallels. The well known Ubi sunt motif belongs to this group.

Most common in the balance group of the parallel pattern are members marked by hwīlum - sometimes, as in

330 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp.31-39.
lines 2107, 2109, and 2111 of Beowulf; eala - alas, as in lines 76-106 of The Harrowing of Hell; óder - other, as in lines 467-89 of Genesis B; and sum - one, some, or some one, as in lines 80-84 of The Wanderer. The antithesis is another type in the parallel group, as in lines 183-88 of Beowulf, 4-13 of Prayer II, 8-26 The Gifts of Men, and 712-29 of Daniel.

As the name implies, the incremental pattern is built on a crescendo-like plan with a series of logical parallel members gradually mounting towards a culmination. The Anglo-Saxon writer made an effective use of the echo which develops from this pattern, and used it as a stylistic device, an appeal to the ear and, as every excellent craftsman would, as a link to bind the schematic arrangement of the sections.

A case in point is the description found in lines 702-36 of Beowulf of the coming of Grendel from the moor in the murky night to Heorot. The passage is made up of four sections beginning at lines 702, 710, 720, and 728 respectively, with various artistic repetitions, such as came, in lines 702, 710, and 720 acting as connectors. The reader hears echoes from the words scynscáda - hostile demon, in line 707, and manscáda - wicked ravager, in line 720.

712; rinc - the man (Grendel), in line 720, and rinca - the men (the Geats), in line 728; winreced - the wine-hall, in line 714, and reced - the hall, in lines 720 and 721; mynte expected, in lines 712 and 731; on wanre niht - in the black night, in line 702, and ofer ba niht - after that night, in line 736. It is interesting to realize that

this passage has been often and justly admired. Nobody today, it is perhaps safe to assume, would take the cumulative structure as evidence of patchword origin. The repetition of com is instead felt to be an artistic device. There are other instances of artistic repetition in this same passage, which, although they are less conspicuous ... appear to serve the same purpose of linking the four parts.

Other examples of the incremental pattern are found in lines 37-52 of The Battle of Brunanburh, 104-19 of Daniel, 199-235 of Judith, 196-205 of Genesis and lines 1296-1313 and 1767-84 of the same poem.

The rhythmical pattern is the result of the expanded line, with emphasis on rhythm rather than meter. Built something like the Freytag triangle, line expansion in this pattern has a three-way movement, with a climb, a climax and a decline, the logical, rhetorical and rhythmical elements

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 49.
forming one. This pattern is often built on speech material. The speech plays a foremost rôle in heroic poetry, and the Anglo-Saxon poet was at home with it weaving it into a variety of rhythmical pattern types. Examples are found in lines 1162-68 of Beowulf, 423-40 of Guthlac, 224-49 of Daniel, 131-35 of The Dream of the Rood, 565-79 of Exodus, 106-09 of The Seafarer, 25-28 of The Rune Poem, and in many other poems. 334

2. Intensity and Conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon Line.

The importance of having a knowledge of the style and syntax of Anglo-Saxon literature to experience Anglo-Saxon poetry to its maximum, and to be able to interpret and translate it accurately, has always been paramount in the minds of Anglo-Saxon teachers and scholars. This was recognized as far back as 1887. The student of Anglo-Saxon is often struck by the intensity, conciseness, and weightiness of the line of the Anglo-Saxon poems he reads. At first, these characteristics are interpreted as faults

335 Albert H. Tolman, "The Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," PMLA, III (1887), pp. 17-47. The essay outlines and discusses several Anglo-Saxon stylistic devices and characteristics of the contemporary spirit, including alliteration, the metaphor, epithets, kennings, the variation, the parallel, the comitatus spirit, and the elegiac mood. This essay must be read by all students of Anglo-Saxon.
STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

of style, but if an investigation is made they are discovered to be stylistic qualities. A passage taken at random from Judith illustrates:

Pa wurdon blide burhsittende,
sydean hi gehyrdon hu seo halgie spraec
ofer heanne weall. Here waes on lustum.
Wit peages faestengeates folc onette,
weras wif sogod, wornum ond heapum,
breetum ond drymmum brungon ond urnon
ongean da peodnes maegs pusendmaelum,
salde ge geonge. 336

Soon, the student discovers that the emphasis placed on accent and alliteration is partly responsible for the vigorous style and the weight of the line. Critics have called it "the strange emphasis" of Anglo-Saxon style. 337

Although Hippolyte Taine was misled in much of his appraisal of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and his approach to literature generally, 338 he was attracted by the chief care of

336 Dobbie, Beowulf and Judith, Vol. IV, p. 103, lines 159-166; Glad then were they / the citizens (dwellers-in-borough), / after they heard / how the holy (one) spoke / over the high wall. / The army was in joy. / To the fortress gate / the people hastened, / men and women together, / in multitudes and heaps, / in crowds and throngs / hurried and ran / towards the Lord's maid / by thousands, / old and young.


338 Taine, History of English Literature, Vol. I. On page viii of his Avertissement (Foreword) written in 1871 Taine remarks that he might have left to Englishmen the task of writing the history of English literature.
the Anglo-Saxon poet "to abridge" and "to imprison thought." This characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry was warranted, or at least called for, by the exigencies of the

"Peut-être valait-il mieux laisser ce soin aux gens de la maison; ils diront qu'ils connaissent mieux le personnage, puisqu'ils sont de sa famille. Cela est vrai; mais, à force de vivre avec quelqu'un, on ne remarque plus ses particula-rités. Au contraire un étranger a cet avantage que l'habi-tude ne l'a point émoussé; involontairement il est frappé par les grands traits; de cette façon il les remarque. C'est là toute mon excuse; je la présente au lecteur anglais avec quelque confiance, parce que, si j'examine mes propres idées sur la France, j'en trouve plusieurs qui m'ont été fournies par des étrangers et notamment par des Anglais." This is typical of Taine, the historian, to approach literature as he does history, and try to explain literature solely in terms of the kind of men who wrote it, the times in which they lived, and the society to which they belonged. But surely, a Frenchman's "propres idées sur la France" is one thing, having nothing to do with his appraisal of French literature, which is something else. If it did, it would be just as valid as the negative appraisal of a beautiful Japanese Haiku by a United States marine winner of the Purple Heart, who suffered the worst atrocities at the hands of the Nipponese. His judgement could easily be blurred and strongly influenced by his hate of anything connected with Japan. To make the evaluation of literature subjective and a matter for historicism is the wrong approach.

339 Taine, History of English Literature, Vol. I, p. 43. In addition, Taine's appraisal of Anglo-Saxon poetry and the "barbarians" who produced it misses the goal when it comes to style. Taine does recognize that "the remnant of Anglo-Saxon poetry suffices to show the strange and powerful poetic genius of the race." But he becomes shocking, and exhibits a genuine ignorance typical of any French critic, so impudent and categorical in a judgement based on false premises, when he describes Anglo-Saxon religious poetry as the result of "the romantic imaginations of babbling clerics mere composers of adventure;" when he states there is "no art, no natural talent" in their poetry "for describing singly and in order the different parts of an object or an event;" or when he judges the imagery of Anglo-Saxon poetry "too feeble" and "not knowing how to unfold itself;" literature with "entangled" ideas, written by "clumsey-fingered, unintelligible" poets who "neglected" their
alliteration and the Anglo-Saxon line, whose shortness did not allow the poet to hold back the expression of an idea. The effect was also partly achieved through the abundant use of the metaphor and the personification. The diction was adorned with an extraordinary variety of synonyms that has accounted for the name given Anglo-Saxon poetry, "the poetry of synonyms." Two other figures of speech, the simile and the allegory, were hardly used at all.

3. The Scarcey of Articles and Pronouns.

Tained complained that in Anglo-Saxon poetry "articles, particles, everything capable of illuminating thought, of marking the connection of terms, of producing regularity of ideas, all rational and logical artifices, are neglected. Passion bellows forth like a great shapeless beast; and that is all." Tolman replied that the French historian "overstates" the case, and "mistakes it," that "he is wrong in...art producing works "the acme of barbarism," outstanding by "the harshness of the expression, which, subservient to the energy and shocks of the inner sentiment, seeks only to exhibit it intact and original, spite of all order and beauty, - such are the characteristics of their poetry, and these will be the characteristics of the poetry which is to follow," in relation to "Homer's happy poetry." Pp. 41-44. In footnote Number 1 of page 41, Taine mentions that he read Anglo-Saxon poetry in translation. This may explain, in part, depending whose work he read, his difficulty of comprehension and interpretation.

thrusting aside as rude and worthless the poems which he cannot appreciate." Taine's difficulties stemmed, not so much from his inability to appreciate Anglo-Saxon poetry, as from an utter ignorance of the Anglo-Saxon language and its style. The scarcity of articles, particles, and pronouns was dictated by the rigid requirements of alliteration and meter, and cannot be put down as a defect. Only great craftsmen could have turned out Anglo-Saxon poems as they did. Anglo-Saxon poets were boxed in, so to speak, with the limitations of the type of versification they used, just as Alexander Pope was, with the heroic couplet, and Gerard Manley Hopkins with his sprung rhythm had to manoeuvre expertly and steadily. The Anglo-Saxon poet may be compared to an experienced sea captain who knows the idiosyncrasies of his ship and every inch of the treacherous coast along which he navigates, feels in advance how she will react against the elements at a given movement, and remains the master in control at all times of both ship and elements. Likewise, the Anglo-Saxon poets had to be deeply versed in the devices of poetic technique, fully exercised in the use of the unwieldy meter, in utmost com-

341 Taine, History of English Literature, p. 43.
342 Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 34.
mand of the language, skilfully knowledge in the ways of adaptation to make the language fit the meter and express what they wanted, and produce at the same time the desired effect. This is exactly what Anglo-Saxon poets did. Their works have none of the alleged shortcomings Taine believed he recognized in them, on the contrary, they exhibit to a degree of high perfection the poetic art of Anglo-Saxons.

4. The Repetition Technique.

When Taine wrote that the Anglo-Saxon poet's "ideas are entangled, without notice, abruptly," he "will return to the idea he has quitted, and insert it in the thought to which he is giving expression," he gave proof again of how little he understood Anglo-Saxon literary techniques. Surely, there can be nothing wrong with what has been called "crossed repetition," or more normally, parallelism, with the passing back and forth between two or more thoughts. Many writers have used this technique. Milton, for example, in lines 26-83, Book I of Paradise Lost, intensifies the torments of Hell and makes them more effective by a back-and-forth, one-two, one-two-one movement.344

343 Taine, History of English Literature, p. 43.
An extension or development of the cross repetition technique is the parataxis, that is, the placing of propositions one after another, without showing their connection or interdependence. The leaving of thoughts and returning to them at leisure was a popular stylistic device with Anglo-Saxon poets, and one that made oral recitation more pleasurable to the listeners. The critic unfamiliar with Anglo-Saxon writings sees inconsistency in the writer who used it. The case is well clarified in the statement that

A.-S. poetry expresses paratactically in independent clauses, those ideas of time, cause, manner and accompaniment which we are accustomed to express syntactically, in subordinate clauses. Thus, there is nothing to say first what cause moved our Grand Parents ... to fall off," and "who first seduced them?" The reply is given in lines 34-44, including a biographical sketch of how Satan became what he is. The description of the torments of Hell is a three-way affair; the physical, lines 45-49 with Satan being "hurld headlong flaming from th'Ethereal Skie;" the spiritual, lines 59-60; "confounded though immortal ... for now the thought both of lost happiness and lasting pain torments him;" and the physical-spiritual, lines 61-69: "a dungeon horrible ... great Furnace ... darkness visible ... torture without end ... ever-burning Sulfur unconsum'd." New thoughts are introduced in lines 70-74: "such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd" with the horrors of hell still being referred to, in line 75 the fallen angels' new abode is "unlike the place from whence they fell," and in line 81 Beelzebub appears for the first time. The change of movement or thought from the cause of the fall and punishment, to the description of the torments and Hell itself, to the Justice of the Almighty, to a comparison between the new state and the former, to the introduction of Beelzebub, although different, belongs to the same subject and is used by the poet to bring about the desired effect. 

W. T. Harris, ed. Webster's New International
in the construction to indicate that the poet has not abandoned his first line of thought and taken up a new one. Hence, if the reader does not keep his own mind 'on the key,' he may fancy that the author is jumping about aimlessly.\footnote{Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 36.}

Some passages will illustrate.

In line 224 of Daniel, the poet begins to describe the episode of the casting of the three young Hebrews into the furnace by Nebuchadnezzar: \textit{Da weardyrre anmod cyning} - then was in anger the proud king, introduces various thoughts in independent clauses before coming back to his original idea of the furnace and the king of Babylon, at line 409: \textit{Da paet ehtode / ealdor beode / Nabochodnossor, / wi\textit{f} bam hehstum / folgesi\textit{dum} - then the lord of that nation Nebuchadnezzar spoke unto the princes who stood near by. Many examples exist in Beowulf. The passage dealing with the melting of the sword blade in dam Grendel's cave, beginning at lines 1606, is followed by the thoughts of spring, God's power over the seasons, God the Creator, back to the melting sword, at line 1616, then, a reference is made to the hot and poisonous blood, in lines 1617-18, ending finally with the return of Beowulf swimming back to the

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surface of the mere, in lines 1619-20. Another passage is found in lines 2451-60 describing King Hrethel's mourning of his son who was accidentally killed. The art displayed by the poet in the paratactic construction is to give a passage a total effect with the use of many details spread over a number of principal clauses. The examples they left throughout their poems testify to the success achieved.

5. Climax, the Transition, and the Pronoun.

There are other less important, but nevertheless, typical poetic devices forming part of the general frame of Anglo-Saxon stylistic patterns. In many cases Anglo-Saxon poems appear to have been put together at random without any consideration to climax. As it was rightly remarked, "climax is so nearly an instinctive device with us moderns that one is not fitted to do justice to the power of A.-S. poetry until he becomes accustomed to the absence of it." 347

This observation applies likewise to the use of the abrupt transition, and to the pronoun which is introduced in a passage before the noun it replaces is identified. The sudden transition, as employed by the Anglo-Saxon poet, has been a common device used by poets of all ages. In Act

III of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare places Scene 1 in Syria, Scene ii in Rome, Scene iii in Alexandria, Scenes iv and v in Athens, Scene vi in Rome, Scene vii near Actium in Antony's camp, Scene viii in Caesar's camp in a plain somewhere else near Actium, Scene ix in another part of the plain somewhere else near Actium, Scene x in a different part still of the plain, and Scene xi in Alexandria. These abrupt transitions from one part of the world to another are explained as a means by Shakespeare "to give the impression of majestic breadth, of an action embracing half of the then known world, which he wanted for the sake of the concluding effect." 348 It was for the reason of effect also that the poets of *Beowulf* and of other Anglo-Saxon poems used it.

It was equally common for Anglo-Saxon poets to introduce an idea with a pronoun, and then mentioning later by name the thing or person described. The poet of *Beowulf* uses *hi* - they, in line 28, for *gesibas* - companions, mentioned in line 29. The passage is: *hi hyne ba æt-bærôn / to brimes farode, / swæse gesibas, / swê hê selfa baed* 349 they him then bore unto the sea current.


349 *Beowulf*, lines 28-29.
his dear companions, as he himself had urged. Beowulf begins to speak to the coastguard, in line 260, and does not identify himself by name until eighty-three lines further on when addressing Hrothgar, in line 343; \textit{Beowulf is nama} - Beowulf is my name.


Many students of Anglo-Saxon literature have recognized the circumambient structure of certain passages in Anglo-Saxon poems, but have overlooked its poetical significance. The structure of \textit{Beowulf}, for example, "is not sequential, but complemental; at the outset certain parts of a situation are displayed, and these are given coherence and significance by progressive addition of its other parts."\textsuperscript{350} Recognizing that the procedure by "circuitous route, is not obscure,"\textsuperscript{351} the great Beowulfian scholar Klaeber erroneously called it "lack of steady advance," and saw in it a "rambling, dilatory method, with forward, backward, and sideward movements," denoting "looseness" of construction.\textsuperscript{352} Klaeber failed to see the fundamental impor-

\textsuperscript{350} Joan Blomfield, "The Style and Structure of \textit{Beowulf}," \textit{RES}, XIV (1938), p. 399.

\textsuperscript{351} \textit{Beowulf}, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{352} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. lvii-lviii.
tance of the principle involved and its rôle in the poem, that is, the displaying of the separate but essential features or parts of an event complementary to one another, the total effect being attained through the sum of them all. In other words, the poet synchronizes the separate aspects into a coherent whole after each momentary visual impression has been touched off.

A case in point is found in the accounts of Beowulf's fight with Grendel in Heorot, lines 745-815:

Grendel's movements and motives and his final sense of defeat are first described (745-57). The poet next reverts to Beowulf's grapple, considered as a fulfilment of his afen-spraec. In 764-5 ... the tearing off of Grendel's arm, is obscurely stated in a metaphor. The fight is then represented from the point of view of the Danes (765-90) who hear the din raging within their hall; ... the shriek of defeat ... elaborated ... (782-88). Lastly, the sensations of the Geats when they see their Lord at grips with the monster provide an opportunity for contrasting Grendel's magic immunity from bite of iron with his impotence against the decrees of providence (801-15); these reflections are concluded with an explicit account of the severing of the claw, darkly alluded to before. The outcome for each of the three parties - Beowulf, Grendel, and the Danes - is then summed up, and the severed claw again mentioned, this time as the proof and symbol of Grendel's final defeat.

354 Ibid., pp. 399-400.
The same technique, on a much wider scale, envelops the poem of Beowulf as a whole in unity of theme. To unfold the plot and to bring out the important traits of his hero's character, the poet uses a background of Danish and Geatish history into which he weaves the behaviour and deeds of his hero in youth, maturity, and old age. Thus Beowulf is discovered to have the violence and strength of a beast, wisdom and humility, to submit to the decrees of Providence, to show himself a true King, and to give his life for those he loves.

The interpretation of this poetic technique is not as simple as it appears. The poet works through abstraction, formalism, and uses a language clothed in imagery and symbolism very much unfamiliar to us. The most outstanding features of his style, and this applies to other Anglo-Saxon poems, are considered to be "the ritual of language and exploitation of its metaphysical aspects." This explains why a thorough knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language and literary tradition, and an understanding of the spirit of the age are prerequisites for the study of the literature of that period in the original.

7. Word Order in Sentence Structure.

The newcomer to Anglo-Saxon shows surprise at the structure of the sentence. Annoyance is experienced where ambiguity is believed to exist from lack of clause subordination. This is particularly noticeable with subordinate clauses placed at the beginning of a statement; with coordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns, and adverbs found at the commencement of a sentence, as swylce - also or likewise, in line 293 of Beowulf, or ba git - yet again, still, hitherto, besides, further, as in line 1866 of Beowulf; and with verbs standing at the end of a sentence in construction of the conjunctive order, as in line 1269 of Beowulf: bæer him æglaēca / ætetgræpe weard - where for him the monster aggressive was. An investigation of the subject discloses a preference, or dislike, by Anglo-Saxon writers for certain forms of sentence structure, the use of which was apparently dictated by the poetic and syntactical conventions of the day. 356

Three kinds of Anglo-Saxon sentence structure may be identified. The common order is similar to the simple

principal sentence of modern English, as *An Antiochia bare ceastre waes sum cyninge Antiochus gehaten* - in the city of Antioch was a king named Antiochus. The other type is the conjunctive order, that is, the common order existing in subordinate clauses after coordinating conjunctions and after other conjunctives, particularly, relative pronouns and adverbs when they appear first in the sentence.

The subordinate clause form, that is, the conjunctive order, is exemplified in lines 917-19 of *Beowulf*: *bā waes morgenlēocht / scofen ond scynded. / Œode scealc monig / swīðlicgenda / tō sele pām bēan* - when the morning light was sent forth and hastened, went many a warrior valiant to the high hall. The coordinating conjunction form is found in lines 1661-63 of *Beowulf*: *ac mē geūde / ylda Waldend, / paet ic on wāge geseah / wlitig hangian / ealdsweord ōacen* - but me granted the Ruler of men that on the wall I saw hang beautiful an old mighty sword. The relative pronoun and adverb forms when they begin the sentence are illustrated in line 2406 of *Beowulf*: *Sē waes on dām ērēge / preotēoða secg* - who in that troup was the thirteenth man, and in line 907 of *Beowulf*: *swylce oft*

The third type is the demonstrative order. It is usually introduced by a demonstrative adverb placed at the beginning of the sentence, as in line 1495 of Beowulf: bā waes hwīl daeges - then was a day (day-while). Failure to recognize these Anglo-Saxon syntactical and stylistic conventional sentence structures, and to establish the correct syntactical precedence of one clause over the other leads to inaccurate discernment of the interdependence of the clauses within the sentence, improper punctuation, and misinterpretation of the true meaning and full force it.

In a more extensive treatment of the subject, Andrew makes a restatement of the findings contained in his earlier article, already referred to, and pushes further his development of the subject, including the paratactic sentence structure and an investigation into syntactical peculiarities common to verse. In these syntactical characteristics are features of Anglo-Saxon style relevant to this paper and considered a prerequisite to a correct understanding of the Anglo-Saxon sentence form and its meaning, and to an accurate translation into modern English. Unfortunately, these stylistic features seem to go unnoticed, and are usually overlooked as punctuation will show in the editions and translations of Anglo-Saxon works. Even Sweet
missed it in his Grammar, and Andrew asked:

Are such subordinate clauses good usage in O.E. side by side with the more usual type? It will be contended here that they are, and it will be necessary to examine the evidence carefully since the wide prevalence of the type seems not be generally realized; no example of it is given by Sweet in his excellent Primer among the sentences which form Chapter i, although these illustrate almost every other type of O.E. clause; and the editors of O.E. texts almost invariably print such clauses as principal sentences, except when the verb is unstressed (e.g., 'waes, weard', etc.).

An example of a stressed verb is shown in Ba geseah se Haelend ba menigu; ba het he hig faran - and Jesus seeing great multitudes about him, gave orders to pass over the water; the Vulgate having videns autem Iesu, there is every possibility that the first sentence is a temporal clause. In other words, in cases such as this, editors show subordinate propositions as principal sentences. In fact,

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358 S. O. Andrew, Syntax and Style in Old English (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 72-86, and 87-100.
Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 9-10.
362 Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 3, 4, and 5.
an examination of *ba* - sentences in Anglo-Saxon texts translated from Latin reveals that alleged principal clauses turn out to be subordinate. 363

It should be remembered that there are very few punctuation marks in the original Anglo-Saxon texts, the punctuation in the texts available today has been supplied by modern editors. The substitution of commas for the existing stops after the first sentences will change them from principal to subordinate clauses and reestablish punctuate normal syntax. Most editors/them as principal sentences and, in so doing, introduce ambiguity. Thus, Klaeber edits lines 1600-1601 of Beowulf: *Bā cōm nōn daeges. / Naes ofgēafon / hwate Scyldingas* - Then came noon (the ninth hour). Left the headland the valiant Scyldings, instead of *Bā cōm nōn daeges, / naes ofgēafon / hwate Scyldingas* - Then came noon, left the headland the valiant Scyldings. By substituting the period for a comma after *daeges*, what was shown as a principal sentence becomes a subordinate clause, the ambiguity is removed, and normal Anglo-Saxon syntax is made right.

Stress plays an important rôle in Anglo-Saxon *ba* - sentences as it does in certain modern languages. For example, the first person plural indicative present of the

363 Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 10.
Portuguese verb *falar* - to speak, is distinguished from the first person plural preterit by a stress in speech, and by an acute accent in writing. *Falamos* - we speak, is present; *falamos* - we spoke is past, the difference existing in the stressed ā of the second *falamos*. It is not uncommon, of course, for ambiguity to arise, and it does, particularly if not speaking if the speaker does/give the syllable its proper stress, and in writing if the accent is not indicated. The ambiguity in Anglo-Saxon, going back to the *ba* - sentences, appears in the written text mostly, because "in speech, principal sentences must always have been differentiated from clauses, *ba* (adv.) being stressed and *ba* (conj.) un-stressed." 364

Another experience fairly general among newcomers to Anglo-Saxon is to interpret the existence and apparent existence of the paratactic construction as a lack of grammatical subordination in the sentence, particularly in poetry, and a convincing evidence of the immaturity of the language. It is a case of mistaken identity resulting from an illusion. The reader fails to understand or grasp the significance of the syntactical construction, inherent in the paratactic structure, which is used to indicate subordination by means of an idiomatic mode of expression. It

364 Andrew, *Syntax and Style*, p. 18.
is wrong to call the existence of the paratactic structure in Anglo-Saxon a weakness of the language. Andrew warns against that when he states "because of its supposed paratactic construction, the OE epic style, especially in Beowulf, has been described as archaic or primitive; there could be no greater delusion. Abundant proof" exists to show that "the epithet 'paratactic'," used pejoratively is inadmissible to describe the syntactical form of Anglo-Saxon writings including Beowulf.\(^{365}\) The parataxis, that is, the placing of clauses in succession without showing interdependence, \(^{366}\) exists in all languages, each one being distinguished by its own characteristic features while sharing forms common to all. The parataxis, as opposed to the hypotaxis, is also described as "a rhetorical device by which a subordinate relation is idiomatically expressed by a coordinately juxtaposed sentence."\(^{367}\)

Among the forms peculiar to Anglo-Saxon writings may be distinguished the following paratactic sentence. One type is introduced by wolde - the preterit, third person

\(^{365}\) Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 94.
\(^{367}\) Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 87.
singular of willan - to will, be willing, wish, desire, to be used to, to be about to, as in lines 1292-93 of Beowulf:
Hēo waes on ofste, / wolde ūt banon, / fōre beorgan, / pā hēo onfund ten waes - She was in haste, would out from thence, save her life, as she discovered was. Another model is introduced by wende - the preterit, third person singular of wēnan - to ween, think, fancy, expect, imagine, believe, hope, to fear (for), to despair (of), and to wonder, as in lines 2327-29 of Beowulf: Baet ēam gōdan waes / hreow on hreōre, / hegesorga māest; / wende se wīsa, / baet hē Wealdende - That the good (king) was troubled in heart (mind), of heart-sorrows greatest; weened the wise (king), that he the Almighty. Finally, there is the clause introduced by cwæd - the preterit, third person singular of cwēdan - to mention, say, speak, name, call, proclaim, summon, declare, agree, and resolve, as in lines 90-92 of Beowulf: Saegde sē be cūpe / frumsceaf tīra / feor-ran reccan, / cwæd baet se Aelmihtiga / eoroon worht(te) He said who could the origin of men (mankind) from far relate, mentioned (proclaimed) that the Almighty wrought the earth. A point of interest emanating from these examples is the position of the verb at the beginning of the clause.

Other paratactic sentence forms include the defining clause, usually introduced by *swa don* - as do, or the like; the comparative, and the adjectival clauses. There are also many subordinate clauses, paratactic in appearance and construction, used throughout Anglo-Saxon poetic records. The poet of *Beowulf* was particularly successful in his choice of subordinate propositions for the handling of transitions. Such are, the introduction of Beowulf, Hygelac's thane, to the story, in lines 194-99; the challenge of the Danish coastguard, in lines 229-34; and the last scene of the poem, that is, Beowulf's burning on the pyre, in lines 3134-38. This stylistic device shows the skill of the poet for introducing transitions, which have "nothing 'primitive' about them, and "are as artfully contrived as any in later English poetry."369

Many other cases, judged parataxis, are subordinate constructions, the correlation existing by means of adverbs, such as *nu* - now, *siddan* - since, and *swa* - so as; examples are found in lines 424-27, 2070-73, and 3066-69 of *Beowulf*. Finally, there is the periodic sentence structure by far the most important, exemplified in lines 461-69, 1260-66, 1376-79, and 2442-47 of *Beowulf*, and often mistaken for para-tactic. This type of construction is made up of a principal clause and a number of correlated subordinate propositions.

369 Andrew, *Syntax and Style*, p. 96.
forming a single period or sentence unit.

It has often been said, in uninformed quarters, that Beowulf is the grand classic of Anglo-Saxon paratactic style. This erroneous opinion is rejected by a competent authority in Anglo-Saxon sentence structure, S. O. Andrew, whose diligent investigation of Anglo-Saxon texts has produced statistical evidence and convincing illustrations confirming that the syntactical sentence construction exhibited in Anglo-Saxon writings does not lack in subordination. He states:

If we add together all the supposed principal sentences in the poem which are really either subordinate or coordinate clauses and the ambiguous sentences which are preferably taken as subordinate, we have a total of over 260, and the traditional text, if rightly punctuated, is quite transformed by the addition of 260 new dependent clauses, which is at the rate of one in every twelve lines. Nothing in fact is left of the supposed paratactic style; except for the occasional use of idiomatic parataxis, itself ... a subordinating device, the prevailing sentence-structure is not paratactic at all but periodic. 370

To complete this epitome of the word-order in Anglo-Saxon sentence structure some poetic idioms or syntactical features confined to Anglo-Saxon poetry will be examined.

Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 99-100.
Often mistaken for a parataxis is the asyndetic coordination. The asyndeton, as opposed to the polysyndeton, is a rhetorical figure that omits the connective, as in: I came, I saw, I conquered. The asyndeton, widely used in *Beowulf*, is a coordinate clause without conjunction, but dependent on a principal sentence. In the following examples from *Beowulf*, the two clauses have different subjects, as in lines 7-8, 89-91, 356-58, 891-93, and 1256-59. In the following passages, the subject being the same in both clauses is left out idiomatically in the second, as in lines 1318-20, 2391-93, and 2918-20 from *Beowulf*.

It is important to note that the great majority of so called subjectless principal sentences in *Beowulf*, some one hundred, are in fact coordinate clauses, in which the omission of the subject was common idiomatic practice. In a number of cases the second clause is a paraphrase of the first, as in lines 1310-11 and 1610-12 of *Beowulf*, or may complete the meaning of the first, as in lines 1223, 2703-05, and 1943-45 of *Beowulf*. There/many instances where the asyndetic construction is built up with more than two clauses, the coordinated propositions depending on a third. This type of construction is found in lines 415-19,

372 Andrew, *Syntax and Style*, p. 77.
Another frequent occurrence in Anglo-Saxon verse is the use of principal propositions exhibiting the conjunctive order, mostly in the *he ba* - he (they) then sentence forms with idiomatic interception of the personal pronoun, that is, a personal pronoun stressed in its own right may, like a noun, be dissociated from its verb, a practice that has been an accepted poetic convention throughout the history of English literature. Other forms are found after connectives, such as: *swylce* - likewise, also, as in line 293 of *Beowulf*; *ba git* - yet, still, again, further, besides, as in line 1666 of *Beowulf*; *sona* - soon, forthwith, immediately, as in line 1794 of *Beowulf*; *swa* - so, thus, in this manner, as in line 559 of *Beowulf*; *foroam* - therefore, as in line 679 of *Beowulf*; *nu* - now, as in line 1818 of *Beowulf*; *oft* - often, as in line 2018 of *Beowulf*; and *symleever* - ever, always, as in line 2880 of *Beowulf*; after the negatives: *nalas*, that is, *nalaes*, *nales*, *nallas*, *nalles*, *realles* - not at all, as in line 43 of *Beowulf*; *naefre* - never, as line 655 of *Beowulf*; and *no by aer* - none the sooner, yet ... not, as in line 2466 of *Beowulf*; and following the 

Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 73-75.

Ibid., p. 54. A well-known example is given from Milton: So he with difficulty and labour hard / Moved on.
exclamatory *hwaet* - what, lo, behold, well, as line 1774 of *Beowulf*.

Other cases of conjunctive order are sentences introduced after a pronoun-subject with rhetorical stress, as in line 318 of *Beowulf*; after a pronoun in an oblique case with stressed position, as in line 477 of *Beowulf*; and in sentences with oblique cases when the subject, a pronoun instead of a noun, comes before the stressed pronoun and is proclitic to it, as in line 426 of *Beowulf*.

8. Anglo-Saxon Metrics and Alliteration.

A survey of some of the Anglo-Saxon stylistic peculiarities most relevant to this thesis must not overlook a reference to Anglo-Saxon prosody including alliteration. In an article on Anglo-Saxon poetic style, it was remarked that "the language and style" exhibited by Anglo-Saxon poets "could not be any ordinary language or style." This statement was dictated, it seems, from a knowledge of the


376 Andrew, *Syntax and Style*, pp. 80-82.

complexities inherent in the skilful and felicitous manipulation of the Anglo-Saxon metrical form.

To describe the Anglo-Saxon metrical line as a mere irregular line of two hemistichs with four main stresses, divided equally between two half-lines linked together by alliteration, and separated by a caesura, is to underestimate the art of the poets who composed with it. There is much more to the Anglo-Saxon metrical line than meets the eye; not every writer was able to "make" with it, because the practice from which Anglo-Saxon metrical rules were later inferred proved to be linguistically demanding, with an unyielding stress-pattern, and an exacting accuracy of thought. The Anglo-Saxon verse was the tool of experts, and only those writers who brought great craftsmanship to their metrical art were happily successful.

The ability to manoeuvre the Anglo-Saxon line freely implied the theoretical and practical following knowledge of: the metrical pattern for each half-line represented by Sievers' five types;\(^378\) of the proper distribution of trochaic and iambic metrical types prescribed by the effect and mood intended; of the adequate manipulation of the hypermetric verses, that is, half-lines; of the apt

\(^378\) Anderson, Literature of the Anglo-Saxons, p.48.
phrasing and stress disposition; of the skilled balancing of syntactical and metrical pauses; of the appropriate choice of vocalic and consonantal endings for stress purposes;\(^{379}\) of the timely placing of initial rests in the lines as the occasion for the sounding of the harp;\(^{380}\) of the judicious introduction of syncope and elision for occasional variation in the second foot of each type; of the discriminate, that is, showing judgement in the, use of anacrusis, which gave the value of the free run-on line; and, finally, of the practical application of the stichic form with run-on lines, including the introduction of new elements at the beginning of the second half-line, and the avoiding of monotony by making the end of the sentence coincide with the end of the line for major pauses.\(^{381}\)

Alliteration was an integral part of the Anglo-Saxon metrical form. The skilful use of it was a demanding task: in the hands of some writers it could be heavy, redundant, euphuistic, and monotonous, but handled by masters it was


\(^{381}\) Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxx.
dictated by a great "sense of poetic propriety in the mind of the poet."\textsuperscript{382} The mechanism of alliteration presented difficulties, and to achieve success was a challenge. If a writer was well versed in all the other aspects of Anglo-Saxon metrics but lacked skill in the use of alliteration, his art suffered. The pillars of alliteration were the four main stresses of every line, with the key of the alliteration of the line located in the first main stressed syllable of the second half-line. The key stress alliterated with the first or second main stress or both of the first half-line, but very seldom with the second stress of the second half-line. Consonantal alliteration was more frequent than vocalic. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, sometimes pronouns and adverbs were stressed, and poets took advantage of this to emphasize certain words they wanted brought into prominence. Alliteration played a dual rôle; it belonged to the metrical mechanism, and it was part of the syntactical design of the sentence.

It has often been repeated that happy alliterative combinations were the result of chance. It was not so where poetry was concerned. Bliss who has delved at length into Anglo-Saxon poetic records declares at the end of his investigation of the Anglo-Saxon metre:

\textsuperscript{382} Bliss, \textit{The Metre of Beowulf}, p. 135.
the analysis of the combinations of pairs of verses into lines reveals that the combinations are not the result of mere chance. The poet combines his pairs of verses in such a way as to achieve greater variety, both of rhythm and of phrasing, than chance would dictate; and at the same time to ensure that the falling rhythm of Type A, the norm of Old English metre, is maintained in as many lines as possible.  

The demands of alliteration were rigid and far greater than those of end-rime, and with the close affinity existing between metre and style, the Anglo-Saxon poet had to measure his skill in choice of diction. This prompted certain uninformed critics to advance that poets used words which alliterated, whether or not they were the best words that could be used; or that the metre was a compelling force which determined the style; or that the mechanism of alliteration "became too obvious," and the synonyms used "became a source of weakness" because they were "often multiplied" unnecessarily. Some writers were guilty of those pitfalls, but poets avoided them, and their works are examples of fine craftsmanship. Beowulf was described "a finely regulated and richly rhythmic achievement."

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384 Anderson, Literature of the Anglo-Saxons, p. 49.
387 Pope, Rhythm of Beowulf, p. 95.
The same could be said of many other Anglo-Saxon poems. The charge that alliteration was responsible for endless repetitions of synonyms is not founded. In keeping with Anglo-Saxon poetic style and diction, the poet repeated his ideas in every possible way, but not words. Tolman clarified the point and explained that the remorseless energy of the alliterative metre uses up, devours, the thought so rapidly that repetition becomes a necessity. Thus A.-S. poetry progresses like a spirited horse, which takes a few long bound forward, only to follow that by much prancing and tossing without any advance. But this repetition of the main idea is made enjoyable by the constant variation of the language. Each repetition must emphasize some new phase or characteristic by the use of new terms. 388

There is little strain on the imagination to picture Anglo-Saxon poets struggling over their poetry in an attempt to find the right verbs, nouns, or adjectives, that would convey their artistic ideals and satisfy, at the same time, the exigencies of the metrics and alliteration. This happened to the poet of Beowulf and to the great poets of all other periods when the technical demands of poetic form met in the apt diction represented by the word and phrase, verse or sentence. 389

Chapter IV has illustrated some of the Anglo-Saxon stylistic and syntactical characteristics. Verse groups, called rhetorical patterns, involving the use of repetition, parallel, balance, antithesis, chiasmus, and contrast, were examined, examples were given and an interpretation of them made. The intensity and conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon line, the scarcity of articles and pronouns, the use of repetitions and transitions, the adduced lack of climax, the unusual place of the pronoun, the roundabout approach followed in bringing out facts, the word-order of the sentence-structure were explained, the method of metrics discussed, and the practice of alliteration defended. All the features of style and syntax considered in Chapter IV are important for an understanding of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and style. Chapter V will examine the verb in Beowulf and its contribution to the poetic diction of the poem.
CHAPTER V

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

This study has shown, so far, that an understanding of Anglo-Saxon literature calls for a certain familiarity with Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique, semantics, how Anglo-Saxon poets reacted to nature and developed mood in their works, how these, in turn, affected by the influence of Latin Christianity and the spirit of the age moulded their thoughts and acted upon the vocabulary they used, what stylistic features their writings display, the rhetoric and the kind of sentence structure they disclose, and the type of metre they exhibit. It would seem logical to assume, now, that since the verb is the most important part of speech of the Anglo-Saxon language, that is, the skeleton on which all the other parts of the sentence are supported, its proper function in Anglo-Saxon literature, in poetry for the concern of this study, may be determined by the effect one or more elements of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique, singly or jointly, produce on it. Consequently, this paper can now proceed at an examination of action words in Anglo-

Saxon writings generally, and in Beowulf particularly, for the purpose of knowing the rôle of the verb in the art of the poem.

In Beowulf, an epic poem having 3183 lines, there are at least 810 verbs. This number is made up of 360 uncompounded verbs, 150 others with the prefix ge-391 an additional 100 appear without an affix and are called simple verbs, and finally there are 200 compounded verbs with various prefixes.392 It should be observed that this total

391 The prefix ge- causes a shift in aspect from durative (habitual and continuous actions) to perfective (momentary actions), as féræan - to go, and geferæan - to reach, or winnan - to fight, and gewinnan - to win. In some cases there is also a shift from intransitive to transitive verb.

392 Among some of the other verbs appearing with affixes are; be-ræafian - to bereave, despoil, deprive, as in lines 2746, 2825, and 3018 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, ræafian - to rob, plunder, rifle, take by force, waste, ravage, as in lines 2773, 2985, and 3027 of Beowulf; a-beodan - to announce, offer, as in lines 390 and 668 of Beowulf, and wish good luck or salute, as in lines 653 and 2418 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, boedan - 1) to offer, tender, give, as in line 385 of Beowulf, and 2) to announce, as in line 2892 of Beowulf; aet-beræan - to bear or carry (to), bear away, as in line 1581 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, beræan - to bear, carry, wear, bring, often applied to armour, as in lines 48, 231, 291, and 1024 of Beowulf; an-gylldan - to pay (a penalty) for, as in line 1251 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, gylldan - to yield, pay, pay for, reward, requite, render, worship, serve, sacrifice to; for-laedan - lead to destruction, as in line 2039 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, laedan - to lead, bring, as in lines 1159, 3177 of Beowulf; on-findan - to find out, discover, perceive, as in lines 1522, 1890, 2300, and 2713 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, findan - find, as in lines 207, 1156, 1378, 1838, and 2870 of Beowulf, and devise, as in line 3162 of Beowulf; for-standan - to withstand,
of 810 verbs is exclusive of repetitions, such as, sculan - shall, must, ought, is to, etc., which is used 86 times, or gretan - to approach, touch, attack, and to greet, salute, address, which appears 16 times, or weordan - to happen, come to pass, arise, become, etc., which occurs 59 times, and there are others.393

Some general characteristics pertaining to the Anglo-Saxon verbs should be mentioned here. The use of certain affixes to verbs, and their effects, which establish distinctions between durative and perfective, ingressive and resultative, have already been mentioned in footnotes 391 and 392. In the Anglo-Saxon language motion is understood differently sometimes from what it is today, and the use of the preposition is determined by the idea of rest rather than motion. This is exemplified in the verb fœolan - to penetrate or reach, as in lines 1281 and 2225 of Beowulf, and aet-fœolan - to stick to or hold firmly, as in line 968 of Beowulf. Some verbs are known today to be verbs of rest, but in Anglo-Saxon they are verbs in which the idea of motion exists vividly, either literally or

hinder, prevent, as in lines 1056 and 1549 of Beowulf, and to defend (against), as in line 2955 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, standan - to stand, continue in a certain state, as in lines 926, 1434, and 2271 of Beowulf.

393 Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. 392, 346, and 422.
formatively, as *sceawian* - to look at, view, examine, see, behold, occurring 19 times in *Beowulf*, as in line 2285.

Other verbs have the function of creating a state of mind, as *hatian* - to hate, that is, to demonstrate hatred by actions, reflecting the idea one entertains, as in lines 2319 and 2166 of *Beowulf*; *lufian* - to love, that is, to treat kindly, reflecting what is in one's heart, as in line 1982 of *Beowulf*; *unnan* - to wish somebody to have something, not begrudge, grant, as in lines 346 and 1661 of *Beowulf*; and *eahtian* - to deliberate about something, consider, watch over, rule, esteem, praise, as in lines 1222, 1407, and 3173 of *Beowulf*. The unusual regimen of certain verbs, as *deman* - to judge, *bodian* - to announce, *derian* - to harm, *oleccan* - to flatten, command the use of the dative, that is, the indirect object, the cognates of which are transitive in modern English.

Other peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon verb are the instrumental function of the genitive case attending certain verbs, as in lines 845, 1439, and 2206 of *Beowulf*. A singular verb is used with a plural subject, as in *Beowulf*, line 904, with the verb following, and line 1408, with the verb preceding. One finds a lack of control in the inter-

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change of cases, most conspicuous in lines 424-26 and 1977–80 of Beowulf, with, appearing with the accusative, that is, the direct object, and the dative, that is, the indirect object, and in lines 1830–35 in which an apposition in the accusative case follows a noun in the dative case. The violation of the consecutio temporum time sequence, used in dependent clauses in the transition from past to present, is found in the passages beginning with lines 1313, 1921, 1925, 2484, and 2493 of Beowulf.

Other characteristics regarding Anglo-Saxon subject-verb agreement are: a compound subject and a singular verb; a compound subject in which the second part of it is added after the first member of the compound and the verb have been expressed; a plural subject with a singular verb; and a compound verb changing number without a change taking place in the subject. More than 75 examples of subject-verb apparent incongruities, that is, that look like incongruities, have been discovered to exist in Beowulf and, although several are questionable, they illustrate the kind of difficulties awaiting the student of Anglo-Saxon. 395

A very striking trait of the Anglo-Saxon sentence is the subjectless verb, exemplified in line 1020 of Beowulf:

forgeaf ba beowulfe brand healfdenes -396 gave then to Beowulf the sword of Healfdene. Some editions of Beowulf: Thorpe's, 397 Wyatt and Chambers', 398 and Klaeber's, have made an emendation of brand - sword, to bearn - son, in order to provide forgeaf with an expressed subject. This paper refutes the emendation on the basis that it does away with an ellipsis, which is an important stylistic feature of Beowulf, and that the change thus carried out weakens the poetic value of the line. 399 This is a typical example of what may happen, sometimes, to an Anglo-Saxon manuscript in the hands of certain editors and translators, Klaeber is not included here, who are unaware or overlook certain Anglo-Saxon stylistic devices and technique, and consider distinguishing marks of Beowulf in terms of modern norms.

Anglo-Saxon ellipses developed from subjectless verbs are often interpreted as solecisms in modern rhetoric. The desire of editors, in this case, seems to have been to

399 Sherman M. Kuhp, "The Sword of Healfdene," JEGP, XLII (January, 1943), p. 82.
translate line 1020 of Beowulf with a subject. It is interesting to observe that in Anglo-Saxon if a subject is expressed or suggested by one or several substantives in the preceding or the following clause, it can be omitted. Another case in point are lines 2519-21 of Beowulf in which the ic - I, appears in line 2519, and remains understood in lines 2520-21 without fear the passage may develop into a solecism. 400

The ellipsis of the subject is found also after a formal speech, as in line 2892 of Beowulf. In this case, Wiglaf's discourse, contained in lines 2864-91, provides the cue. To an Anglo-Saxon, the appearance of a subject with heht - commanded or ordered, as in line 2892, would have been redundant and considered bad taste. Similar examples occur in lines 1216-32 of Beowulf, and in lines 45-62 of The Battle of Maldon. Truly speaking, the subjects in these cases are merely understood. Subjectless verbs are found also after so called digressions, as in lines 115-25 and 916-20 of Beowulf. Generally, it may be said that the subject is left out of the Anglo-Saxon sentence when the

400 Alois Pogatscher, "Unausgedrücktes Subjekt im Altnegischen," Anglia, XXIII (1901), p.263. Many examples from Anglo-Saxon prose and poetry are given.
Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. xci-xciv.
context is clear.

Among the elements of surprise awaiting the students looking at Beowulf for the first time, is the end-position of the verb in the word-order of the Anglo-Saxon sentence. The opening lines of Beowulf make plain the predominance of that feature in Anglo-Saxon poetry. In the first ten lines of Beowulf the characteristic is exemplified seven times, namely, in line 2: gefrunon - have heard; line 3: fremedon - displayed; line 5: ofteah - dragged away; line 6: weard - was; line 7: gebæd - experienced or lived through; line 8: bæh - prosper; and line 10: hyran scolde - must obey. This trait of the Anglo-Saxon verb has apparently been inherited from ancient Germanic rule.

Remarks about Anglo-Saxon time relationship in the use of verbs will clarify another Anglo-Saxon syntactical crux. Two tenses only, the present and the preterit, are distinguished in form in Anglo-Saxon verbs. Since the present tense form is used to express many different time relationships, including the future, the student faces another difficulty in the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon texts. Later on in Anglo-Saxon times, the present forms of beon - to be, sculan - shall, willan - will, with the infinitive were used to express future time. Earlier, the preterit of

401 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. xciv.
intransitive verbs was formed with habban - to have, and the past participle, and the perfect of intransitive verbs with wesan - to be, and the past participle. Later, habban was used also to form the preterit of intransitive verbs. The old Anglo-Saxon passive voice is still recognized in the verb hattan - to call, and appears in the form of hatte, from Gothic haitada - is or was called, and later was expressed by the forms of bōn and wesan - to be, and sometimes by weorpan - to become, and the past participle. The prothesis of the negative adverb ne - not, with eom - I am, eart - you are, is - he is, and other similar forms, becomes neom - I am not, neart - you are not, and nis - he is not.

Certain generalities regarding the use of the present tense form must be borne in mind when reading Anglo-Saxon texts. The present tense form is employed to express actual present time, that is, that which is real, as in line 2653 of Beowulf; to denote future time, as in line 293 of Beowulf; to establish the universal, timeless, or gnomic present, as in lines 20 and 2029-31 of Beowulf; to describe an action originating in the past but not completed at the time the speaker refers to it, comparable to Latin jam - at

402 Wright, Old English Grammar, pp. 235-36.
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this moment or now, and Latin jam dudum, equivalent to French depuis longtemps - for a long time or since, and Portuguese and Spanish desde - since, as in lines 265, 290, 996, and 1923 of Beowulf; and finally, in subordinate clauses after verbs of saying, thinking, knowing, and seeing, to indicate the preterit. It is not uncommon, in the last case mentioned, for the subjunctive mood to appear instead of the present tense, as in lines 1314, 1719, 2486, and 2495 of Beowulf. 404

The Anglo-Saxon student should not forget that the present and the future are easily distinguished by the use of adverbs denoting futurity, and by the distinction between perfective and imperfective verbs, the present tense form of the former being used to show future time, and the present tense form of the latter usually to convey real present time. Although the historical present was used widely in the Latin texts available at the time, it rarely appears in Anglo-Saxon texts. A case in point is The Blickling Homilies, and another, lines 2024-29 of Beowulf. 405 The observations made so far regarding the Anglo-Saxon verb show that

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a lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of certain syntactical complexities regarding/relationships in Anglo-Saxon verbs will lead to a wrong interpretation of the texts read.

The paratactic sentence construction, that is, the rhetorical device by which a subordinate relation is idiomatically expressed by a coordinately juxtaposed sentence, was discussed earlier, pages 203-206. In lines 1339, 2158, and 2239 of Beowulf, the verbs wolde - would, cwæd - said, and wende - weened, fancied, or believed, appear at the beginning of the thought and are subjectless. When cases like these occur, the verb is sometimes replaced by a hendiadys, that is, a figure of style that expresses a thought by two words joined by and, rather than by a noun with a qualifying adjective, or by two verbs rather than a single verb, as woldon ond wendon - wished and weened, from willan - to will or wish, and wônan - to ween, as in line 1604 of Beowulf: wiston ond ne wendon - wished and weened not.

It is not uncommon for an Anglo-Saxon verb to take its meaning from another verb, or for the meaning to develop or become reinforced by a verb preceding or following it. This is in keeping with the Anglo-Saxon manner of

406 Andrew, Syntax and Style in Old English, pp. 87-88.
building up meaning from context. An example is found in line 2814 of Beowulf: ealle wyrd forswēop - fate has swept (them, that is, the earls) all, meaning, all the earls have died, and line 2816 of Beowulf: ic him æfter sceal - I shall after (follow) them, the verb forswēop, from for-swāpan - to sweep off, becoming clearer and giving strength and meaning to sceal - I shall. A verb like weallan - to be agitated, rage, toss, well, bubble, seethe, foam, be hot, boil, may be reinforced or given added dimension in meaning when in contact with a verb closely related to it in meaning, as brinnan - to burn, from Latin ardere - to be on fire, shine, throw out sparks, sparkle, be resplendent, glow, and beornan or biernan - to burn, be on fire, give light, from Latin ardere, exardere - to become enflamed, light itself, and comburere - to burn completely, destroy by fire, and burn alive. 407

Because the structure of the Anglo-Saxon verse line compelled the poet to be concise, he had to develop power of expression, that is, thought had to be expressed with clarity and brevity. One of the most important tools used by Anglo-Saxon poets to achieve this end was the metaphor. Often a metaphor in the subject gives way to another in the

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407 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 1174, 126, and 86.
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 63, 230, and 125.
verb, and sometimes to a third in the object. Examples occur in line 1523 of Beowulf: *baet se beadolēoma bitan nolde* that the battle-flash (battle-gleam or battle-light, that is, the sword) would not bite; and in lines 1121-24 of Beowulf: *bengeato burston, þonne blōd aetspranc, lædbite līces* (their) wound-openings (wound-gates) burst (open), then blood sprang out, from the body's hostile bite. 408

In other instances the poet uses a noun with a vigorous verb to convey an idea and develop a certain mood. This is exemplified in line 15 of The Fortunes of Men - *summe sceal hreoh fordrīfan* - the tempest shall drive one away, hreoh - storm, and fordrīfan - to drive away, force, compel, drive out, eject, banish, hreoh and fordrīfan complementing each other. Another example is found in line 949 of Christ - *swogad windas* - roar the winds, from swogan- to make a sound, move with noise, rush, roar, (of wind, water, flame), and when used figuratively, the verb swōgan means to move with violence, enter with force, invade, and windas - winds. In certain cases ideas are implied in the union of nouns or other words, the verbs thus formed having no connection by literal interpretation, as in regolilian -

to draw lines with a ruler, and onhōhsnia - put a stop to, as in line 1944 of Beowulf. 409

The respect for authority, almost sacred, in Anglo-Saxon times, a behaviour the twentieth century does not understand, transformed Anglo-Saxon verbs of causing into verbs of ordering. When orders were given in the Anglo-Saxon period, the emphasis was not on the pronouncement of the commands, but on the acts brought about by the orders, that is, on what was caused to be. It follows that certain verbs of ordering may have a causing counterpart. Depending on the emphasis placed by the writer, hātan - to promise, call, or to order, ordain, bid, direct, may be a verb of ordering or a verb of causing. The verb of ordering is considered an imperfective verb because it does not necessarily produce an effect, that is, the accomplishment of an act may or may not follow the commandment given. On the contrary, the verb of causing indicates the completion of an act, and is a perfective verb, for there is a way in which it can be said that a causative verb states that an action has been completed. The distinction is most impor-

tant in the interpretation and translation of a passage. In lines 198, 1035, 2190, and 3110 of Beowulf, the emphasis on hātan is causative, not mandatory. A similar relation exists between verbs of compelling or forcing, as niedan - to force, compel, and contrain, gebrēatian - to threaten, afflict, trouble, harass, restrain, press, oppress, urge, force, and compel, gebrēan - to restrain, and compel, brēagan - to reprove, rebuke, punish, distress, and oppress, and bræstan - twist, press, and constrain, and verbs of allowing, as lætan - to allow, remain, leave behind, depart from, let alone, bequeath, allow to do, cause to do, consider, regard as, suppose, emit, set free, assert, pretend, allot, and assign. 410

The meanings of verbs of ordering, causing, forcing, and allowing are closely related in the general idea implied in them, that is, putting something in place or in motion by inexpressed means or violence. The fine distinction existing between those verbs is sometimes difficult to establish, but it can usually be discovered from the emphasis they carry and from contextual interpretation. 411

The important rôle of Anglo-Saxon metrics in the sentence and its effect on the verb should not be overlooked. Anglo-Saxon versification, as it has been seen, calls for brevity and power of thought, the alliterative distinctiveness of the line restricting the length of the verse, in a way similar to the English heroic couplet or the Japanese Haiku, and compels the poet to be laconic. As a result, the poet had to compress his thought in a few vigorous words bursting with meaning, and had to strive to provide a forceful and highly significant verb as the gear on which would veer the energy of expression of the whole verse. There is a way in which it can be said that the poet used a select verb in every case, but not every verb was select in the sense of poetic. For example, waes - was, is used 243 times in Beowulf, and other forms of the verb wesan - to be, appear 198 times for a total of 441 occurrences of the verb to be.

This fact leads to an important observation: not all the verbs in Anglo-Saxon poetry are poetic words. General-

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412 Haiku, sometimes written Hokku, is a form of Japanese poetry which states in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables a clear picture designed to arouse a distinct emotion and suggest a specific spiritual insight. Earlier in the century the Haiku was a formative influence on the imagists. (From: Thrall, Hibbard, and Holman, A Handbook to Literature, p. 217.)

413 Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. 323-24.
ly, however, and particularly because Anglo-Saxon poetry called for power of expression in the line, the verb is usually discovered to be pregnant with meaning and rich in associations and allusions. The verb can only be appreciated, that is, the full weight of its meaning understood, when the sense implied is grasped and the experience it conveys is interpreted. Examples will illustrate.

Sea imagery, as earlier mentioned, is a favourite subject of the Anglo-Saxon poet. A fine poetic specimen is contained in lines 1903-13 of Beowulf, describing Beowulf's homecoming. The poet uses seven nouns to depict the ship, and thirteen verbs, two of which are understood, and seven are well chosen to reinforce the meaning. The lines are:

Gewāt him on naca
Dā waes be maeste
segl sale faest;
no baer wēgflotan
sīēs getwæefde;
flēat fāmighēals
bundenstefna
baet hīe Gēata clifu
cūpe naassas;
lyftgeswenced,

Departed he in the ship / churning (ploughing) the deep water / the Danes' land left. / Then was upon the mast / a sea-garment, / a sail (held) fast by a rope; / the sea-wood creaked; / not there the wave-floater / the wind above the billows (blowing) / (in no way) from its course impeded (delayed), / the sea-goer (floater) went on, / floated the foamy-necked / forth over the waves, / the bounden (well-wrought) prow /
The literal translation of these lines is not made with the idea of supplying an adequate, that is, artistic rendering of the passage in question. As Wyld once pointed out "no impression equivalent to that produced by the Anglo-Saxon can possibly be gathered from a bald and literal rendering; the translation of the lines quoted above is a literal version. This was done for the purpose of emphasizing certain elements of the diction, but the literal equivalent thus made is to the detriment of the poetic value of the lines, and does not do justice to the art of the poet. The translation, as it is given, is far from being convincing that the passage is artistically wrought with a wealth of imagery, every word and phrase replete with meaning, with extraordinary variety in the choice of words, with striking and beautiful forms of expressions teeming pictorial, and the lines, efflorescent with human touch, permeate life with palpitating images and sound associations.

It is perhaps appropriate and timely at this point to mention that a translation of poetry from one language to another is never adequate in the sense of translating the poetic intuition and the artistic ideal of a poem to

across the sea's currents, / till they the Geats' cliffs (homeland) / could see, / the well known headlands; /
the galley forward thrust / driven before the winds (wind-impelled), / until it stood (came to rest) upon the land.

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the point of having the same poem in another language. What actually takes place in the translation is a paraphrase or explanation of the logical sense, and the allusions inherent in the artistic ideal. The work thus produced is not a poem; it is, at best, a French explication d'auteurs.

The opinion expressed here is nothing new and applies also to literary prose. Much is lost in the translation of a work, and it is worse than unfortunate that the genuine beauty of Anglo-Saxon poetry is hidden from the average reader in translation. "Stream of narrative" and "flow of narrative" are not indeed happy terms to apply to the Anglo-Saxon epics.... I do not see how it is possible, except perhaps as a tour de force, to paraphrase or to imitate in one language the poetry of another language without following to some extent the technique of the original.

One must go further and say, that to follow the technique of an original piece of literature in translation is impossible because the poetic intuition which produced the artifact is the result, among other things, of the poet's particular general experience which is different in every man. What can actually happen and, indeed, has happened

in the past is that the translation made became part of the artist's particular general experience and a potential objective correlative, which in time could develop into a poetic intuition. Such seems the case of Alfred Tennyson's *The Battle of Brunanburh*, Ezra Pound's *The Seafarer*, and many others, including the so called 'faked' translations of James Macpherson's *Ossian*, Thomas Chatterton's literary 'forgeries' of poems and prose pieces, and finally, Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat*.

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418 T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, 3rd ed. (London, 1951), p. 145: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked." It is very important to remember that Eliot makes his definition of objective correlative belong to the appetitive world, but in fact, in the process of the poetic intuition, it belongs to the cognitive faculties, as shown by Paul J. Marcotte, in *The God Within*, pp. 25-37, and 55-72.


422 Ibid., pp. 257-58.

Returning to the excerpt describing Beowulf's homeward voyage from Heorot, the passage could be the object of an enlightening paper on the use of sea imagery, rejecting, at the same time, what has been erroneously described as an Anglo-Saxon exaggerated fondness or mannerism for epithets or synonyms. Several of the eleven verbs found in those lines will now be examined to show that they are the result of thoughtful consideration and careful selection, to demonstrate the poet's ability to make use of the verb to convey the mood required by his artistic ideal, and to illustrate that the verbs so chosen contribute to the enrichment of the poetic diction of the poem.

The first verb is gewat - departed, used in line 1903, from gewitan - to depart or go. At first sight there seems to be nothing unusual about the choice of this action word, meaning simply to leave. There is much more, and the poet could have used any of several other verbs. The choice of gewat at this particular moment and place has its raison d'être, the word meaning to turn one's eyes in a particular direction with the intention of taking that direction, to set out towards a goal, to pass over, to go away, to retire, even to die. The etymology of gewat helps further to grasp the sense in which the poet of Beo-

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424 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 469.
wulf used it. To depart means to separate, to part from, to quit, to die, from Old French départir or despartir, des, from Latin dia - from, with the idea of separation or removal, and French partir, from Latin partire - to divide or put asunder, from Latin transire or discedere - to go beyond and away from, to go to the other side, to separate, with the French meaning se séparer or s'écarter. The prevalent meaning arising from this is to die, in this context figuratively of course, in the sense of going away and not coming back, of breaking away, once and for all, from certain things which are being left behind, such as, loved ones, cherished memories, pleasant company and surroundings, etc. This is Beowulf's case; having destroyed the monsters, covered himself with glory, and made many friends, he is now turning his back, that is, departing from it all, in other words, in going away he is dying a bit.

The verb gewat is rich in associations and develops the mood intended by the poet. A departure is often sad, but when a loved one leaves with the almost certainty that he will not return, hearts throb with emotion, a strange sadness fills the atmosphere, and tension mounts as the last

moment approaches. The joys and smiles of the farewell feast are soon transformed into mixed feelings of melancholy, heartbreak, and concealed sobs. Hrothgar, the matchless king, blameless in every way, magnificent in his formal attire and accompanied by his retainers, expresses his last thanks to Beowulf for all he had done for his people. The aged king's face is flushed with sadness, and the piercing crystal-like look of his eyes reaches far beyond the visible, for he knows that many winters have deprived him of the joys of strength, old and grey, he will not see his friend and champion again. Among the men, the atmosphere rings with laughers, last moment jokes and messages are exchanged, and the best wishes of good-luck, bon voyage, and safe journey home are heard above the hubbub of the leave-taking gathering.

Beowulf's escort, light in hearts, is eager to board the beloved ocean craft; the men long to see the cube naessas - the well-known headlands of their country again. As the din of the coats of mail, of shields and spears echo behind the Danes, the heavy sounding steps and the firm and decided gait of the Geats reach the shore where the ship rests at anchor, the final farewell takes place. A sword mounted with gold, a treasure and heirloom, is given to the guardian of the vessel. More adieus are in the making, a hurried word, a final good-bye, a last glance, and sighs of
relief mark the definitive parting.

As the ship pulls away from the strand, the waterside echoes the muffled sound of roaring commands, the resounding creak of a broad-beamed ship, the squeaking oars and splashing water, the keen laughers and impulsive shouts of joy, the thumping beat and pounding waves, while overhead, the salty sky teems with bustle as the much-ado sea gulls shrill their way about and add to the commotion, as if taking part in the activities, by contributing local colour with their high-pitched and piercing cries. All this, and more than space allows to mention here, is contained in the verb gewitan which, by way of associations, imparts the mood of sadness which has overtaken the Danes, and the sadness mixed with joyous excitement which has filled the Geats at the thought of their impending homecoming trip.

The verb gewitan is usually followed by a verb of motion, in this case, by drēfan - to stir up or make the water turbid, a word which in itself is full of meaning, whether taken literally, figuratively, or symbolically. Anyone who has handled the oars of a boat or of a canoe, or has seen the paddle-type rear and side wheels of old river steamboats chew up the water, or has been at the command of an outboard motor, particularly when its mechanism performed reverse action churning the water and turning up the bottom,
or has witnessed the hellish frenzies stirred up by the powerful propellers of transoceanic liners coming or leaving their moorings will have an idea of the associations the verb dₕᵢᵣₕₐᵣₙ secretes.

It is not so much what the verb dₕᵢᵣₕₐᵣₙ is, as how it acts on one's mind by way of allusions, that makes it a particularly well chosen and suggestive verb. When used in the context as it is in line 1904 of Beowulf, it brings back to life all that has been said about gewitan plus a myriad of activities connected with putting a ship to sea. On board, every member of the crew is either busy giving orders, pulling, pushing, tying, holding, watching, steadying, or moving about something that seems quite familiar; at sea, the waves are doing their utmost to react to the treatment they receive at the hands of the ship, eddying, churning, chewing, splashing about the oars, the side of the ship and the rudder, while the floor of the sea does its share by spitting up, as best it can, every living thing that is disturbed, and throws up foam that clings to everything.

Overhead, the air is a maze of sea mews moving about in what appears utter confusion but, in fact, well ordered flights, each bird knowing every movement that is made and in what direction, their shrieks and shrills as if voicing annoyance at the ship's departure. On shore, an-
other type of movements with men hurrying to and fro or looking about, standing or taking up the vigil, hesitating and putting things away, straightening or securing others, and turning and disappearing.

A look at the etymology of drefan will help to understand the fine shades of meaning it has. Drefan means to stir up, disturb, agitate, confuse, churn, trouble, the Latin equivalents being agitare, commovere, turbare, used in relation to deep water - the deep water, in line 1904 of Beowulf. Agitare has the French sense of mettre en mouvement ou en branle, that is, to set a ship in movement or action, as used by the biographer Cornelius Nepos, the friend of Cicero, in Dion 9,2: navem agitare in portu - faire manoeuvrer un vaisseau dans le port - to put a ship amoving in port. Agitare means also to shake, in the French sense of remuer and agiter, as in Cicero's De Natura Deorum 2,26: maria agitata ventis - les mers agitées par les vents - the seas rising through (the action of) the winds; and French se remuer or se déplacer - to put a move on or to move from one place to another, as in Thebais 2,206 of Papinius Stacius: Fama finitimis agitatur agris - 428 la

426 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 86 and 1714.
427 Ibid., pp. 86 and 1707.
428 Ibid., pp. 86 and 1707.
Renommée parcourt les territoires voisins - fame wanders about neighbouring territories, and French se mettre en mouvement, as in Cicero’s De Divinatione 2, 139: tum animus agitatur ipse per sese - alors l’âme se meut par elle-même (trouve en elle-même son principe d’activité) - the soul moves by itself (that is, finds in itself its principle of movement).

Latin commovere is a synonym of agitare, and more specifically has the meaning of the Latin se commovere, as in Cicero’s De Finibus 5, 42: ex loco - bouger d’un endroit ou quitter un endroit - to move from one place or to leave a place. Latin turbare is also a synonym of agitare, the French equivalent being rendre trouble, mettre en désordre, alterer - to make turbid or muddy, to sow disorder, to alter relating to water, and by extension, to Latin turbidus and French confus - confused, as in Ovide’s Epistulae 17, 7; freta ventis turbida - mer bouleversée par les vents - a sea troubled by the winds, or as in De Natura Rerum 2, 1 of Lucrecius: mare, aequora - agiter la mer - to disturb the sea, and by extension, to Latin turbo -

429 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 86 and 1717.
430 Ibid., pp. 355 and 1707.
431 Ibid., pp. 1613 and 1713.
432 Ibid., pp. 1613 and 1713.
qui tourne en rond, tourbillon, tourbillonnement - that which pivots on itself, as a whirlwind, a whirlpool or an eddy, whirling or eddying, as in Curculio of Plautus: ex- oritur ventus turbo -433 un vent s'élève en tourbillon - a wind rises in a whirlpool.

The etymological origin of the verb drēfan having been established, it would seem evident that this word, as used in line 1904 of Beowulf, has a denotative as well as a connotative meaning, and plays another rôle in addition to the important duty it fulfills in developing mood. It is explained first in terms of its normal denotative sense, that is, the stirring up of water in order to move the ship, and this is the sense in which drēfan must be interpreted as shown earlier. The connotative implication is bound with the associations it brings back and the mood it creates. It is also used symbolically. Gazing at the eddies made by the oars, the water churned up at the stern, and the sea acting generally about the ship, one's imagination becomes very active and fancies seeing life, as it really is, through the agitations of the water. For Beowulf and his retainers, names like Hrothgar and Heorot, Grendel and his Dam, Aeschere and the mere, Unferth and Breca, Hygelac

433 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 1613 and 1715.
and Wiglaf, Wealheow and Hrothmund remain part of their particular general experience and episodes in the animated sea of their lives. Another event, the homeward trip, has begun in the every-day contest for livelihood, and as high tide is followed by low tide, heavy seas by calm and fair weather, there is a way in which life may be compared to the movements of the agitated water.

The struggle the ship faces every moment of her life at sea is like one's conflict in life from the time of birth and as the ship must move through time and space, navigate in clear and stormy seas, face constant hazards, and overcome difficulties, so must men pilot their lives and follow the best course they know through the constant turmoil of daily happenings. Beowulf silenced Unferth, overcame Grendel and his mother, faced the return trip, surmounted difficulties at home, just as he had to crush the Dragon at the end of his life. Drēfan is rich in poetic associations in the context in which it is used in line 1904 of Beowulf, and contributes to the poetic diction of the poem.

It is significant that the verbs gewat and drēfan are immediately followed, in line 1904, by ofgeaf - left, from ofgian, ofgyfan, or ofgiefan - to give up, leave, abandon, resign, quit, desert, or even in the sense of die, as in line 2251 of Beowulf: lif ofgeaf - he gave up life.
In the line under review, ofgeaf is used in connection with the land of the Danes - Denaland which Beowulf and his men are leaving behind them, never to return according to the poem. Ofgeaf placed at the end of line completes the statement, and is used in syntactic parallelism to gewāt appearing at the beginning of the statement, to which it is related in the sense just elaborated.

The Latin cognate of ofgeaf is destituo and destitutio - to abandon in the figurative sense, the Old High German being abageban, and the Old Saxon afgeban. The denotation of ofgeaf is to leave physically the land of Hrothgar, to depart or go away; as a result, the contextual association of ofgeaf and its parallel relation to gewāt develop the connotative value, figuratively speaking, into abandoning or forsacan - to give us in the sense of to forsake a land. This is Denaland which has been good to them and where they have made friends. In other words, ofgeaf means figuratively, to break away from or close the door on a particular experience of life, that is, to die a bit. Looked at in this light, ofgeaf contributes to the mood of sadness which hovers in the background of this passage relating to Beowulf's departure from Denaland.

Other verbs of interest in lines 1903-13 of Beowulf are faest, appearing in line 1906, from faestan or faestnian-to hold or make fast or firm, to fasten, secure, entrust, commit, or commend, the Latin equivalent being firmo, from firmare - firm or to make firm or solid. Faest is a well known word today, the modern English, to hold fast or to make secure, coming in direct line from its Anglo-Saxon cognate. The word is popular and convenient in the vocabulary of the seaman. It has a denotative meaning in line 1906, but it is possible that the poet of Beowulf may have intended a connotative meaning, as well, from the word's contextual appearance.

The verb bunede - creaked, from bunian - to make a noise, sound, resound, creak, groan, is used in line 1906 in apposition to the kenning, that is, an Anglo-Saxon periphrastic conventionalized expression used instead of a single word, sund wudu - sea wood, for ship. The verb bunede is aptly chosen for its conventional meaning describing the noise originating from the friction of the ship's timbers of her structure caused by the stress put on it by the rolling and the pitching of the sea. The shuddering, thrumming, and groaning of a ship at sea is a familiar sound to those ac-

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436 Beowulf, ed. Julius Zupita, p. 87.
customed to the sea, and many will remember the noise for the sleepless nights it has brought them. Bunede may be applied, as it is in line 1906, to describe the ship as a whole or an aspect of it, as the noise from the rolling and pitching, or the rubbing of the moving oars, or the movements of the rudder, or any other part, or noise, on which the poet wishes to focus attention. Bunede was a word familiar to those who went to sea, and the use of it in the passage under study could awake a host of cherished associations and related allusions of the kind so ably expressed in The Seafarer. It helps, at the same time, to convey the proper mood.

Of particular concern to this paper, in the remaining lines of the passage being reviewed, are the verbs get-waeftan - to separate, part, put an end to, but particularly, to delay, hinder, restrain, deprive, detain, as in lines 1907-08 of Beowulf: no baer wegflotan / wind ofer ydun / sides getwaefta - in no way there did the wind (blowing) across the waves delayed (impeded or hindered) the wave-floater on its journey. Another verb is faran - to go, proceed, march, go beyond, go away (in the sense of to move or to change place), sail, the Latin cognates being ire, vadere, incéder, transire, migrare, navigare, and by extension, to fare or journey on, from Sanskrit pri - to bring over.
The verb *faran* is used widely in Anglo-Saxon for expressing every kind of going from one place to another, the poet giving it the required meaning through contextual association, in this case, the description of a sea voyage, as in *sængenga för* - the sea goer went on, line 1908 of *Beowulf*. A great deal more is implied in the verb *för*. Looked at literally, *för* has little colour, but seen in the light of its etymology and the seafaring contextual background of lines 1903-13 of *Beowulf*, *för* is pregnant with significance. In Anglo-Saxon days, as always, a ship had to keep a steady course, and with the 'benignant' cooperation of the elements, the hard work of a sturdy crew, final destination could be reached safely and without delay. Anyone who has sailed the North Sea at any time, but particularly from September to April, knows that this is to leave much unsaid about seafaring days of old when a heavy ship, unwieldy oars, a sail, and a cumbersome rudder were the only means of propulsion to overcome the powerful and treacherous North Sea, and be able to remain master of it.

The respect of the Anglo-Saxon for the sea was not a myth. It was a genuine veneration mingled with awe, ad-

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Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 856, 1642, 792, 1592, 975, and 1016.
miration, and perhaps fear for the unknown beyond the seas, but at the same time, although certain intangible factors bordering on the mysterious puzzled them, they knew the sea to be a reality from experience. In those days, when a ship took to the sea anything could happen, and to faran on was a wish foremost in the minds of those connected with it. The meaning of faran implied to have a good voyage with a minimum of hardships, that is, to keep on course, to meet good sailing conditions, to reach home - safely and healthy. This was the hope of all, but the possibility of fulfilment was always overshadowed with feelings of anxiety and misgivings since the sea was known to exact a heavy toll; this was the reality the Anglo-Saxon knew but too well. The most important thing which could happen a ship in those days was to faran on, that is, to fare well, with the implied meaning of the ship sailing according to plans and to the satisfaction of all concerned. As long as the ship would faran on, a safe journey with a happy landing was in the making. The Anglo-Saxons realizing the true import of faran in sægenga for would react to the rich associations it stirred in them.

Beowulf's embarcation must have been a strongly built boat, manned by an able and eager crew, sailing in ideal conditions and taking advantage of favourable winds, for the poet reinforces sægenga for by fleat fámigeals.
fór ðæs scutted (floated) the foamy necked forth over the wave (the ship sped on across the main), in line 1909 of Beowulf. This line must be interpreted with the idea of swiftness, the poet achieving that with the use of the verb fleat, from flēotan - to float, swim, sail, and its contextual arrangement with the adverb ford - forth, forward, onward, and the kenning fāmigheals - foamy necked (that is, the ship was afoam).

Although the verb flēotan is passed over by most modern translators, and is put down as float in the modern sense of the word, flēotan means a great deal more. The etymology of flēotan shows that it has its origin in Sanskrit plu - to float or swim. It is cognate with Old Saxon fliotan, Old High German fliuzan or fleozan, Middle High German vliuzen, Latin fluere - to flow, from Greek to navigate, and Latin navigare. It will be shown that fleat means more than merely to float. The basic and most important idea is movement forward as indicated by the word swim, in Sanskrit plu. Most modern translators, as may be verified from the references given in the next footnote, give fleat a literal rendering or translation with the result that the idea of movement forward, of speed or veloc-

Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, p. 1016.
This is wrong, and speed is definitely implied from *navigare*, the Latin equivalent of the Greek cognate, whose roots are *navis* - ship, and *agitare* - to press on or drive on, hence, to pass over the sea, to travel by water, or to sail.

It is true that a seaworthy ship floats, and this is the idea implied in *fleotan*, but a ship must do something else besides floating to overcome the high seas and reach her destination. This is exactly what the poet conveys in line 1909, where the idea of speed prevails, and is reinforced by *ford* and particularly by *fæmiegeals*, immediately associating the image thus produced, that is, of foam.
a characteristic of any fast moving vessel, forming about
the curved-prow ship. The word chosen in translation to
render the proper connotation of flåt must impart the idea
of swiftness. This is done with the verb to scud, the na-
ture of which is to hurry. More specifically, it means hur-
rried movement; used imperatively, to be off or to make
haste; and applied to the sea, it becomes a technical nau-
tical term meaning, to sail or move swiftly on the water, or
to run before a gale with little or no sail. The same
idea of speed is expressed in lines 496-98 of Andreas: is
bes bat ful scrid, / faered famigheals, / fugole geli-
cost / glided on geofone - the ship is going at full speed
fares the foamy necked, like a bird flying she slides over
the water (sea). The idea of swiftness is reinforced with
the simile of the flying bird.

The last two verbs appearing in lines 1903-13 of
Beowulf are gebrang - pressed on or thrust forcibly, of line
1912, and stôd - stood, from standan - to stand, of line
1913. Gebrang is from gebringan - to press on, the Latin
equivalent being contendere - to lighten or stiffen, extend,
brace oneself, and is allied to Latin trudere - to push with strength and violence. The verb gebringan is a happy and apt choice for the occasion. At this point the vessel is within the cube naessas - well-known bluffs of line 1912, of the home of the Geats. At the sight of the cliffs the oarsmen double their energy with great sighs of relief and enthusiasm, and the ship, in line 1913, lyftgeswenced - driven (beaten) before the wind, like a thoroughbred race horse rounding the last bend and gathering momentum, presses on home with a tremendous forward thrust past the headlands, and there on land she stands! Seven words only, like the simple stroke of a great master, are required to give an extraordinary colourful passage, a striking appeal and a powerful finish. Such are the words céol up gebrang / lyftgeswenced, on lande stōd - the keel (ship) pressed or pushed on (upwards) driven (or beaten) before the wind, came to rest upon the land (ran aground or was grounded), lines 1912-13 of Beowulf.

In this passage again the contextual relation of gebrang is the key to the understanding of the lines, and the grasping of the happy mood it conveys, of the relaxed satisfaction of the crew upon reaching homeland after a

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long absence. This is a good example of the terseness of Anglo-Saxon poetic thought. Not a single word could be removed from the seven words used in this context without altering the meaning or weakening its purport. Ceol - keel is a synonym for ship; it is allied to Latin carina, from the half shell of a nut, to French coque (d'un navire), and Latin celox - a light ship. Figuratively speaking, everybody and everything, that is to say, the members of the crew and every part of the ship in the ceol - keel, were set upon their mettles as they caught sight of the familiar headlands. The adverb up - up, which is used as a postposition, has the same function as ford in ford ofer yoe - forth, that is, forward over the wave (ocean) of line 1909. As a postposition, the adverb up clarifies and reinforces the meaning of gebrang, but unlike modern English postpositions, it comes before the verb, not after. In its particular position immediately before gebrang, the adverb up creates the impression of a hammer blow, that is, of a thrust upon gebrang, while the compound immediately following gebrang, lyftgeswenced - driven before the wind, becomes the third and last word in up gebrang lyftgeswenced - pressed on weather-driven (driven before the wind), lines 1912-13, forming a sort of triune expression, whose effect,

443 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 266 and 286.
like a booster rocket, seems to enable the ship to round off the headlands and, in one final sweep, pick up the necessary momentum to run the keel aground in a majestic landing, just as the custom of the time would have it, that is, the ship on lande stōd – on land stood or came to rest upon the shore, in line 1913.

Of noteworthy interest for its function in the last line of the passage under examination is the compound verbal adjective lyftgeswenced – driven by (before) the wind, in line 1913, from lyft – air, sky, clouds, atmosphere, breeze, or heavens, and the verb swencan – to press hard, to cause a person to labour or to cause a person trouble, as to harass, vex, or afflict, in the sense of the Latin cognate flagellare – to whip. The Anglo-Saxon verb swencan is allied to geswencan – to agitate, trouble, vex, fatigue, afflict, harass, or oppress, with the Latin equivalents pulsare and agitare, tribulare, vexare, fatigare, adfligere, adficere, and opprimere. Cognate with these are the Anglo-Saxon sweng – a blow or stroke, from the verb swingan to swing, and the verb swincan – to labour or toil, the modern English cognate appearing as swink, meaning to labour, exert oneself, to toil, work hard, slave, drudge, as used by Spenser, and swinked or swinkt, wearied with toil, as used by Milton, in line 293 of Comus.444

444 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 650,
Two of the Latin verbs mentioned in the paragraph immediately preceding are most significant in helping to understand the meaning of lyftgeswenced. One verb is adfligere, the French equivalent being frapper (heurter) contre—to strike (knock or run) against, as in Latin ad scopulos adflicta navis of Cicero's Pro C. Rabirio Postume 25—navire jeté contre les rochers—ship thrown (pushed) against the cliffs; tempestas naves Rhodias adflixit of Julius Caesar's De Bello Civili 3, 37, 2—la tempête jeta à la côte (drossa) les navires Rhodiens—the storm knocked against the coast (drove ashore) the Rhodian ships; and (ferrea manus) navem ita undae adfligebat ut..., from Ab Urbe Con Ita Libri 24, 34, 11 of T. Livius—(la main de fer) abattait le navire sur les flots avec tant de violence que...—(the iron hand) pushed down (blew down or threw down) the ship upon the sea (billows) with such force (violence) that...

The other Latin verb is agitare, which has already been described on page 242 with the idea of to put in movement. The relation of agitare to swencan is contained in 948, and 448.

Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 671, 1277, 86, 1599, 1669, 655, 37, 35, and 1086.

445 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 37, 1706, 1707, and 1712.
the French idea of *pousser vivement* - to push briskly or sharply, that is, with strength, as in *terris agitare vel undis Trojanos potuisti* of Virgil's *Aeneid* 12,802 - *tu as pu poursuivre les Troyens sur terre ou sur mer* - you were able to push after (pursue) the Trojans on land and at sea; and the French idea of *remuer* or *agiter* - to move or shake, as in *maria agitata ventis* of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* 2, 26.446

From the meanings derived from *flagellare, adfligere, agitare*, and modern English *swink*, a clearer understanding of the full weight of *lyftgeswencan* is now possible. What is implied in *lyftgeswencan* is tantamount to high winds blowing so strongly as capable, so to speak, of lifting the ship and making her come to rest on shore. In other words, the prevailing idea inherent in *lyftgeswencan* is forward thrust resulting from powerful winds blowing about high cliffs, deep gorges, towering fjords, catching the vessel like the lashes of a whip, figuratively of course, beating down upon her with repeated and continued swinging motion, striking or knocking against the keel, shaking, pushing, and moving the ship with the strength characteristic of coastal winds about headlands. The contextual meaning of *lyftgeswenced* is fraught with suggestiveness.

446 Gaffiot, *Dictionnaire illustré latin français*, pp. 86-87, 1719, and 1707.
Several pages have been needed to give a partial exegesis of eleven lines of Anglo-Saxon poetry, with special emphasis placed on certain verbs. There are many more similar passages in Anglo-Saxon poetry, which are replete with poetic wealth, and much more space than the limits of this thesis allow would be needed to discuss them. As a compromise, verbs will be singled out of other passages which will be examined, and individual verbs taken at random from Anglo-Saxon poetry will be discussed. A case has been made, from the discussion of lines 1903-13 of Beowulf, against the danger of literal translation of Anglo-Saxon poetry and in favour of the importance and necessity of interpreting words in the light of their etymological background and contextual associations. Very few words in Anglo-Saxon can be taken at their face value; words like gewat, drefan, ofgeaf, bunede, fleat, ford, gebrang, and lyftgeswenced, are capable of yielding an abundance of poetic meanings if seen and understood in their milieu.

It remains a difficult task to explain adequately the full significance of the diction of Anglo-Saxon excerpts of poetry by merely pointing to the suitability of the choice of the verbs and their richness in suggestiveness, that is, tending to stimulate thought or reflection, without showing their effect on other words in the context, and
what meaning they take in association with them. However, some knowledge may still be gathered from an examination of certain verbs, and comments made about them. A wider and deeper acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon verbs will help to understand the important use Anglo-Saxon poets made of them, and will help to reveal how fully charged action words are with allusions.

An appropriate example is found in two verbs of lines 44-47 of The Whale. First, there is the verb beaenian or bedennan - to cover, stretch on or over, spread over, from Latin obducere and French recouvrir, as in Cicero's De Natura Deorum 2,120: trunci obducuntur cortice - les troncs se recouvrent d'écorce - (tree) trunks are covered (cover themselves) with bark. Poetically, Latin obducere has the French equivalent of voiler - to veil, obscure, dim, shade, as in Horace's Epodon Liber 15,5: frons obducta - front couvert, asombri - frowning (covered) brow (forehead), gloomy face (forehead). Figuratively, Latin obducere means in French tirer à soi, absorber, boire - to pull towards oneself, to absorb, to drink, as used in Cicero's Tusculanae Disputationes 1,96, and in Seneca's Dialogi 1, "De Providentia" 3, 12. 447

The figurative sense of obducere is interesting. As-

assuming that the Anglo-Saxon poet of The Whale had a knowledge of it or of Latin words cognate with it, the choice of the verb beorden represents the stroke of a master. Heolobhelme, line 45 of The Whale, means a helmet which makes the wearer invisible or conceals him, that is, the helmet puts the wearer in darkness, is so far as the viewers are concerned, in dimming the view, so to speak, of the people looking at him. As a result, there is a way in which heolophelme may be described as a dusky covering, something pulled over, although darkness is not mentioned as such. The art of the poet here lies in his ability to suggest and emphasize darkness from the context in which the passage takes place, and in his cleverness to choose a word which conveys the exact meaning desired. This shows again the richness of Anglo-Saxon words, the imagery that may be developed from them, the effect needed to carry the thought, and the poets' dexterity with the vocabulary they use.

The expression heolophelme bebeaht - overtaken by a dusky covering (darkness), that is, veiled in or enshrouded in darkness, in line 45 of The Whale, is immediately followed by helle seceo - hell (he) seeks. This is a reference to the fable of The Whale and the account it contains of the journey of lost souls dragged to hell by the devil. The lure to which the soul is attracted is likened to a whale
which is mistaken for an island on which weary seamen un­wisely and rashly alight. The whale, personifying the devil, plunges into the bottomless depths of the sea, representing hell, carrying the seamen, symbolizing evil men's souls. The familiarity of Anglo-Saxons with script­tural allusions would enable them to associate darkness with hell immediately. Taking advantage of this knowledge the poet is free to suggest darkness by way of an image, thus enriching his poetic diction with heolobelme, and completing the image with the verb bebeaht which serves a double purpose. It conveys the idea of stretched or covered in the French sense of voiler, and figuratively it carries the sense of Latin obducere - pulled towards oneself or absorbed in darkness, this thought being suggested by contextual allusion and the word heolobelme, and confirmed, beyond any doubt, in helle seceo - hell seeks (he) of line 45.

A word is necessary about the verb seceo - he seeks from secan - to seek, found in line 45 of The Whale. Basically, this verb means to search for, inquire, ask for, look for. In line 45 of The Whale it is cognate with Latin invisere and French aller voir, visiter, faire visite - to go see, visit, or pay a visit to, as used by Cicero in Epistulae ad Atticum 12,30,1 and in De Oratore 1,249. The more precise meaning of seceo is found in the general sense of
Latin *petere*, the French equivalent being *chercher à atteindre* - to seek to reach, and in the unequivocal meaning of French *diriger sa course vers*, or *chercher à gagner* - direct or point one's course towards (a certain direction), or endeavour, that is, make efforts to reach, as in *Miltiades* 5,5 of Cornelius Nepos: *naives petere* - *chercher à rejoindre les navires* - to make efforts to reach the ships. The word is particularly well exemplified in the French idea of *aspirer à* - to aspire to, as in Cicero’s *Orator ad M. Brutum*, 56; *eloquentiae principatum* - *aspirer au premier rang dans l’éloquence* - to aspire to the first place (to the top, the summit) in eloquence.  

Diving through the depths of the sea of hell, the devil with the damned souls aspires, that is, craves for reaching the bottomless pit. This is the sense in which *seceo*, in *helle seceo* - aspires to hell, line 45 of *The Whale*, must be interpreted and translated, because the devil, that is, the fallen angel, has his residence in hell, and belongs there by his fallen nature, and must aspire to hell in everything he does.

The *Phoenix* is rich in Anglo-Saxon poetic diction,

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and hundreds of pages would be required to bring out the striking variety of its vocabulary, the extraordinary wealth of its figurative language, the astounding store of its associations and allusions, and the astonishing range and diversity of meanings of certain words.

Action words in *The Phoenix*, as in all other Anglo-Saxon poetic records, perform an important function. To single out a few as examples are the verbs *lixe*₃, from *lixan* - to shine, flash, glitter, gleam, flare, and glimmer. The Latin cognates are found in *fulgere* - to make lightening or to be lightening, light, shine, sparkle, gleam, and flash; *coruscare* - to shine, sparkle, glitter, gleam; and *lucere* - to twinkle, shine, give light in speaking about the stars, shine through, and be visible. This verb, as was pointed out in the section under colours, is rich in poetic associations and allusions. *Lixan* has a variety of synonyms which appear constantly in Anglo-Saxon literature, and are used to describe the effect of light on objects. It is a favourite of Anglo-Saxon poets who have developed about it fine descriptive distinctions, the nature of which can only be revealed from the context, as in line 33 of *The Phoenix*: *sunbearo lixe*₃ - the sunny grove shines.

Dreosæd, in line 34 of The Phoenix, from dreosan - to fall (as fruits and rain), perish (plants, men, riches), become weak (health, plants), fail, and fade (plants), is applied in this line of The Phoenix to describe vegetation which never fades or declines. The Latin cadere - to fall, an equivalent of dreosan, has seven basic different relations, each one having several related but distinct meanings. This gives an idea of the variety of meanings which dreosan may take on, the exact, being determined by the sense in which it is used in the context.

Stondæ, from stondan or standan - to stand, as in stand in the sense of to continue to be, in line 36 of The Phoenix: grene stondæ - (the grove) shall remain green (whatever the time of the year), is another fine example of what appears to be an Anglo-Saxon very ordinary verb, turns out to be one difficult of precise appraisal in translation. Bosworth needs three quarter of a page to list the different senses in which stondan may be used; these are divided in twelve categories. Stondan means to stand, occupy a place, stand firm, this being the main idea and the denotation of the verb. Its connotations are many: to con-

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geal, to remain, continue, abide, to stand good, be valid, be, exist, take place, to oppose, resist attack, to reprove, to stand still, to appear, flash out, to arise, come, to be present to, come upon, to be of no account, to stand up, keep one's feet, to attack, assail, to perform, consist, to depend on, and there are many others. This variety of meanings which can be applied to *stóndan* is further evidence of the difficulty waylaying the translator of Anglo-Saxon, and serves as an excellent example illustrating the contextual importance of Anglo-Saxon words in determining their accurate meanings.452

To complete this extremely partial treatment of the verbs in *The Phoenix* attention will be given to the following verbs. Line 36 uses *bibead*, from *bibeodan* - to ordain, order, command, and bid, in *god bibead* - God ordained; *bibeodan* is similar to Latin *jubere* - to give order, with at least ten different meanings, and *mandare* in the sense of to entrust, with five meanings. The verb *brosniad* - decays, from *brosnian* - to crumble, decay fall to pieces, rot, wither, be corrupted, perish, cognate with Latin *corrumpere, deficere, dissolvere, perire*, is used literally in line 38 of *The Phoenix*; *naefre brosniad* - never decays (leaf), but the verb frequently appears in a connotative and figurative

sense. Lines 37-38 of The Phoenix yield the verb behongen from gehongian or gehangian - to hang, hang with, be suspended, depend, in wudu bid gelice bledum gehongen - the wood shall be hung (like) with fruits.

Onspringao is a verb strongly suggestive. It is allied to German entspringen, and means to spring, from onspringan - to spring forth, issue, originate, rise, gush forth, burst or push forth, burst asunder, and describes the action of streams springing forth from mountains, as in lines 62-63 of The Phoenix; ac baer lagustreamas, wundrum wraetlice, wyllan onspringao - but there streams, wondrously splendid, freely spring out. Leccap, from leccan - to water, irrigate, wet, moisten, slake (to mix with water), lave, from Latin lavare - to bathe oneself, to flow gently upon or against, as the sea upon a beach, as in line 64 of The Phoenix; foldan leccap - laving the earth, is a fine application of the verb leccan, for there is a sense in which the water from a spring does mix, so to speak, with the land it waters.

Brecan, from brecan - to break, fills half a page of colourful connotative meanings, figurative and symbolic, of Bosworth's dictionary; brecan is used to impart the idea of breaking forth, with a variety of nuances in shatter, burst out, tear, to curtail, injure, violate, destroy, op-
press, to break into, rush into, storm, capture, to press, force, to break or crash through, burst forth, spring out, to subdue, tame, to roar, and to bubble, as in line 67 of The Phoenix: brimcald brecað - ocean-cold (waters, meaning springs) bubble (from). A compound verb is found in geond-faráð, from geondfaran - to traverse, pervade, from geond - through and faran - to go, of line 67; bearo ealne geond-faráð pragum brymlice - at times go through the whole grove majestically.

Gelaedeo, as in line 244 of The Phoenix, from ge-laædan, is rich in suggestive meanings, such as, to lead, guide, conduct, bear, carry, lift, take, bring, bring forth, bring up (produce), to pass, lead life, to mark, to beat the bound of land, to do, to place, lay, to sprout forth, grow, spread, to take a wife, marry, the Latin cognates being: ducere, deducere, agere, inducere, deferre, perferre derivare, educere, producere, and educare. The Anglo-Saxon verb awyrde, in line 247 of The Phoenix, from awierdian - to spoil in the sense of harvests and fruits of the earth, appears also in the sense of injure, hurt, corrupt, seduce, destroy, and kill. Finally, beccad, used in line 249 of The Phoenix, from beccan - to cover, cover over, conceal, to swallow up, to thatch, is another Anglo-Saxon verb particularly popular in the figurative sense, as may be seen from
the variations beccan is capable of taking.

A most enjoyable passage full of well-known allusions is contained in lines 850-64 of Christ. Life, in these lines, is compared to a dangerous journey aboard a sea-stallion riding a sea full of hazards, the world, and with the grace of God's Son, the dangerous ocean is overcome and the trusty sea-horse is tied up to a safe port. Among the most colourful verbs of the passage are ligan, line 851, to go, but this verb is usually associated and applied to describe a sea voyage. It is cognate with Latin applicare - diriger vers (en parlant de vaisseaux) - to direct or guide towards in the sense of steering or sailing ships, as in Cicero's De Inventione 2,153; navem eum applicarunt - ils dirigèrent vers lui le vaisseau - they guided the ship (they sailed) towards him, and by extension, it becomes like French faire aborder - to lead in the sense of direct or guide (ashore), as in Caesar's De Bello Civili 3,101,5; aplicatis ad terram navibus - après avoir fait aborder les
navires au rivage - after having guided the ships to shore. 454

The verb lacao used in line 854 of Christ, from lacan - to move up and down as a ship does on the waves, that is, to wave about, is a highly suggestive verb with the idea of movement being dominant. It is also used to describe the movements of a bird in flight, and the fascinating trepidation of flames. In another sense it means to play on instruments, with the obvious image of movements back and forth. In its context, lacao is applied to the soul which is tossed about the windy crests of daily difficulties and temptations. 455

A simple verb is gelidan - to go, move, travel, sail, advance, proceed, and come, as in line 857 of Christ: aerbon we to londe geliden haefdon - before that we had sailed (come) to land. If the emphasis, in translation, is not placed on the sailing aspect of geliden haefdon, the contextual association of the passage and the allusions it contains are lost. 456

The Anglo-Saxon verb oncnawan, appearing in line 861 of Christ: baet we oncnawan - that we should know


(God's grace), has four meanings. *Ononawan* means to know in the sense of recognize or identify a person or an object; the second meaning is to know with emphasis on to understand and attain knowledge of, as in line 861 of *Christ*; the third sense of *ononawan* is to know, that is, to learn by observation, to observe or perceive; finally, the verb *ononawan* may be used in the sense of to acknowledge, that is, to make acknowledgement of a fault, or to acknowledge a greeting. The distinction between these meanings is made clearer from knowledge of the Latin cognates: *agnoscere* - to recognize, perceive, understand, and admit; *cognoscere* - to learn, know, seek to know, become acquainted with, study, learn, and inform; and *noscere* - to learn to know, examine, study, seek to recognize, recognize, conceive, listen, and admit.  

Related to God's grace, in line 861 of *Christ*, *ononawan* implies that man is capable, through grace, of attaining knowledge of discernment between right and wrong, or good and evil, and is able to navigate on the rugged sea of life, steering a steady course that will take him safely across to the port of heaven.

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Having examined verbs in excerpts from Beowulf, The Whale, The Phoenix, and Christ, individual verbs will now be singled out for examination, and to uncover the variety and shades of meanings which may be applied to them. This will corroborate further what has been observed so far, namely, that besides being excellent observers with animated imaginations, Anglo-Saxon poets exhibit a keen sense of feeling noticeable from the many fine distinctions in meanings, and show a skill of expression not so much in the choice of words themselves, since a word can have several significations, but in making the words develop the proper mood through their contextual arrangement, and take on, as a result, the intended meanings. Such a technique, that is, the ability of giving sense to a word by means of the context in which it appears and mood in which it develops, rendered the poet's art very difficult, and left students of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in the twentieth century, struggling mercilessly with the meanings of words. This Anglo-Saxon semasiological characteristic must not be construed as reflecting poorness or dearth of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary and lack of variety. If this were the case, modern English should also be considered poor, when words such as nice, fine, big, large, thing, boat, plant, to make, to put, to go, to do, to move, and others, are made to express many meanings.
One of the interesting verbs in Anglo-Saxon vocabulary is scacan or sceacan, the modern English cognate appearing as shake. It is immediately realized, from what has been said about the vivid imagination of Anglo-Saxon poets, what sterling use they made of scacan and the nuances of expressions they dressed the word with. Scacan serves sixteen meanings, at least, with a number of distinctions for each one. Some of the general meanings are: to shake or quiver, move quickly to and fro, brandish, go, glide, dispatch, hasten, flee, depart, die, pass on, pass from, proceed, hurry off, go forth, even to weave. To weave is associated with the verb bregdan - to move quickly, pull, shake, swing, and has twenty-two other meanings. When used transitively scacan means to dispatch, hasten something on, and intransitively of immaterial things, to depart, pass away, hasten on, etc.

Scacan occurs eight times in Beowulf in the following instances. In line 917: bæ waes morgenlēoht scocen ond

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Gillan, Connotations of Old English, pp. 17-43.

460 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 156.
scynded - when the morning light was sent (pushed or thrust) forth and hastened, scacan is used intransitively here meaning to shake, sent forth. In line 1124; waes hira blaed scacen - was their power (glory or renown) departed, the verb scacan is transitive and refers to slain soldiers in war, implying the idea of their prosperity being shattered and, having been shaken out of them, has been lost forever. In line 1136; bā waes winter scacen - then was winter departed (that is, sent away), scacan is used transitively with the idea of winter being shaken off, that is, spring shaking nature free of winter. In line 1802; bā cōm beorht scacan - then came the bright (sun) hastening (then came on), the intransitive use of scacan conveys the idea of nature shaking off, that is, flinging out, scattering or dispersing darkness from its face. In line 2254; dug(u) ellor s(c)eoc - retainers have departed elsewhither, scacan is also used intransitively, the idea of dying carrying with it the notion of hurrying or hastening. In line 2306; bā waes daeg sceacen - then was day departed (sent away), scacan is transitive and conveys the idea of shaking off, similar to the use made of it in lines 1136 and 1802. In line 2727; bā waes all sceacen - then was all departed, all referring to daeghwila - days, appearing in line 2726, in other words, the days had passed or had run out on Beowulf, scacan being used transitively in the sense of shattered,
The verb *sigan* - sink or fall, used in *Beowulf*, line 1251: *sigan* sank, in the expression *sigon hā to slæpe* - (they) sank to sleep or fell asleep, has become very prosaic in modern English. Inherited from Anglo-Saxon through Latin, the expression has been adopted as part of everyday modern language. It was not just a matter-of-fact with the Anglo-Saxons. The expression was poetic, and the poet of *Beowulf* made it serve double duty. Bosworth gives four principal and several related meanings with sixty explanatory lines for the description of the verb *sigan*. Sense I - is to pass from a higher to a lower position, to sink, descend, decline, fall down. Basically, this is the meaning conveyed in line 1251 in so far as the idea of passing from one stage to another is concerned, but the sense goes beyond. Sense II - to move towards a point (to make a descent upon a place) is more appropriate as long as it is applied figuratively, this being confirmed by Bosworth under IIb.

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462 Ibid., p. 782.
463 Ibid., p. 782.
464 Ibid., p. 782.
The art of the poet, exhibited in line 1251, is to give the verb *sigan* a joint denotative and connotative meaning, to relate it indirectly to the beginning of the passage immediately following, and to prepare the mood of terror developed in the passage contained in lines 1251-76 at the beginning of which it appears.

Beowulf's thanes had made merry and had indulged in both food and mead, tired and heavy, they were happy to take a reclining position on their cots. This is the denotation of *sigan* as used in line 1251, the physical aspect of *sigan* being emphasized. In a figurative sense, and taken with *slaep* - sleep, the connotation of *sigan* is to move to a certain point, in this case, that of heavy sleep. The artistry of the poet goes beyond this point. The verb *sigan*, in its position at the beginning of a passage which serves to introduce *Grendles modor* - Grendel's mother, in line 1258, and her wicked DESCENT upon Heorot, is suitably and artfully chosen. The expression *sigan bā tō slaep*, of line 1251, is in apposition to *sum sāre angeald æfænraestē* - one sorely paid for his night's rest, of lines 1251-52, that is to say, one was sent into permanent "sleep," meaning death. *Sigan* is then echoed in and related to the passage immediately following and beginning line 1279 with *com bā tō Heorot* - came she (Grendel's mother) to Heorot, in other
words, Grendel's mother made a DESCENT upon Heorot. Finally, the passage prepares the way for the mood of terror developed and conveyed by the passage following.

The art of Anglo-Saxon poets appears also in the technique employed in using a word which is connected etymologically to two verbs having the same root, thus being able to develop a double meaning from the word. An example of this is the noun blæad - power, vigor of life, glory, renown, as used in line 1124 of Beowulf, and the verbs blæwan - to blow, breathe, be blown, sound, inflate, kindle, inflame, flare, allied to Latin sufflare, and the verb blowan - to blow, in the sense of to flower, flourish, bloom or blossom, with Latin equivalents florere, efflorere, reflare, and reflarere. A great deal of confusion may arise in the mind of the translator in a case like this. The difficulty rests in distinguishing one verb from the other, their various parts being identical except the present indicative and the infinitive, and then, when the occasion warrants it, in establishing whether the noun is used denotatively, that is, that which blows or flourishes like a plant, or figuratively, the connotation of blæad being used to emphasize fame or success. In most cases the context will help to clarify the

meaning.

Attention may be called to several other verbs in Beowulf. Gesēcan or gesēcean - to seek or search, go to, visit, go to attack, inquire about, ask for, pursue, follow, look for, try, strive after, long for, wish or desire, expect from, approach, attain to, as in line 692; āfrefr ge-sēcean - ever seek, that is, will never see again or go visit the loved ones at home.  

Forniman - to take away, deprive of, plunder, waste, devastate, destroy, consume, annul, disfigure, overcome, as in line 695; waeldeacf fornam - a murderous or bloody death had taken away, in the sense of snatched away.  

Angyldan - to pay a penalty for, as in line 1251; sum sāre angeald - some sorely paid for, is allied to angieldan or angildan - to yield, pay for, reward, requite, render, worship, serve, sacrifice, punish, and is related to wergild - compensation, value of a man's life.  

Swingan - to beat, strike, smack, whip, scourge, flog, chastise, afflict, swing, fly, divide by a blow, is used most

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466 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 301.
467 Ibid., p. 131.
468 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 43.
405 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 21, and
469 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 33.
effectively in the dual capacity of denotation and connotation in line 2264: *geond sael swunged* - (hawk) swings through the hall. Denotatively, it was a familiar sight to see hawks flying in the hall; connotatively, it was a characteristic of a prosperous hall, alive with the *comitatus* spirit of deeply-rooted fellowship, of mead drinking, of festivities and gay laughters, the absence of which, implied in line 2264, signifies gloom in the individuals and the nation to which they belong, therefore, figuratively, the *hawk swunged* not, meaning an absence of all those things, in other words, a nation living in misery.

A colourful verb is *bitan* - to bite, in the sense of cut, wound, as in line 1523 of *Beowulf*: *bitan nolde* - (the sword) would not cut, that is, wound, from which comes bite - a sting or sword-cut. *Bitan* is allied to Latin *findere* - to split open, *mordere* - to bite, *caedere* - to beat, to cut down, to split or break in two, to mow down in the sense of to kill, and to sacrifice animals, in the French sense of *égorger* - to cut one's throat, and *vulnerare* - to wound, damage, and figuratively, to wound or damage someone with words.  

471 Ibid., p. 105.  
verb sēcan or sēcean - to seek, in the sense of to try to find or to get, try to reach by attack, go to, visit, is used more than 35 times in Beowulf, as in line 2820: sāwol sēcean – (Beowulf's soul departed) to seek (the reward of the good). 472 Two other verbs used as synonyms of to die or depart from this world are oflāetan - to leave, relinquish, as in line 1183: worold oflāetest (a friend of Scyldings thou) leavest the world, and geferian or geferan - to go, depart, carry, reach, attain, bring about, in combination with habban - to have, as in line 2844: haefde æghwaeder ende gefēred - he had to each one brought an end (to this transitory or perishable life). 473

Scrīdan - to glide has a wide selection of meanings, and appears four times in Beowulf, as in line 650: scadu-helma gesceapu scrīdan cwōman; the cover of night (shadow, darkness or shapes of darkness), or shapes and forms, that is, the shadow covering of creatures, came advancing (stealing in). Basically, the etymology of scrīdan is Old Saxon scrīdan, scrīdan - to go, pass (of time, light), Old High German - scrītan which is cognate with Latin gradī - go forward and advance, Icelandic skrida - to creep, crawl, glide, and slide.

Anglo-Saxon scrīdan has five principal meanings, each one having several variations, such as, to go, take
one's way to a place; to go hither and thither, go about, wander; of the gliding motion of a ship, cloud, bird, smoke, kite and the like; of the increase or decrease of light; and finally, of the coming of time, seasons, and of the passage of time. *Scridan* is artfully chosen in line 650 of *Beowulf*, the poet using three meanings to convey the idea of night descending on nature. These are; the decrease of light, the advancing, that is, the crawling, creeping or stealing motion of coming night, and the spreading of darkness to cover all things in nature. There are two other verbs allied to *scridan*: *glidan* - to glide, slip, slide, glide away, vanish, the Latin cognate appearing as *labi* - to slide in the sense of stumble, trip or totter, and to go, run, let go, as in line 2073 of *Beowulf*: *glâd ofer grundas* - glided over the earth, and the verb *sneowan* - to hasten, go, in the sense of gliding or hastening over, as in line 62 of *The Wonders of Creation*: *eastan snowed* - hastens from the east (referring to the coming of day).

A large number of Anglo-Saxon verbs are very similar, and their contextual association is the only factor capable of sorting them out and determining their precise meanings. Examples from Beowulf are **gladian** - to glisten, shine, as in line 2036, and **glitinian** - to glitter, shine, as in line 2758; **scinan**, to shine, as in line 606, and **blican** - to shine, gleam, as in line 222; **lixan** - to shine, glitter, gleam, as in line 311, and **glidan** - to glide, slip, vanish, as in line 2073. **Talian** - to suppose, consider, claim, maintain, appears in lines 532, 594, 677, 1845, and 2027; and **tellan** - to account, reckon, consider, occurs in lines 794, 1773, 1810, 1936, 2067, 2194, and 2641. **Teohhian** - to appoint, assign, is found in lines 951, 1300, **getēn** - confer, bestow, grant, in lines 366, 1044, 2165, **getēn** - to draw, in lines 1545, 2610, and **getēn** - to assign, allot, in lines 2295, and 2526.

**Hātan** - to name, call, order, command, is used thirty times, and **gehātan** - to promise, vow, threaten, is used eight times. **Dencan** - to think, be intent on, mean intend, occurs eleven times, and **gebencan** - to think, remember, conceive, in line 1474. **Slēan** - to strike, slay, is used twelve times, and **geslēan** - to achieve or bring about by fighting, as in lines 459, and 2996. **Unnan** - not begrudge, wish, grant, like, appears in lines 503, 960,
1225, 2855, and 2874, and geunnan - to grant, in lines 346, and 1661. Wendan - to turn, is intransitive in line 1739, and gewendan - to turn, is transitive in lines 186, and 315. Windan - to wind, fly, curl, eddy, gold made into rings, is found in lines 212, 119, 1193, 1382, and 3134, and gewindan - to go, turn, reach by flight, in lines 763, and 1001. Cyoan - to make known, show, is used in lines 262, 349, 659, 700, 923, 1940, and 2695, and gecyoan - to make known, announce, in lines 257, 354, 1971, and 2324.476

This study of Anglo-Saxon verbs is brought to a close by a partial list of findings which have come to light in the course of four years of Anglo-Saxon studies. Neosan and neosian are two different verbs very much alike in meaning: to seek out, inspect, go to, visit, attack, and occur twelve times in Beowulf. Neosan is used most suggestively in line 63 of Judith: bealoful his beddes neosan (Holofernes) the baleful one his bed to seek, that is to say, at the sight of the lovely and strikingly beautiful Judith, Holofernes had but one thought - to spend a pleasureable night with the enchanting maid, and he immediately his beddes neosan - sought his bed477 Hydan which Klaeber

translates as hide, in line 2766 of Beowulf,\textsuperscript{478} and Kemp Malone as heed,\textsuperscript{479} and gehydan - to hide, keep secret, as in Beowulf, line 3059 are easily mistaken. Hafelan hydan - (my) head to hide, in line 446 of Beowulf, that is, to bury the head as would happen at interments, is elucidated by F. Mezger who shows that the reference is not so much to the interment of the body of which the head is part, as to the custom of covering the head of the dead with a cloth when a burial took place.\textsuperscript{480} Geweorban is an impersonal verb meaning: suit, seem, agree upon, decide, agree in thinking, agree upon in the sense of settle, as in lines 1598, 1996, and 2026 of Beowulf,\textsuperscript{481} and illustrates a different and rather distinct use of the verb, but when examined in the light of Latin equivalents and Old High German roots, geweorban, appearing in the lines of Beowulf mentioned here, must be interpreted in the sense of - it was the opinion of many, that is, many agreed, that you leave to or let the South Danes, or, it pleases me, suits me with respect to this, or , I desire it.\textsuperscript{482}

\textsuperscript{478} Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 362.
\textsuperscript{479} Kemp Malone, "Old English (Ge) Hyd an 'Heed'," A Grammatical Miscellany Offered to Otto Jespersen on His Seventieth Birthday (London, 1930), pp. 45-54
\textsuperscript{480} Fritz Mezger, "Two Notes on Beowulf," MLN, LXVI (January, 1951), pp. 36-38.
\textsuperscript{481} Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 422.
\textsuperscript{482} Frank G. Hubbard, "Beowulf 1598, 1996, 2026; Uses of the Impersonal Verb Geweorban," JEGP, XVII (1918), pp. 119-24
The verb *drífan* is a common verb used transitively and intransitively in connection with ships at sea. It means to drive, as in lines 1130-31 of Beowulf; *ne meahne* ... *drífan hringedstefnan* -could not drive (his) ring-prowed (curved necked) ship, and in line 2808; *feorran drífan* - from afar drive (ships). Other verbs related to the sea in Beowulf are *beran* - to bear, carry, bring, wear, as in line 48; *aetberan* - to bear or carry to, bear away, as in line 519; *wealnan* - to swell, surge, boil, appears twelve times in a literal sense, as in line 515, and five times figuratively, meaning having to do with emotions, as in line 2599; and *winnan* - to contend, fight, as in line 1132.483

A verb replete with allusions in relation to the sea is *rídan* - to ride, swing on gallows, ride at anchor, as in line 1893 of Beowulf; another meaning is to swell, surge, and roll, as in line 1883 of Beowulf; *sē be on ancre rād* - which at anchor rode, and in line 1392 of Genesis, and line 32 of Riddle 3; *fāmig rīdan* - (ship) rides (through) the foam. The verb *rídan* has given birth to six important substantive compounds connected with the sea.484

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THE VERB IN BEOWULF

They are: brimrād - sea-road, from brim - sea water, and rād - road, ride, riding, expedition, journey, raid, modulation, name of the rune for R, and road, as in lines 1262 and 1587 of Andreas; hronrād or hranrād - whale-road, as in line 266, 634, and 821 of Andreas, line 205 of Genesis, and line 10 of Beowulf; hwēolrād - wheel-road, a word which appears in glossaries only; seglīrād - sail-road, in the sense of swinging with the waves, riding, pitching, rolling, tossing, in other words, seglīrād is the riding place of a ship, as in line 1429 of Beowulf; streamrād - the course or bed of sea, that is, a watery road, the road across the sea, as in line 54 of The Gifts of Men; swanrād or swonrād - swan's road, that is, the sea, as in line 196 of Andreas, line 200 of Beowulf, line 996 of Elene, and line 675 of Juliana; and wigrād or wigrōd - a war-road, that is, along which an army passes, as in line 2084 of Genesis. An inquiry into Latin equivalents of rīdan and its substantive compounds reveals that equitātio - horseback riding, itio - action of going, profectio - departure, via - road, quadriga - chariot (used figuratively), rheda - coach, and modulatīo - cadence, are all allied.485

485 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire agrégé latin-français, pp. 223, 345, 505, 521, 558, and 397.
Gringan and gecringan - to yield, cringe, fall, perish, and gringan - to sink down, perish, are used for the verb to die, as in line 126 of Elene, lines 635, 113, 1209, 1337, 1568, and 2505 of Beowulf, and in lines 292, 302, and 324 of The Battle of Maldon. Other verbs used to convey the idea of death are gewitan - to depart, go; hweorfan - to move, go depart; and ofgyfan - to give up, leave, as in line 1681 of Beowulf: þæt wæorc worold ofgeaf - when (he) gave up this world (resigned). The expression flet ofgeafon - he gave up the floor, in line 61 of The Wanderer, is used for he died. In other words, the denotation of flet ofgyfan - to give up the floor means to make way for another, and the connotation, to die implying the idea of making room for another in this world.

A colourful verb which may take several meanings, particularly when used to describe mental attitudes, is sworcan or swearcan - to grow dark, darken, become overcast, be obscured, be troubled, sad, become grievous, gloomy, troublesome, angry, fall out of mind, as in line 1737 of Beowulf: on sefa(n) sweoceo - in (his) mind darkens, and in line 1279 of Guthlac.

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Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 313.
Wyld, "Diction and Imagery," p. 81.
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 781, 785.
From the Anglo-Saxon comitatus spirit or German Gefolgschaft comes the verb folgian or gefolgian - to follow, pursue, accompany, follow after, attain, obey, serve, observe, and is allied to Latin comitari - to accompany, adhaerere - to be related, that is, tied to in the figurative sense, meaning to be always at the side of, alienare - to belong to another, and servire - to be slave to, that is, to be under the care or in the service of another, as in lines 1102, and 2933 of Beowulf. 489

One of the many verbs originating from Christianity through Latin is halgian or gehalgian - to hallow, sanctify, consecrate, dedicate, ordain, reverence, keep holy. It appears in the sense of consecrate, in line 586 of Andreas, the consecration of a bishop in line 1650 of Andreas, the dedication of a church in line 1646 of Andreas, in a metaphorical sense, in line 1482 of Christ. Halgian is cognate of Latin consecrare - to consecrate by religious act, that is, to acknowledge as having a divine character, dedicare - to declare, reveal, dedicate, sacrare - to consecrate or offer to a divinity, sacrifice, devote, initiare - to initiate, instruct, receive, ordinare - to place in regular order, that is, to ordain; and sanctificare - to make inviolable or

Other verbs having their origin in Christianity are syngian and gesyngian - to sin, transgress, err, perpetrate crime, commit adultery, from Latin peccare - to sin; forhyçgan - to despise, detest, reject, from Latin despicere, as in line 299 of Daniel; tweogan - to feel doubt or hesitate, when used in a religious sense, from Latin dubitare; onsclüian - to regard with loathing, abhor, test, execrate, regard with disfavour, curse, refuse, reject, shun, regard with fear, irritate, from Latin abhorrere, detestari, exsecrari, resistere, abdicare, and exacerbare; beswican - to entice, delude, offend, from Latin decipere - deceive, illicere - entice, seducere - seduce, illudere - delude, proedere - betray, scandalizare - offend or scandalize, supplantare - supplant, deficere - weaken, and evadere - evade, as in lines 29 of Daniel, 568 of Guthlac, and 451 of Genesis.

The verbs forlaedan, forlaeran, fortyhtan, spanan, and scyccan, are used also in the sense of to seduce, in one or the other meanings of beswican. The Anglo-Saxon verbs for faith are renderings of the Latin credere, fidere, and

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sperare, namely, gelefan, gelifan, and gelyfan, with two others, treowan and getreowan, being used in the sense of gelefan, as in lines 434-35 of Juliana. Gecyrran appears in the sense of to convert, from Latin convertere, and apostacy, being a turning away from God, is represented by acyrran or acirran, rendering the Latin avertere, as in lines 411 of Juliana, and 1119 of Elene.

Anglo-Saxon verbs of worship are represented by the general term beowan - to serve, from Latin servire. More specific verbs are onsecgan - to vow or sacrifice, from Latin sacrificare, as in line 255 of Juliana; biddan - to ask, pray, intreat, beseech, bid, order, require, from Latin petere, poscere, precari, deprecari, rogare, and postulare, as in line 271 of Exodus; gebiddan is a rendering of orare and adorare, as in line 1 of The Lord's Prayer III; cleoplan - to call upon, from Latin clamare, as in line 1318 of Elene; halsian or healsian - to adjure, to call upon, from Latin obseerare; cigan - to call upon, when used in a religious sense, is a rendering of Latin invocare; andettan is a compound of and and hatan, and means to confess, acknowledge, give thanks, promise, vow, from Latin confiteri; aerendian - to intercede, plead a cause, as in line 665 of Genesis, from Latin intercedere; gegeyrnan - to entreat, beg, from Latin desiderare. Other verbs are
herian - to praise, from Latin laudare and celebrare, as in line 333 of Daniel; weordrian - to honour or worship in the religious sense, from Latin honorare, as in line 153 of Juliana, and in the Latin sense of adorare, celebrare, and laudare, as in lines 270 of Exodus, 1886 of Genesis, and 394 of Christ; wuldrian - to glorify, praise, from Latin gloriar, as in line 401 of Christ; maersian - to glorify, praise, exalt, as in line 617 of The Phoenix, from Latin cantare; bletsian and gebletsian in the sense of to bless, from Latin benedicere, as in lines 358 and 362 of Daniel.

There are other verbs not necessarily describing things connected with Christianity but deriving their origin from it. An example is the Anglo-Saxon verb regelian - to draw lines with a ruler. The word regol means rule, regulation, canon law, standard, pattern, monastic code of rules, and by extension, a ruler, that is, an instrument. Regol owes its origin to Latin regula - a rule or ruler which was used by Germanic tribes in the building

491 Keiser, Influence of Christianity, pp. 98, 106, 107, 109, 110-12, 115, 29, 19, 36, 57, 74, and 58.
of their dwellings, the word appearing as such in line 489 of Guthlac. After monasticism appeared, the meaning of regol was extended to include ecclesiastical rule. Later, a word was coined meaning to measure with a ruler. Other derivatives are regolberyce - breach of rules, regolfaest - rigid, strict, adhering to monastic rules, regollagu - monastic law, regollaic - according to canonical or regular rules, regolliff - life, according to ecclesiastical rules, regollasticca - rule, the instrument called a ruler, regoldeaw - discipline of monastic rule, and regolweard - regulator, director, ruler, abbot, or provost.

A last example in this investigation of Anglo-Saxon verbs is tieman or timan; this verb may be used to express two basic categories of meanings. The first is to teem, be productive, tieman being cognate of team - a line of descendants, offspring, progeny, family, or children. When applied to a female, it means to be pregnant, bear, bring forth young; when referring to a male, it means to beget, have intercourse with a woman; and when neither one is indicated, it means to have offsprings, bring forth. The second category/meanings includes four variations of tieman. It may be employed as a technical legal term equivalent to vouching to warranty as a step in the proceedings of a suit for the

recovery of property; in a general sense, to refer an opinion to the source from which it is derived in its support; to resort to, appeal for help; and to lead to. Tieman represents a typical example of the variety of meanings Anglo-Saxon verbs have, illustrates the difficulties of interpretation they create, and serves as an appropriate specimen for closing this partial survey of Anglo-Saxon verbs. 493

More pages could be filled with pertinent comments about verbs in Beowulf and Anglo-Saxon verbs generally, but the number would be large and beyond the scope of this paper. The approach which was followed in this chapter consisted in a close examination of a cross section of verbs in Anglo-Saxon poetry. It was aimed at showing the importance, colour, and variety of the verbs in Beowulf and in other Anglo-Saxon poems, for the expressed purpose of demonstrating that the poet of Beowulf chose his verbs skillfully, that is, carefully, appropriately, and with taste. The verbs examined prove beyond doubt that the poet of Beowulf is a first class artist who manipulated his craft with assurance, poise, and the balance of a master of the language. The poet exhibits among other achievements the ability of dotting his work with accurate, powerful, image-creating action words from which meanings are developed from

contextual arrangement. This investigation of Anglo-Saxon verbs has brought to light also certain difficulties which students and translators of Anglo-Saxon poetry must overcome if their interpretation of Anglo-Saxon poems is to be carried out in the environment and atmosphere in which the works were composed, the precise meaning arrived at, and the proper mood inherent in them apprehended.
CONCLUSION

The original plan for this thesis was far more comprehensive than the material contained in the five chapters presented here. On the basis of the extensive research carried out in preparation for the working of this topic, and the copious notes and references accumulated, Chapter V of this work would have become longer than this paper, and the planned thesis greatly voluminous.

When most of the preliminary research work had been completed, it became evident that a project much beyond the scope of the normal requirements for a doctoral thesis was in the making, and the original plan, if continued, would require another year, possibly two or more, to complete. It was then decided, upon the recommendation of the thesis director and the concurrence of the head of the English Department, that the present work be submitted as the usual partial fulfillment for the degree of doctor of philosophy in English literature, and the completion of the original plan be submitted later, if so desired, as a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Literature.

Some of the material which had to be left out of this thesis includes a chapter on the treatment of figures
of style in Anglo-Saxon literature in their relation to Beowulf, and how they contribute to an understanding of the poetic style, technique, and diction of the poem. The figures are the metaphor, epithets, kenning and kent heiti, compounds, rhetorical understatements or


litotes, the antithesis, episodes or digressions, 86, and 103.


Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 80-81.


Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxiv.


Godfrid Storms, Compounded Names of Peoples in Beowulf (Utrecht, 1957).


Bryan, "Epithetic Compound Folk-Names," pp. 120-134.


... "Various Notes, I. Disguised Compounds in Old English," Collected Papers of Henry Sweet, pp. 220-221.

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Martin-Clarke, Culture in Early Anglo-Saxon, p. 82.


Frederick Bracher, "Understatement in Old English Poetry," MLA, LII (December, 1937), pp. 915-34.

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S. O. Andrew, Postcript on Beowulf (Cambridge, 1948), p. 94.


Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxv.
the expression of purpose, 501
the personification, 502
the anticipation, 503
the contrast or heightening of effect.

Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, p. viii.

499
Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 44-50.
Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 33

Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 1111.
Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 132-181.
Andr ew, Postscript on Beowulf, pp. 91, and 98.


502

503
Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 220-46.

504
Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 220-46.
Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. lxiv-lxviii.
CONCLUSION

the parallel, repetitions, the dialectical form, the formula, the appositive, the pattern, the

John R. Clark Hall, trans. Beowulf, new ed. C.
ix-xlili.

N. F. Blake, "The Seafarer, Lines 48-49," Notes
and Queries, IX (1962), pp. 163-64.
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506 Tom Burns Haber, "Parallels in Motif and Sentiment," this is Chapter IV of A Comparative Study of the
Beowulf and the Aeneid (Princeton, 1931), pp. 88-133.
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Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 52.
Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, p. 142.
Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 116.
Hart, "Ballad and Epic," p. 195 and footnote on
p. 196.
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508 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p.91.
A. S. Cook, "The Beowulfian Mapelode," JEGP,
XXV (1926), pp. 1-6.
Klaeber, "Studies in Textual Interpretation of
Godfrey Leonard Gattiker, The Syntactic Basis
of the Poetic Formula in Beowulf (University of Wisconsin,

509 Morgan Callaway, Jr., "The Appositive Partici-

510 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 100.
dialectical form, the parenthetic exclamation, Biblical allusions, the riddle, the proverb,

Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxv.

Klaeber, Beowulf, pp lxv-lxvi.

Dorothy Whitelock, Audience of Beowulf, p. 5.
Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 4, 8, and 34.
C. Abbetmeyer, Old English Poetical Motives Derived from Sin (Minneapolis, 1903), Dissertation, University of Minnesota.

514 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 18, 36.
gnomic passages, 516 the conceit, 517 the irony, 518 the


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519 theme, the runes, 520 the apopiosis, 521 the varia-


Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 220-53.

518 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lx.
Bryan, "Epithetic Compound Folk-Names in Beo-
wulf," pp. 122, 128, and 129.
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C. C. Batchelor, "The Style of the Beowulf: A Study of the Composition of the Poem," Speculum, XII (1937),
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Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind, p. 53.


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Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 7, 100-01
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Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 79.
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Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. vi, and lxiii-lxxi.
Brodereur, Art of Beowulf, especially Chapter I.
Bédour, Twelve Beowulf Papers.
Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition.
Dorothy Whitelock, Audience of Beowulf.
Andrew, Postscript on Beowulf.
and certain Beowulfian theses which have illuminated the
diction of the poem. 527 A part of the last chapter, which

Klaeber, "Studies in the Textual Interpretation
John A. Nist, "Textual Elements in the Beowulf
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ix-lxv.
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guage and Content.
Andrew, "Some Principles of Old English Word-

527 Robinson, Variation: A Study in the Diction of
Beowulf.
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Gattiker, Syntactic Basis of the Poetic Formula
in Beowulf.
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ing and Function.
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of Words Referring to Monsters in Beowulf (University of
Isaacs, Personification in Beowulf.
Gillan, The Connotations of the Old English
Terms sceacan, faege, aeglaeca: A Study in the Method of
Determining the Poetic Values of Old English Words.
may have detached itself as a separate chapter, dealt with the major problem of translation of certain passages from *Beowulf*, similar to the excerpt discussed on page 233, taken from thirty-one translations of *Beowulf*, twelve of which are listed under footnote number 439 of page 252.


The first plan was to deal with the Beowulfian verb exclusively, and the early stage of the research was oriented toward an examination of verbs in *Beowulf*. It was soon discovered, however, that action words in *Beowulf* could be investigated, elucidated, and appreciated properly only in the light of a shrewd knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language, its etymological and syntactical complexities, a thorough understanding of the connotative, thematic, and contextual overtones of words and their meanings, Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique, the influence of Latin and Christianity on the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, mood and nature in Anglo-Saxon poetry, the spirit of the age, and Anglo-Saxon stylistic characteristics. It became manifest, in the process, that all these elements affect the verb in their own specific ways, and contribute to give it meaning, colour, and consistency. Verbs from other Anglo-Saxon poetic records were examined to afford a comparison. Gradually, the verb in *Beowulf* emerged as an important element of the poetic diction of the work. Finally, the overall results establish the verb in *Beowulf* as the fundamental ingredient of the poetic diction of the poem, the verb acquiring its importance not so much taken by itself, as in conjunction with contextual elements from which it derives its poetic value.
The views expressed in the paragraph immediately preceding are confirmed by Brodeur in his scholarly and indispensable work on the poetic skill displayed by the author of Beowulf. Brodeur estimates the number of distinct verbs in Beowulf to be very large,

probably about one thousand ... most of them are used in prose as readily as in poetry. A large proportion of the verbs in Beowulf are mere compounds of common verbs ... their simplices were certainly part of the vocabulary of speech. Only a few belong to the diction of poetry, and the sources of artistic effect seldom reside in them although these may be found in a good many striking combinations of verbs admirably chosen to express the impact of an action upon its object, or the action especially appropriate to the subject. In such cases the effect lies in the harmony of the verb with other elements of the clause. 529

It is stated, therefore, from the information made available in this thesis, that the poet of Beowulf has enriched the poetic diction of the poem through the use of carefully chosen verbs, the contribution made becoming evident only in the light of elements of Anglo-Saxon language, poetic diction, technique, and style, and of certain influences coeval with Beowulf.

529 Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, p. 7.
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine the verb in Beowulf in order to determine the contribution made by the poet to the diction of the poem. The findings establish that the verb plays an important rôle in the poetic diction of Beowulf.

The Introduction states the approach. It emphasizes the difficult task awaiting anyone investigating the poem Beowulf, mentions the names of some scholars who have studied it all their lives without exhausting the matter, and points to the necessity of marshalling one's efforts on one aspect, part, or feature of the poem. The last paragraph contains a synopsis of the thesis.

Chapter I deals with Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique in general terms. Definitions are given of literature, beauty, prose, verse, poetic diction, poetic technique, style, convention, and tradition. The position of Anglo-Saxon studies in the 1920's is mentioned along with Anglo-Saxon research since 1925. The main crux in the study of Anglo-Saxon poetic works is shown to be an understanding of the Anglo-Saxon language made more difficult by a scarcity of Anglo-Saxon works. It is not uncommon to be led
astray in the interpretation of allusions and meanings of Anglo-Saxon poems. This is illustrated by reference to an article by Paull F. Baum on the poet of *Beowulf*, and clarification of the problem regarding allusions to the Old Testament. The discovery of the Sutton Hoo treasure, the intellectuality of the seventh and eighth centuries, the many important libraries set up at the time, the centers of learning, the monastery schools, the appearance of saints and scholars, are mentioned in support of the claim that *Beowulf* was written in a period of marked intellectual achievements. The oral-formulaic theory advanced by Francis P. Magoun, Jr., regarding the making of *Beowulf*, is examined, discussed, and rejected. *Beowulf* is seen as having been written pen in hand.

Chapter II shows the importance of semantics as a prerequisite for an understanding of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, and investigates the influence of Latin and Christianity on the vocabulary and the literature of the Anglo-Saxons. Semantics is defined, and several words, including *wineleas*, *daegwoma*, *widewe*, *lencten*, *cealdheort*, serve to illustrate the role of etymology in the understanding of Anglo-Saxon words. The allusion inherent in *brūnecg* is explained in terms of knowledge of the tempering of steel. The description of the helmet found in the Sutton Hoo treasure is used to explain the meaning of *wala*, a word appearing in line 1031 of *Beowulf*. The multiplicity of meanings of some Anglo-Saxon words and
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the difficulty in arriving at a precise understanding of them is illustrated by way of thirteen Anglo-Saxon words and their eighty-seven possible modern English equivalents. Colours in Anglo-Saxon poetry are discussed, and their frequency of appearance in Anglo-Saxon poetical works given. A conclusion is reached that the function of the dictionary is not usually to give the historical sense of words.

The influence of Latin on Anglo-Saxon vocabulary is found to exist in Latin borrowings, abstract ideas rendered by native compounds, and in the analogical transference of ideas. Virgil and Anglo-Saxon are discussed, and books known to Anglo-Latin writers mentioned. The influence of Virgil is seen in Virgilian phrases used by Anglo-Saxon literary ecclesiastics, among Anglo-Saxon kings who were scholars, and in the technique of composition of Anglo-Saxon writings. The effects of Latin appear in Anglo-Saxon idioms and inflexions.

The influence of Christianity on the Anglo-Saxons is investigated, and its effects on their vocabulary noticed. This is illustrated by certain words, a marked concern in final things, hagiography, and Biblical quotations. The rôle of the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo is mentioned.

Chapter III investigates mood in Anglo-Saxon poetry, examines how Anglo-Saxon poets interpreted and reacted to
nature, and shows that the spirit of the age had a strong influence on Anglo-Saxon writings. Examples of how mood is arrived at are taken from *Beowulf* and *Judith*. Mood is developed from contextual arrangement by way of enumeration of objects, by indirect and suggestive method, the choice of diction and the use of certain expressions, overtones, and subjective and objective emotive connotation.

Misunderstanding exists in modern times regarding the reactions of Anglo-Saxon poets to nature. The preference of Anglo-Saxon poets for certain aspects of nature is mentioned and discussed. It is shown that their reactions to nature was realistic or physical, the result of a priori experience. The spirit of the age and the Christian writers' frame of mind are responsible for the Christian rationalism of Anglo-Saxons. This leads to a strong attraction for the sea, and to a spirit of idealization which permeates their lives and is reflected in their attitude towards women, love, the *comitatus* spirit, mead drinking, and etiquette.

The spirit of the age is investigated and appears as a definite influence on Anglo-Saxon literature. Anyone reading Anglo-Saxon works must do so in the light of the background of the age. The seventh and eighth centuries saw the spreading of a strong Christian faith, the golden age of conversions, the gathering of important libraries, flour-
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ishing scriptoria, important centers of learning, and aristocrats making history. This refined civilization was capable of heroic times, and was a blend of Christian, Germanic pagan, classical Mediterranean, and Celtic elements. *Beowulf* and other excellent poems were the results of this unique civilization which has an echo in the wealth of the Sutton Hoo treasure.

Chapter IV examines some Anglo-Saxon stylistic and syntactical characteristics, illustrates these with examples from *Beowulf*, *Judith* and other poems, and demonstrates their fundamental importance for an understanding of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Rhetorical patterns discussed include verse, envelope, parallel, incremental, and rhythmical types. The intensity and conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon line, the scarcity of articles and pronouns, the repetition technique, climax, transitions, the pronoun, the roundabout approach, the word order in sentence structure, and Anglo-Saxon metrics and alliteration are explained and illustrated.

Chapter V examines the verb in *Beowulf* and, for comparison and contrast, in some other poems. General characteristics of Anglo-Saxon verbs are discussed. They include the use of affixes to verbs, motion and Anglo-Saxon verbs, verbs of rest with the idea of motion, verbs creating a state of mind, the unusual regimen of certain verbs, the instrumental
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function of the genitive case, a singular verb with a plural subject, lack of control, violation of the consecutio temporum, a compound subject and a singular verb, a plural subject with a singular verb, and a change in the compound verb without a change in the subject. Other verbal peculiarities discussed are alleged incongruities, subjectless verbs, ellipses - not solecisms, omission of the subject, subjectless heht, the end-position of verbs, the preterit of intransitive verbs, the old passive voice, the prothetic use of a verb, the use of the present tense form, the historical present, the hendiadys, verbs taking their meanings from other verbs, and a metaphor in the subject giving way to a metaphor in the verb. The respect for authority and verbs of causing and ordering, verbs of forcing and allowing, and the dual capacity of verbs are also treated. The Anglo-Saxon verb is shown to be generally pregnant with meaning. Translation of Anglo-Saxon poetry, the contextual relation of verbs, the Anglo-Saxon poet's art, and the struggle facing the student are discussed. Some colourful verbs, similarity of certain verbs, and many verbs having their origin in Christianity are examined. The result of this investigation of Anglo-Saxon verbs points to a high degree of poetic perfection in the maker of Beowulf.