THE INTERLACE STRUCTURE OF THE

ADVENT LYRICS

by

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Sister Bertha M. Stucklberger was born in Etmissl, Austria, December 31, 1923. She obtained her degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Ottawa, in September 1959.
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The following figures are samples of artistic interlace of seventh and eighth century Anglo-Saxon England. The illustrations have been photocopied from Codex Lindisfarnensis (Lindisfarne Gospels), edited by T.D. Kendric, T.J. Brown and others, Vols. I and II (Lausanna, 1956-1960).

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INTRODUCTION

The application of the concept of "Interlace Structure" to the Advent Lyrics of The Exeter Book reveals the extraordinary beauty of their construction, as well as the technical competence of the author.

The word "interlace" has been fully explained by John Leyerle and is best understood when seen in the art of late seventh and early eighth century England where it became an artistic achievement of high order and complexity. Examples of such art are primarily admired in the designs of the Lindisfarne Gospels, on Anglo-Saxon weapons and jewelry in which the work was done with such perfection that "it was thought to have been the work of angels since no mortal could execute such complex designs so faultlessly."¹ A second illustration of interlace may be found in tapestry weaving in which the "positional patterning of the threads establishes the shape and design of the fabric."²

This artistic principle of design has its parallel in Anglo-Saxon poetry where an interlace of themes, words, tone and time compose the various threads that form what Leyerle calls "a verbal carpet page" or woven text. The

²Ibid., 5.
Advent Lyrics present such a page to the reader.¹

Up to the present, the work done on Interlace Structure as such is comparatively small. A direct treatment of this concept is limited in particular to that of John Leyerle and A.P. Campbell in their studies of Beowulf, and in general to A.C. Bartlett, who has examined the interlace design principles in the body of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Leyerle develops most fully the significance of the term "Interlace Structure". He separates it into the two aspects of "Stylistic Interlace" and "Structural Interlace". Of the former he says: "it involves multiple statement of a subject in several different words or phrases, each of which typically describes a different aspect of the subject. When variation on two or more subjects is combined, the result is stylistic interlace, the interweaving of two or more strands of variation."² And of the latter: "At a structural level, literary interlace has a counterpart in tapestries where positional patterning of

¹The Anglo-Saxon poet Cynewulf, when describing his poetry says: "I wove words." It is interesting to note that the idea of weaving is contained in the etymology of our English word "text". The Latin words texere serta mean to interweave threads in textile, words that gave us our English words "text" and "textile." See Leyerle, "Interlace Structure," 4.

²Ibid., 4.
threads establishes the shape and design of the fabric, whether the medium is thread in textile or words in a text. In the present thesis structural interlace will mainly be referred to as thematic interlace because it concerns the interweaving of major and minor themes and the contribution of each to the main theme. Leyerle also makes a specific reference to another aspect, that of "time interlace" and for a definition he quotes Horace as follows:

whoever undertakes to make a good poem having clear order should love artificial order and scorn natural order. Every order is either natural or artificial; artificial order is when one does not begin from the beginning of an exploit but from the middle, as does Virgil in the Aeneid when he anticipates some things which should have been told later and puts off until later some things which should have been told in the present.

Time interlace, however, is not fully developed by Leyerle, who refers to it only as a general characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

A.P. Campbell, in his "The Time Element of Interlace Structure in Beowulf" illustrates how the Beowulf poem is "skillfully woven within two periods of time," how the beginning and ending of the poem is framed in the pagan past while the body of the poem is situated in the Christian
present although strewn with sudden departures into its pagan past.

A.C. Bartlett has made a more thorough study of rhetorical patterns in Anglo-Saxon poetry. She uses terms directly akin to interlace structure such as: "poetic tapestry," "fabric," "envelope patterns", in which the end of a passage returns to, in some way repeats the beginning, and is referred to as "the return to the keynote."¹ She also speaks of "incremental patterns"²-- a heaping up of terms for the same subject which in this thesis is referred to as "variation." She explains structural patterns in which there is "an overlapping of two or even three themes"³ and finally she refers to "ornamental digressions" in Anglo-Saxon poetry, as "a weaving in and out /which/ could have gone on, like an arabesque motif in a curtain or a carpet."⁴

Among the critics who have devoted their major studies to the Advent Lyrics, and who to a certain degree develop the aspect of their interlace structure, may be mentioned Albert S. Cook, Jackson J. Campbell, S.B. Greenfield, and J.E. Cross.

²Ibid., p. 54.
³Ibid., p. 7.
⁴Ibid., p. 65.
Cook attaches much importance to the Advent poet's natural ability for 'wordcraft' which enables him to deftly weave one theme into another and make each theme "subservient to the scheme of the whole, with an eye that is caught by the gleam of gold in ornaments."¹ He also comments on the tonal quality of the lyrics and is undecided as to whether that of joy or sorrow dominates.

Jackson J. Campbell has presented a detailed study of the Advent Lyrics. He sees in them no narrative thread or observable pattern of thematic structure but rather recurring ideas that appear from time to time and which he summarizes as being:

1) The coexistence of the Father and Son.
2) The purity of the Virgin and the miracle of her Virgin birth.
3) Man's inability to understand God's mysteries and his misery and need for grace.
4) The necessity of rendering abundant praise to God.

These themes he says, "provide connecting links from poem to poem and serve to unify the whole group."² He says that

¹The Christ of Cynewulf, (Boston, 1900), p. lxxxvi. Cook also gives a detailed account of the liturgical and scriptural sources of the lyrics with full references. He dates them between 750 and 825. The theory of Cynewulf as author of the Advent Lyrics has been favored by Cook and other critics such as Samuel Moore. However recent criticism has established that the lyrics are an independent poem whose author is unknown. See Kenneth Sisam, Studies in the History of Old English Literature, (Oxford, 1953), p. 11.

the ideas of the lyrics are "woven throughout the poems in an all-pervasive manner /with/ a consciousness of the whole liturgy...almost the whole Christian religion."\(^1\) When speaking of its tone Campbell notes that "the poem starts on a note of exclamation /and/ maintains a heightened tone of praise."\(^2\) In the present thesis the above ideas are repeatedly referred to and illustrated in the development of the various chapters.

S.B. Greenfield traces the theme of spiritual exile as it runs through the twelve lyrics reflecting man's misery, the goodness and glory of Christ and the Virgin, and the tone of joy and sorrow. His emphasis is on man's fivefold condition of exile due to his fall into sin where he is presented as "a prisoner longing for a glimpse of the sun."\(^3\)

J.E. Cross has dealt with the theme of coeternal existence as contained in Lyric V. He has pointed out the theological background out of which this theme was created and has illustrated the Advent poet's references to this

\(^1\)Campbell, The Advent Lyrics, p. 35.

\(^2\)Campbell, "Structural Patterns in the Old English Advent Lyrics," ELH, 23 (1956), 242.

\(^3\)Greenfield, "The Theme of Spiritual Exile in Christ I," PQ, 32 (1953), 323.
dogma by examples from the poem.¹

The Interlace Structure of the Advent Lyrics as it is discussed in the present thesis, is viewed from four different aspects of interlace. First, "thematic" or "structural" interlace discusses the major and minor themes of:

1. praise and expectant longing for a Saviour.
2. man's misery.
3. the Virgin theme.

These themes or thematic threads are turned on and off, forming breaks as they intersect each other and so interrupt the narrative flow of the story. Sometimes too, they merge into one another in such a manner that each minor theme makes a necessary contribution to the main theme emphasizing it, and bringing it to its highest climactic development.

Second, "stylistic" or "variational" interlace illustrates the strands of variation or verse repeats in their emphatic function and decorative significance. These variational strands are woven together into a stylistic braid.² Through them the poet "repeats what he has already said in a new expression,"³ and is concerned quite as much "with his word

² See Leyerle, "Interlace Structure," 5.
arrangment as with his ideas."\textsuperscript{1} The position of the words or phrases is important to the poet for the rhetorical effect of ornamentation. Third, "tonal" interlace describes and exemplifies the contrasting elements in tone. One may speak of a joyful or sorrowful tone, a tone of color as light or dark, and also of an earthly or heroic tone as contrasted with a spiritual tone in which the concrete serves to define the abstract. These opposite tones exist side by side, define each other, and merge into one another. Fourth, "time" interlace analyses the manner in which the time strands of past, present, future, and even timelessness are woven together with no regard for chronological order.\textsuperscript{2} Time seems to disappear within the timeless for the latter strand of timelessness dominates by far those of past, present, and future. With reference to these structural principles, we hope to provide an analysis of the poems which will allow the reader to appreciate the poem's complexity, its beauty of structure and technical excellence.

\textsuperscript{1}Bartlett, The Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 65.

\textsuperscript{2}A modern example of time interlace can be found in the stream-of-consciousness novels where the time element is completely askew and unity is brought about by clearly defined themes or motifs running through the novel.
CHAPTER I

THEMATIC INTERLACE

One of the reasons why the Anglo-Saxon poet in general and the Advent poet in particular were able to give themselves up to the luxury of interlace structure in which the time element is so distorted that no narrative thread remains, is that the audience was expected to possess "a common tradition of doctrine and symbol.../and/ to make considerable effort to understand the underlying meaning of a poem".¹ In fact the audience was supposed to know the story beforehand so that poetry could be enjoyed solely for its sentiment and ornament.² Consequently the poet was exempted from explicit comment. He was free to move backward and forward in time, digress suddenly into another theme, insert metaphorical or allusive material, without obscuring the significance of his interlace pattern.

The Advent poet has done exactly that. He has woven together in a mosaic style and with jerky transitions, memories from the Old and New Testament, fragments of the Creed, echoes of the preface of the Mass and Patristic

²See Bartlett, The Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 110.
homilies.\textsuperscript{1} He has made out of the \textit{Advent Lyrics} a verbal carpet page where major and minor thematic threads cross, recross and merge with one another in a manner that makes each theme a necessary unifying element and integral part of the whole.

In this chapter these thematic threads will be treated separately both in their individual aspect and in their relation to the other themes and particularly to the two main themes, which have to do with the expectant longing for a Saviour and man's duty to praise Him.

\textbf{The Themes of Praise and Expectant Longing for a Saviour}

"Evildoers," says B.F. Huppe, "are actually driven by a loss of their desire for eternity." However, if the sinner "has heard the voice of God...and has begun to raise his voice in penitential song, he is restored to God. He speaks in accord with God."\textsuperscript{2} This spirit is given prominence by the Advent poet when he makes the themes of praise and longing the keynote of his lyrics. With deep insight into man's fundamental duty he has perceived that "it is right and good for man to praise his Creator because of the high

\textsuperscript{1}Campbell, \textit{The Advent Lyrics}, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{2}Huppe, \textit{Doctrine and Poetry}, pp. 92-93.
destiny that the Creator has prepared for him and reserved for him through the Redemption in spite of man's having turned from God.\(^1\)

Upon analysis of the twelve lyrics, it is seen that the themes of praise and longing are implicitly woven almost into every line. The three objects of praise are Christ, the Virgin, and the Blessed Trinity, while that of longing is Christ, the promised Redeemer who is to restore man to his former place of honor, which he had lost through sin. In giving expression to these two themes the poet calls upon all the resources of language in order to describe the goodness, grace, and glory of his subjects, while inserting into each a maximum feeling of awe and reverence.

The themes are emphasized throughout the lyrics, first by repetition. When celebrating the praise of Christ the poet recapitulates two categories of motifs: His eternal Godhead and majesty 50 times and that of his triumphant dealings with humanity as Saviour 50 times, in a total of 100 variations. In these titles, even though there are intricate verbal relationships, there occur only 12 exact repetitions.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Huppe, \textit{Doctrine and Poetry}, p. 137.

\(^2\)See Appendix I, pp. 69-71.
In the first category of attributes, dealing with Christ’s eternal Godhead and majesty, the poet is concerned primarily with praising Christ as coeternally existing with the Father. He is so struck by this aspect of Christ’s majesty that it overshadows all others in its repetition under various forms. The poet first alludes to Christ’s coeternal existence in line 12 when he refers to Him as "craeftga" (craftsman) and "cyning sylfa" (the king Himself), which suggests the Son-Father identity. Craftsman embodies the idea of creation, which is generally attributed to God the Father.\(^1\) The same motif is picked up again in the epithets of "liffrea" 27a (Lord of life) and "lifes fruman" 44a (Creator of life), which reannounces the idea of Christ as the Creator.

The motif of coeternal existence dominates the entire space of Lyric V. In this lyric Christ is praised in this aspect under the form of the sun metaphor:

\(^1\)George Philip Krapp and Elliott Dobbie, eds., *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, The Exeter Book, Vol. III* (New York, 1936). All further quotations of poetry, unless otherwise stated, will be taken from this text.

\(^2\)See Huppe, *Doctrine and Poetry*, p. 127. He quotes Ambrose as saying: "When scripture says: In the beginning God made heaven and earth, we recognize the Father in the name "God," and the Son in the name "beginning" who, not through the Father but through His own self was created first and most powerful of spiritual creation."
Eala earendel, engla beorhtast,
ofer middangeard monnum sended,
on sopfaesta sunnan leoma,
torht ofer tunglas, þu tida gehwane
of sylfum þe symle inlihtes!  ll. 104-108.

(O rising light, the brightest of angels, sent to
men upon earth, and true splendor of the sun, glo­
rious beyond the stars, Thou from Thyself, forever
dost illumine all time!)

The words "earendel" and "sopfaesta sunnan leoma" are used
to indicate the coeternal aspect of His nature. In the
lines immediately following, this same motif weaves into
the themes of man's longing and misery:

swa þec nu for þearfum þin agen geweorc
bideþ þurh byldo, þaet þu þa beorhtan us
sunnan onsende, ond þe sylf cyme
þaet þu inleohete þa þe longe aer,
þrosme beþeþahte ond in þeostrum her,
saetón sinnæhtes;  ll. 112-117a.

(So now in need Thine own work prayeth Thee in
confidence, that Thou send us the bright sun, and
Thou Thyself come, that Thou enlighten those who
long since were wrapt in darkness, and here in gloom
sat, in perpetual night).

In the above "sunnan onsende, ond þe sylf cyme" man requests
that Christ send Himself and come Himself which "is an
effective way of reiterating the inseparability of Father
and Son." A more direct reference to this motif together

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1See Cross, "The 'Coeternal Beam'", 75. He quotes the following Patristic statement: "For who can imagine
that the radiance of light ever was not, so that he should
dare to say that the Son was not always, or that the Son was
not before His generation? or who is capable of separating
the radiance from the sun...?"

2Cross, "The 'Coeternal Beam'", 78.
with thematic interlace is found in lines 122-127a:

\[\text{efenece mid god, ond nu eft gewæerþ} \]
\[\text{flæsc firena leas, þæet seo faemne gebæer} \]
\[\text{geomrum to geoce. God waes mid us} \]
\[\text{gesewen butan synnum; somod eardedon} \]
\[\text{mihtig meotudes bearn ond se monnes sunu} \]
\[\text{geþwaere on þeode.} \]

(Coeternal with God, and now later become flesh free of sin, that the maiden bore as a help for the miserable. God was among us seen without sin, together they dwelt the mighty son of God and the son of man, harmonious among men).

Man in his misery rejoices in the salvation brought to him through the conception of the Virgin. He praises the Son, who in the beginning was coeternal with the Father and he confesses belief in Christ's retention of the Godhead in his human form in lines 125-126 when he says, "together they dwelt the mighty Son of God and the Son of man." Finally line 129, the last line of Lyric V, "he hine sylfne us sendan wolde" (He was pleased to send us Himself), repeats once more the Son-Father identity.

Lyric VI picks up the coeternal thread intermittently in Christ's titles of: "gaesta god" 130a (God of souls), "eces alwaldan" 140a (eternal Ruler), "bearn godes" 147b (Child of God), and especially in the last line: "þu in heannissum / wunast wideferh mid waldend faeder," 162b-163 (Thou in exaltation dwellest forever with God the Father).
In Lyric VII, the Virgin, as she explains to Joseph the mystery of her divine motherhood, speaks of her Son as: "beorhtne sunu" 205a (bright sun), "bearn eacen godes" 205b (the great Child of God), "maerum meotudes" 210a (glorious Son of God), titles which contain allusions to Christ's coeternal existence.

Lyric VIII like Lyric V, is particularly dedicated to the motif of coeternal existence. It appears here at three intervals:

Crist aelmihtig,  
hu þu aer waere eallum geworden  
worulde þrymmum mid þinne wuldorfaeder  
cild acenned þurh his craeft ond meaht!  
ll. 215b-218.

(Christ Almighty, how wast Thou, with Thy glorious Father, existent before all the world's estates, a Child begotten by His skill and might).

The poet, with wonder and admiration, marvels at Christ's coexistence with the Father while at the same time He deigned to become a Child among men by His skill and might. In lines 222b-223: "hu þe rodera weard / aet frymbe genom him to freobearne." (how the Ruler of heaven took thee in the beginning for His noble Son), the words "aet frymbe" (in the beginning), according to St. Basil, occurred outside of time in eternity.¹ The same motif appears for the third time in lines 236-238:

Sylfa sette þæt þu sunu waere  
efeneardigende mid þinne engan frean  
aerþon oht þisses æfre gewurde.

¹ See Huppe, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 112.
(He Himself ordained that Thou the Son shouldst be coexisting with Thy only Lord before any of this had ever come to pass).

when once more the poet returns to praising Christ in His eternity with the Father before all creation. The lines are followed by a more pressing invitation to Christ that He come and show His mercy to mankind.

Lyric X gives a final direct reference to the coeternal motif in lines 349-350 and 355-356:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bu mid faeder þinne gefyrn waere efenwesende in þam æpelan ham.} \\
\text{... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...} \\
\text{þa þu aerest waere mid þone ecan frean sylf settende þas sidan gesceafht,}
\end{align*}
\]

(Thou with Thy Father of old wast coeternal in that noble home...when Thou Thyself first wast with the eternal Lord Thyself creating this wide creation).

The lines are again interrupted by an urgent petition for the Saviour to come and then the motif is picked up again in line 366b where Christ is invoked as "ece dryhten" (eternal Lord), an epithet which "emphasizes the creation of time by the timeless."¹

The poet in developing this aspect of praise with such followed up detail seems to aim at bringing to its highest pitch the keynote of the main theme. For man, by contemplating the mystery of Christ's coeternal existence and imploring Him under this title, is capable of rendering

¹Huppe, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 116.
to God the highest form of praise since he touches upon the very essence of Christ's nature and perceives a hidden truth not given to everyone to understand.

Still in the category of Christ's eternal Godhead, is the poet's concern with praising Christ's majesty, that is His glorious kingship and nobility as Lord over the spiritual realm in heaven. He is "cyninga cyning" 136a (King of kings), "rodera weard" 222b (Ruler of heaven); He is "engla þeoden" 332b (Prince of angels). Also, the poet praises Christ's supreme nobility as "sunu sopan faeder" 110a (Son of the true Father), "meotudes bearn" 126a (Son of God), and "aelpene ordfruman" 402a (the noble creative source).

In the second category of attributes the poet extols Christ's triumphant dealings with humanity as Saviour, because He "dissolved the enmity between God and man in His own Flesh."¹ In line 2a, Christ is the "weallstan" (cornerstone), a metaphor which explains that He would "gesomnige...weallas" 5, or bring together the two walls (men and angels) where men were to replenish the part of the angels who had fallen. In lines 127b-129, Christ is the

---

triumphant lord whom men must forever thank because He came to save them:

We þaes þonc magon
secgan sigedryhtne symle bi gewyrhtum,
þaes þe he hine sylfne us sendan wolde.

(We therefore must say thanks to the triumphant Lord forever because indeed He was pleased to send us Himself).

In lines 160b-162a, the poet prays that man, whom Christ created with His hands, worship the glorious King of men:

þæt þec weorþien,
weoroda wuldorcyning, þa þu geworhtes aer hondum þinum.

(that those Thee worship, glorious King of men whom Thou didst formerly create with Thy hands).

In Lyric VII the Virgin, in her explanation to Joseph of her miraculous conception, swears to its authenticity by using Christ's title of "Saviour of souls":

ond þus reordade:
"Sob ic secge þurh sunu meotudes,
gaesta geocend, þæt ic gen ne conn Þurh gemaescipe monnes ower  Il. 196b-199.

(And thus she spoke: "By the Son of God, the Saviour of souls, I speak the truth that I have no knowledge of cohabitation of any man, at any time).

In His attribute of "Saviour Christ" the poet invokes the healing power of Christ, which is contained in the connotation of the Old English word "haelende" also meaning to heal.

þu þisne middangeard milde geblissa
þurh þinne hercyme, haelende Crist,
Il. 249-250.
(Gently bless this earth, through Thy coming, Saviour Christ).

In the title "Saviour God" the poet calls on Christ's divinity co-dwelling in His humanity through which man may know Him and trust in Him: "nu us haelend god / waerfaest onwrah þæt we hine witan moton" 383b-384 (Now the trust-worthy Saviour God has revealed to us that we may know Him).

In lines 408-409a, Christ is "the protector of warriors" and the "protector of every creature": "forpon þu gefyldest foldan ond rodoras, / wigendra hleo, wuldres þines, / helm æwhta." (For Thou hast filled the earth and heavens, Protector of warriors, with Thy glory, Protector of every creature). Here Christ is invoked under the most glorious title given in the heroic "commitatus" relationship, which expresses mutual loyalty and service.

Finally the poet praises Christ under the titles of "Saviour of mankind" and "Lord of men":

Ond swa forþgongende folca nergend
his forgifnesse gumum to helpe
daeleþ dogra gehwam, dryhten weoroda.  
Π. 426-428.

(And so continually, the Saviour of mankind dealeth out each day His forgiveness unto men to help them, the Lord of men).

titles which call forth man's unlimited trust in the forgiveness of Christ.

Upon further analysis of the two main categories of praise discussed above there can be noticed also an
exact numerical balance\(^1\) between Christ's titles concerning His coeternal majesty and those given Him concerning His dealings with mankind, where He lowers Himself to man's needs. Furthermore the two categories form two contrasting strands that are interlaced into a braid in which the first strand represents the theme of praise that extols Christ's divinity and the second the theme of longing that extols Christ's humanity.

In the case of the theme of longing, the titles are most often associated with man's expectant longing such as:

\[
\text{Cum, nu, sigores weard, meotod moncynnes, ond þine miltse her arfaest ywe!} \quad \text{l. 243b-245a.}
\]

(Come, now, Lord of triumph, Creator of mankind, and in Thy graciousness, show Thy mercy here).

or again in lines 358b-359: "We þe, haelend Crist, / þurh eafbmedi ealle biddap," (We beseech Thee Saviour Christ in all humility). In lines 332-336 both the divine and human aspects of Christ are invoked in the titles of "Prince of angels" and "Lord of life" when man begs the Virgin to reveal to him the grace that she received through God's messenger:

\[
\text{Swa þe aefter him engla þeoden eft unmaele aelces þinges liþpuaegan bileac, lifes brytta.}
\text{Iowa us nu þa are þe se engel þe, godes spelboda, Gabriel brohte.}
\]

\(^1\) See Appendix I, pp. 69-71.
(thus the Prince of angels, the Lord of life, closed thee, all unblemished, after Him again, as with a wondrous key. Show us now the grace that the angel Gabriel, God's messenger, brought to thee).

Along with emphasis through repetition, the poet also employs positional emphasis as the themes of praise and longing are restated at the beginning (invocation) and end (petition) of each lyric. Thus each lyric is begun by the theme of praise, an antiphonal exclamation of admiration in eleven out of the twelve lyrics:

/Eala/ cyninge 1b (0 King)
Eala pu reccend 18a (0 Thou Ruler)
Eala sibbe gesiþ 50a (0 Thou vision of Peace)
Eala wifa wynn 71a (0 joy of women)
Eala earendel 104a (0 rising brightness)
Eala gaesta god 130a (0 God of souls)
Eala pu soþa...cyninga cyning 214-15a (0 Thou true King of kings)
Eala pu maera...cwen 275-276 (0 thou glorious queen)
Eala pu halga heofona dryhten 348 (0 Thou Holy Lord of heaven)
Eala seo wlitige...heofoncund þrynes 378-379 (0 the Beautiful heavenly Trinity)
Eala hwaet, þæt is wraeclic wrixl in wera life, þætte moncynnes milde scyppend 416-417 (0 what a marvelous change in the life of men that the merciful creator of mankind...)

At the end of each lyric the theme of longing usually appears in contexts such as: "Nearobearfe conn / hu se earma sceal are gebidan" 69-70 (He knows the dire need, how the wretched must mercy await), and "Us is lissa þearf,

---

1See Campbell, "Structural Patterns," 241.
The thematic threads of praise and longing have been discussed as separate themes. However, it should be noted that in the poem there is a tendency to express praise and longing in a single interwoven pattern as the poet combines both themes into one image or phrasing. Thus when the poet describes Christ through His attributes, he portrays Him as the Champion of both God (in the thread of coeternal majesty) and man (in the thread of His relationship with man). He is the Champion of God for without Him nothing was created. He is the Champion of man for He is the Hero swaying man's destiny from catastrophe to glory and in praising Him, man fulfills his being and is cured from sin for:

Se waes ae bringend, 
laa laedend, þam longe his 
hyhtan hidercyme, swa him gehaten waes, 
þaette sunu meotudes sylfa wolde 
gefaelsian foldan maegþe, 
swylce grundas eac gaestes maegne 
sipe gesecan. Nu hie softe þaes 
bidon in bendum hwonne bearn godes 
cwome to cearigum 11.140b-148.

(He was the bringer of law, the giver of wisdom to those who for long had hoped for His Advent, as was promised them that the Son of the Creator Himself would purify the races of the earth and also in time seek the abyss by the might of His spirit. Now they patiently awaited in bonds until the Child of God should come to the afflicted).
In a variety of repetitious phrasings man calls on Christ his Champion within an inseparable fusion of the two main themes:

\[
\text{Is seo bot gelong} \\
\text{eall aet } \text{be anum, ece dryhten.} \\
\text{Hreowcearignum help, } \text{paet } \text{pin hidercyme} \\
\text{afrefre feasceafte).} \tag{ll. 365b-368a.}
\]

(The cure is dependent on Thee alone, eternal Lord. Help the wretched, so that Thine advent here may comfort the miserable).

Finally when man contemplates the Virgin and her Child, his desires are realized, and he can rejoice in the victory of his Lord:

\[
\text{Sibpan we motan} \\
\text{anmodlice ealle hyhtan,} \\
\text{nu we on } \text{paet bearn foran breostan stari} \text{b} \\
\text{ll. 339b-341.}
\]

(Hereafter we may unanimously all hope, now that we behold that Child upon thy breast).

In lines 429-435, the poet promises man his final victory if he truly praises Christ His Saviour:

\[
\text{Forbon we hine domhwate daedum ond wordum} \\
\text{hergen holdlice. } \text{paet is healic raed} \\
\text{monna gehwylcum } \text{be gemynd hafab,} \\
\text{paet he symle oftost ond inlocast} \\
\text{ond geornlicost god weorbige.} \\
\text{He him } \text{paere lisse lean forgildeb}
\]

(Wherefore it is a sublime action for anyone who has intelligence, that he most often and most inwardly, and most yearningly praise God. He will reward him for love, yea, the hallowed Saviour Himself).

In the above quotations the interweaving of themes is cleverly handled. While the poet is occupied with the theme of praising God by expounding His multiple attributes,
he brings to light a hidden knowledge of God as well as a hidden knowledge of man himself, and this arouses in the latter new reasons for praising God. In fact the poet had already implied at the very beginning of the lyric, that man's chief work on earth was to praise God. In lines 20-21 he says: "eadga upwegas, oprum forwyrnep / wlitigan wilsipes, gif his weorc ne deag." (bless us with victory with glorious success, denied to another if his work is worthless). There is established here a contrast between the blessedness of those who praise God and the damnation of those who refuse to glorify His name.

However, the lyric most exclusively dedicated to a simultaneous praise and longing, is Lyric XI. This lyric is a spontaneous outburst of delirious praise interwoven with longing in honor of the triune God and Christ the Saviour. Here the poet sings, with an almost uncontrolled emotion, the praise of the most High but with due remembrance of his own humble condition as a needy creature:

Eala seo wlitige, weorbmynda full,  
heah ond halig, heofoncund þrynes,  
brade geblissad geond brytenwongas  
þa mid ryhte sculon reordberende,  
earme eorþware ealle maegene  
hergan healice, nu us haelend god  
waerfaest onwrah þæt we hine witan moton.

(ll. 378-384.

(0 the beautiful, the full of praise, the high and holy, the heavenly Trinity, widely blessed throughout the surface of the earth, whom rightfully all poor miserable earthdwellers must with all power praise
exaltedly. Now the trustworthy Saviour God has revealed to us that we may know Him).

Besides the attributes mentioned in the above quotation this sole lyric contains 16 other attributes in praise of Christ, each of which picks up one of the thematic threads of praise or longing.

Finally the poem ends as it began, on a note of praise and triumph. At the beginning Christ was King and Head of the glorious temple who was to rebuild the "house that was in ruins." At the end His mission is accomplished; man will dwell blessed ever after in the land of the living:

se gehalgoda haelend sylfa,
efne in þam eþle þær he aer ne cwom,
in lifgendra londes wynne,
þær he gesaelig sippan eardap,
ealne widan feorh wunap butan ende. 11. 435-439.

(the holy Saviour Himself, even in the land where He formerly never came, in the joy of the land of the living, He blessed ever afterwards shall dwell forever, dwell without end).

together with the holy Saviour who has rewarded him for his praise and hope. The interlace design has returned to its beginning.
The Theme of Man's Misery

The theme of man's misery, one of the larger threads of the tapestry, includes all word imagery referring to man's fall, exile, rejection of Christ and consequent subjection to the powers of evil.\(^1\) It runs through all the lyrics and stands out as the chief element of contrast with the other themes. The poet introduces it in the first two lines of the Advent Lyrics, where in the form of a building metaphor, it is immediately contrasted and interwoven with the two main themes.

\[
\text{bu eart se weallstan be þa wyrhtan iu wipwurpon to weorce. Wei þe geriseþ baet þu heafod sie healle maerre, ond gesomnige side weallas faeste gefoge, flint unbraecne, 11.2-6.}
\]

(Thou art the cornerstone that the builders long ago rejected from the work. Well it befits Thee that Thou be the head of the glorious temple and bring together the wide walls, the flint unbreakable, with firm union).

The fact that man has "rejected" Christ constitutes in the eyes of the poet, the worst aspect of his misery.

---

\(^1\)See Catherine Ann Regan, Wisdom and Sin: Patristic Psychology in Old English Poetry, (Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), p. 120. With reference to the above, Regan remarks: "The manifestation of evil in the sinful conduct of man so engaged the poetic imagination of the Old English poets that this theme emerges as one of the major themes of /their/ poetry."
For in the words "weallstan...wipwurpon" there is simultaneously contained a triple rejection. Historically the cornerstone image alludes to three different events: the Incarnation of Christ, the Redemption, and the institution of the Church, three instances in which man rejected Christ through pride. But this brief annunciation of the theme of man's misery is suddenly interrupted in line 3. Here the poet starts again on the theme of praise, where he elaborates especially on Christ's power and glory. Christ is the head of the temple, righteous and triumphant. He is the Lord of glory, Craftsman and King. In line 13, the subject reverts back to man's misery but this time man takes on the humble attitude of petition and avowal of his misery. He implores the King Himself to rebuild that which is corrupt and in ruins:

```
Nu is þam weorce þeart
þaet se craeftga cume ond se cyning sylfa,
ond þonne gebete, nu gebrosnad is,
hus under hrofe. 11 11b-14a.
```
(Now there is need in the work that Craftsman come and the King Himself, and then rebuild that which now corrupt is, the house under the roof).

In the lines immediately following, man continues to avow himself "abject", "wretched" and "miserable", dominated by terror from the evil one. The lyric ends on a note of hope in Christ's goodness: "nu sceal liffrea / þone wergan heap wrapum ahreddan, / earme from egsan, swa he oft dyde."

15b-17 (Now shall the Lord of life deliver the abject crowd from wrath, the miserable from terror, as he often did). The past tense of this last phrase indicates that the poet has already jumped into a future period of time.¹

Lyric II begins with the key metaphor, suggested by the Church Antiphon, O Clavis David. However, the poet reshapes it to suit his own creation:

\[
\text{se be locan healdeþ, lif ontyneþ, eadgan upwegas, oþrum forwyrneþ wlitigan wilsipes, gif his weorc ne deag.} \]

11. 19-21.

(He who the keys holdeth, life openeth, bless us with a path to heaven, with glorious success, denied to another if his work is not well done).

He inserts the moral that those whose works are not well done can expect to be locked out of eternal life. E. Burgert sees in the passage a metaphor "which glorifies the Key that closed eternal life to mankind after the transgression in Paradise and again opened it in the Incarnation and the

¹See Time Interlace, pp. 64-66 below.
Redemption." In either case the metaphor contains an allusion to man's spiritual death from which he needs to be brought back to life through the goodness of Christ. All the lines expressing this theme are built on the basic idea that Christ has the power and will to save man on condition that man desires Him and faces the facts of his own helpless condition. In the lines immediately following is given an interesting example of how the theme of man's misery interweaves fragmentarily with the two main themes of longing and praise:

(a sad thing, we in prison sit sorrowing, for the sun yearning until to us the Lord of life, light reveal become for our soul the protector and the weak mind with glory encompass, make us of this worthy, whom He to glory hath admitted when we miserably to depart


2In the above underlining, single lines indicate the misery theme; double lines the theme of longing for the Saviour and the spaced lines that of praise.
were obliged unto this narrow land, of home deprived. Wherefore he may say who truth speaketh that He saved when it corrupted was, the race of men).

The example illustrates the interlacing of the three themes in picturesque imagery: Man, a sad thing, weak in mind, sits in prison sorrowing, for he has been obliged to depart miserably from his home into a narrow land, after the race of men had become corrupted through original sin. (25-26a). But then he remembers the Promise and begins hopefully to yearn for the Sun, the Lord of life, the Protector of the soul, the Saviour, that He may reveal His light, encompass him with brightness, admit him to glory and save him.

In line 35b occurs a sudden break as the theme of man's misery merges into a new theme, the Virgin theme. The poet addresses her: "faemne geong,/maeg manes leas," 35b-36a (young virgin, maid free from sin), and goes on to elaborate until the end of the lyric, about the mystery of the incarnation in a tone of wonder: "Naenig efenlic þam, aer ne sipþan, / in worlde gewearþ wifes gearnung;" 39-40 (Never anything like that, before or after in the world has happened, that a woman of such merit has been found). We are not permitted to forget that the poet is putting into contrast man's misery with the Virgin's purity.¹

¹For the Virgin theme, see p. 39 below. The tone of this passage is discussed in Chapter III, p. 53 below.
In Lyric III, after a lapse of fifteen lines where the poet has celebrated the Virgin in a series of epithets, the theme of man's misery reappears in the last five lines:

\[
\text{Nu is } \text{he } \text{beart cymen,} \\
\text{awaecned to } \text{wyre } \text{weorcum } \text{Ebre}a, \\
\text{bringe}p \text{blisse } \text{pe, benda onlyse}p \\
\text{nipum } \text{genedde. Nearo}p\text{hearfe conn,} \\
\text{hu } \text{se } \text{earma } \text{sceal are gebidan. } \text{Il. 66b-70.}
\]

(Now is that Child come, born for the alleviation of the afflictions of the Hebrews, He bringeth bliss, looseneth thy bonds imposed by iniquity. He knoweth their dire need, how the wretched must await mercy).

Christ has now come in answer to man's yearning described in Lyric II, but man's wretched condition is again emphasized and repeated in almost synonymous terms. Here again man is an afflicted being suffering from being enslaved by the bonds of sin. However his suffering is alleviated because Christ knows man's wretchedness.

The first fifteen lines of Lyric IV revert to the Virgin theme when suddenly in line 85a the poet interrupts his praise of her only to recite a proverb on man's misery: "Swa eal manna bearn / sorgum sawep, swa eft ripap/ cennap to cwealme." (As all men sow in sorrow so afterwards they reap, they bring forth in death). In the succeeding lines the subject on the Virgin is continued to line 95, where for the second time in this lyric the misery theme appears.
in Dauides dyrre maegan
þæt is Euan scyld eal forpynded,
waergþa aworpen,
ll. 96-98a.

(In the beloved descendant of David the guilt of Eve is all nullified, the curse cast off).

This time it is in the form of a flashback to Eve's transgression in Paradise and the origin of man's misery when God had pronounced His curse upon the human race.

In Lyric V, the element of contrast between the "light" of Christ's glory and the "darkness" of man's misery is extremely strong. After Christ has been referred to as the "Eala earendel," (brightness of the Everlasting light); "soþfaesta sunnan leoma," (true splendour of the Sun); "symle inlihtes" 104-108 (Who forever illuminest), man is described as:

þrosme bebeahhte ond in þeostrum her,
saeton sinneahtes; synnum bifealdne
deorc deaþes sceadu dreogan sceoldan. ll. 116-118.

(covered with darkness and in darkness here, sat in perpetual night, wrapped in sin had to suffer the dark shadow of death).

He urgently appeals to Christ that He enlighten the darkness of his night in sin. In the three lines that follow the poet moves into the theme of Christ's coeternal existence with the Father, saying that the "efenece mid god, ond nu eft gewearþ / flaesc firena leas," 122-123a (Coeternal One with God later became flesh free of sin). And he continues
by "faemne gebaer/geomrum to geoce," 123b-124a (The maiden bore Him as a help for the miserable), whereby he merges three themes into one.

In Lyric VI, as the themes of praise and longing for the Redeemer become more accentuated, man's petitions and confessions concerning his exile also become more pressing and picturesque. Man pleads:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{paet sunu meotudes sylfa wolde} \\
& \text{gefaelsian foldan maegpe,} \\
& \text{swylce grundas eac gaestes maegne} \\
& \text{siðe gesecan. Nu hie softe ðaes} \\
& \text{bidon in bendum hwonne bearn godes} \\
& \text{cwome to cearigum.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

ll 143-147a.

(that the Son of the Creator Himself would purify the races of the earth and also in time seek the abyss by the might of His spirit. Now they patiently awaited in bonds until the Child of God should come to the afflicted).

Stanley Greenfield places the above petitions "in the mouths of the just souls in limbo,"\(^1\) where according to the seventh article of the Creed, Christ descended after the Crucifixion in order to announce to those who had hoped in Him, the glad tidings of their deliverance.

More dramatic still is the imagery of man's distress in lines 150b-154:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Bring us haelolif,} \\
& \text{werigum witeþeowum, wope forcymenum,} \\
& \text{bitrum brynetearum. Is seo bot gelong} \\
& \text{eal aet þe anum...oferþearfum.} \\
& \text{Hæftas hygegeomre hider ...es;}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^1\)"The Theme of Spiritual Exile in Christ I,"p. 324.
THEMATIC INTERLACE

(Bring salvation to us to the tormented slaves, overcome with weeping with bitter burning tears. The remedy is completely dependent on Thee alone. Visit here the sad captives in extreme distress).

The description still refers to the souls in limbo, but the poet by making use of a tragic physical representation, clarifies the meaning of an abstract concept of faith.

In Lyric VII, the theme of man's misery appears from a slightly different perspective. J.J. Campbell calls this lyric "The Temptation of Joseph" because Joseph is tempted to cover up what he believes to be the Virgin's crime. His mind is obscured in face of the mystery he has to contend with. Facts are there in proof against Mary's innocence. He can no longer resist the tauntings of his friends for they have spoken to him injurious speech, insults, and many bitter words. He becomes mentally unsettled, emotionally hurt and yet he cannot resign himself to believing that his "pure maiden" is guilty. Joseph then, in contrast to Mary, experiences the consequences of guilt even though he has not committed actual sin:

Ic lungre eam
deope gedrefed, dome bereafod,
Forpon ic worn for þe worde haebbe
sidra sorga ond sarcwida,
hearmes gehyred, ond me hosp sprecap,
tornworda fela. Ic tearas sceal
gotan geomormod. God eafe maeg
gehaelan hygesorge heortan minre,
afrefran feasceafte. 1l. 167b-175a.

1 "Structural Patterns," 249.
(I suddenly am deeply troubled, bereft of honor, for because of thee I have heard in words much great grief, injurious speech, insult, and they speak scorn against me, many bitter words. Sorrowful in mind I must shed tears. God easily may heal the mental distress of my heart, comfort the miserable).

Like the rest of his co-exiles, Joseph is given to feel the distress of his state and must find comfort in God's saving power. Mary on the other hand does not feel in the least troubled or hurt at Joseph's accusing her of adultery. She is completely immersed in joy and gratitude for the great things that are being accomplished in both of them as she explains to Joseph the mystery, the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the Saviour; she advises Joseph to say eternal thanks for being henceforth the great Child's father by earthly opinion.

In Lyric VIII, the theme of man's misery reappears intermittently, mainly in three places, and each time joins with and becomes one with that of man's longing and praise for the Saviour. The first image recalls and paraphrases the Key metaphor of Lyric II, line 19,

\[\text{haelende Crist,}\]
\[\text{ond ða gyldnan geatu, ðe in geardagum}\]
\[\text{ful longe aer bilocen stodan,}\]
\[\text{heofona heahfrea, hat ontyna,}\]
\[ll. 250b-253.\]

(Saviour Christ, high Lord of heaven, bid unlock the golden gates, that in days of old full long ago stood locked).

---

1The abrupt change of tone in this passage is further discussed under Tonal Interlace, p. 56 below.
which starts by praising Christ, then longs for His coming and finally alludes to man's original fall in the Garden of Paradise. The second image refers to a prophecy of the Old Testament and Christ's recalling of it on the eve of His Passion:

Hafæþ se awyrgcdæ wulf tostenced,  
deor daedscwænan, dryhten, þin eowde,  
wide towrecene. þæt þu, waldend, aer  
blode gebohtes, þæt se bealofulla  
hynþ þæð heordlice, ond him on hæft nimeþ  
ofær usse neoda ðlœste.  II. 256-261.

(The accursed wolf, the beast of shadow hath scattered, Lord, Thy flock, ruined it widely. That which Thou, Lord, formerly with blood boughtest, the enemy oppresseth severely and taketh us prisoner against our desires).

The lines place a strong accent on man being more a victim than an active sinner. And for this reason he can claim Christ's help with greater justification. In the third image of lines 266-274, the poet sums up the whole story of man's pitiful state:

ond þin hondgeweorc, hæeleþa scyppend,  
mote arisan ond on ryht cuman  
to þam upcundan æþelan rice,  
þonan us aer þurh synlust se swearta gaest  
forteah ond fortylde, þæt we, tires wone,  
a butan ende sculon erþmu dreogan,  
butan þu usic þon ofostlicor, ece dryhten,  
aet þam leodsceånæ, lifgende god,  
helm alwihtæ, hreddan wille.

(and that Thy handiwork, Creator of men may rise and come aright unto the exalted splendid kingdom whence us first through love of sin the black spirit seduced and misled, that we, of glory wanting must endure misery without end unless Thou wilt often save us from the enemy, living God, Protector of every creature).
Man is weary in exile, oppressed by the deceiver; he first fell through love of sin seduced by the black spirit and was condemned to suffer eternal misery unless the eternal Lord deliver him from the enemy.

The theme of man's misery is only slightly and implicitly alluded to in Lyric IX, when in lines 310b-314, the poet re-introduces the key image:

Wende swipe
þæt ænig ælda æfre ne meahte
swa faestlice forescyttelsas
on ecnesse o inhebban,
opþæs ceasterhlides clustor onluccan

(He thought deeply how any mortal ever might in eternity raise up such strong bolts or open the lock of that city gate).

The prophet wonders how any mortal man could open the lock of the city gate, which had been so firmly closed by man's transgression.

In Lyric X, however, the poet returns to his lengthy enumerations of man's miseries. Here again man is a captive, a slave, harassed by his own wishes, 360-362. He knows that evil spirits have dammed him, that the hateful devil has oppressed him and fastened him with dire ropes, 363-365a. But he knows too that the cure is dependent on Christ, who will help the wretched, the miserable, even though they have engaged in a feud against God through sin, 365b-369. Then in lines 370-373:
Ara nu onbehtum ond usse yrmpa geinciple,
hu we tealtrigab tydroman mode,
hwearfiap heanlice.

(Spare now Thy servants and consider our miseries,
how we totter, weak in spirit, and roam about abjectly).

man details anew the tragic consequences of his fall. The
more often he enumerates them, the more confident he becomes
of being heard.

Lyric XI gives a single reference to this theme in
the words "earme eorþware" 382 (poor earthdwellers). The
poet is in a hurry to get away from it and to tie it trium­
phantly to the theme of praise.

Finally in Lyric XII, the theme of misery is resol­
ved, as Greenfield says, when "the poet urges all men to
pray for forgiveness of their sins: and man shall be
rewarded"

\[\text{efne in þam eþle þaer he aer ne cwom,}
\text{in lifgendra londes wynne,}\]
\[\text{II.436-437.}\]

(even in the land where he formerly never came
in the joy of the land of the living).

\[1\]"The Theme of Spiritual Exile," 328.
The Virgin Theme

The Virgin theme appears in ten out of the twelve lyrics; all except lyrics I and XI make express or allusive mention of the Virgin, honoring her in three distinguishing aspects: her purity, her power and glory, and her role in the plan of the Redemption. The poet treats this theme from the double point of view of emotion and contrast. What H.C. Wyld claims as characteristic of all Anglo-Saxon poetry is particularly applicable here, namely, that it exhibits "arresting qualities of elevation of thought and a sustained intensity of emotion, together with great delicacy and tenderness of feeling."¹

It is with a strong feeling of admiration that the poet delights in the Virgin's purity and becomes repetitious in his admiration: "Waes seo faemne geong, / maegb manes leas," 35b-36a (Young was the Virgin a maid free from sin); "Naefre wommes tacn / in ðam eardgearde eawed weorþep," 54b-55 (Never a sign of sin shall be seen in that dwelling); "Eala wifa wynn geond wuldres þrym, / faemne freolicast ofer ealne foldan sceat," 71-72 (O joy of women in heavenly glory,

fairest maid on the whole face of the earth); "Fricgæþ ðurh fyrwet hu ic faemnan had, / mund minne, geheold, ond eac modor gewearþ / maere meotudes suna?" 92-94a (Ask ye in curiosity how I have kept my maidenhood, my virginity, and yet become mother of the glorious Son of God?); "ond efne swa þec gemette, meahtum gehrodene, / claene ond gecorene," 330-331 (and Christ almighty found thee even so endowed with virtues, pure and elect). Phrases such as these are strewn throughout the lyrics, making the interlace thread of her purity appear and reappear.¹

The aspect of the Virgin's power is most forcefully expressed in Lyric IX where she is celebrated as Lady of heaven, of earth, and of hell because she consecrated her virginity to the Lord:²

\[
\text{Þæt þu sie hlaefdige halgum meahtum wuldorweorudes, ond worldcundra hada under heofunum, ond helwara.}
\text{Forbon þu þæt ana ealra monna geþohtest brymlice, þristhycgende, þæt þu þinne maégþad meotude brohtes, sealdes butan synnum.}\quad \text{II. 284-290a.}
\]

(Thou art lady with holy might of the heavenly host, and of earthly ranks, and of the inhabitants of hell. For thou alone of all mankind didst nobly resolve, strong in mind, that thou thy maidenhood to God bring, give it without sin).

¹See Appendix II, p. 72.

²Other references to her power are found in verses: 88a and 330b.
The poet exults in the Virgin's glory in Lyric III where he identifies her first to the heavenly, then to the earthly Jerusalem. She is "Cristes burglond," 51b (the city of Christ), "engla eþelstol," 52a (the home of angels), and in her "saule sopfaestra simle gerestæþ, wuldrum hremge" 53-54a (the righteous dwell eternally in exultant glory). In lines 59-63a she is the earthly Jerusalem where the wide creation looks upon her with awe as it watches in surprise how the creator of the universe deigns to seek her as His dwelling place:

Sioh nu sylfa þe geond þas sidan gesceafht,
swylce rodores hrof rume geondwþitan
ymb healfa gehwone, hu þec heofones cyning
siþe gesceœþ ond sylf cymeþ
nimeþ eard in þe

(See now thyself how the wide creation and heaven's roof surveyeth thee all about on every side, and how the King of heaven seeketh thee in His course, and cometh Himself, and taketh His dwelling in thee).

The Virgin's role in the plan of the Redemption is referred to explicitly in nine different places. The most picturesque is found in Lyric IX. Here the poet interprets the Virgin's divine motherhood in terms of Ezechiel's prophetic vision (xlv, 1-2), where Mary is "compared to

---

2 See Appendix II, p. 73.
3 Kennedy, Early Christian Poetry, p. 78.
a door which sets forth symbolically the birth of Christ.\footnote{Schaar, Critical Studies, p. 138.}

She is the entrance through which Christ comes into this world. Only He can pass through it for He has the key to open or lock:

\begin{verbatim}
Nu þæt is gefylled þæt se froda þa
mid eagum þæer on wlaðade.
þu eart þæt wealldor, þurh þæ wældend frea
æne on þæs eorpan ut sipade,

Swa þæ æfter him engla þeoden
eft ummaele æelces þinges
liopucaegan bileac, lifes brytta. 11.326-334.
\end{verbatim}

(Now that is fulfilled what the prophet then looked upon with his eyes. Thou art that wall-door, through thee the Ruler Lord once travelled unto this earth. Thus the Prince of angels, the Lord of life, closed thee all unblemished, after Him again, as with a wondrous key).

This door-metaphor is also closely interlaced with the theme of man's misery for it would have no point unless man were shut out of Paradise without possibility to enter again. It is interlaced too with the theme of longing by the fact that the Virgin presented as a door through which Christ will pass serves as a stimulant for man's longing. He can trust in her because by her purity she participates in the divine power of Christ, and by her human nature she is attainable to man. She becomes the meeting place of the divine and the human and establishes a kinship which ends
the existing enmity between God and man.

The poet, besides using symbol and metaphor in the development of this theme, also uses the principle of contrast or the placing side by side of opposites. Man's dilemma because of his fall in sin demands someone free from sin to intercede. Hence, the poet continually sets up the Virgin's purity in a criss-cross pattern of phrasing, which contrasts with man's sin. He repeatedly refers to her as "maeg manes leas" (maiden free from sin)\(^1\) so that even with the focus on her purity we are reminded of man's misery. In lines 72-77 for example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{faemne freolicast ofer ealne foldan sceat} \\
\text{baes þe æfres sunbued sceag secgan hyrdon,} \\
\text{arece us þaet geryne þaet þe of roderum cwom,} \\
\text{hu þu eacnunge æfres onfenge} \\
\text{bearnæ þurh gebyrde, ond þone gebedscipe} \\
\text{aeftær monwisan mod þe cubes.}
\end{align*}
\]

(maiden the fairest over all the surface of the earth, that ever men heard tell of, explain to us the mystery that came to thee from heaven, how thou didst conceive and yet intercourse after human fashion knewest not).

she is asked to reveal the secret of how she could give birth to a child and yet remain spotless. By this question man implicitly acknowledges that his faculties have become so obscured through sin that he can never hope to understand the mystery of her virginity.

\(^1\)See Appendix II, p. 72.
Contrast and interlace appear again in lines 94b-99:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Forban þæt monnum nis} \\
& \text{cub geryne, ac Crist onwrah} \\
& \text{in Dauides dyrre maegan} \\
& \text{þæt is Euan scyld eal forpynded,} \\
& \text{waergpa aworpen, ond gewuldrad is} \\
& \text{se heanra had. Hyht is onfangen}
\end{align*}
\]

(Truly that to men is not a known mystery, but Christ revealed in the beloved descendant of David that the guilt of Eve is all nullified, the curse cast off, and glorified is the humble sex. Hope is received).

Mary is described as the one in whom the guilt of Eve is erased, in whom womanhood is honored. In her there is purity and innocence as contrasted with the rest of men in whom there is guilt and sin. However, by continually alluding to man's guilt the poet forecasts his redemption. Because of the Virgin, man is now allowed to hope. The themes of praise, longing, purity and misery all meet in her.
CHAPTER II

VARIATION AS STYLISTIC INTERLACE

Of the Advent poet it has been said that he was "so thrilled by the sweet chanting of the Greater Antiphons of Advent, and so imbued with their spirit through reflection upon their rich devotional and doctrinal contents that he gladly yielded to the impulse to reproduce them in English under the form of variation."¹ According to Klaeber, variation is "the very soul of the Old English poetical style."² It consists of a multifold repetition of the same idea in a new expression or embellishment. John Leyerle equates variation with what he calls "stylistic interlace" when it is combined on two or more subjects and becomes an "interweaving of two or more strands of variation."³

By means of this poetic technique of variation the poet is able to turn his subject or theme on and off again "until he has produced a description that is pure decoration for its own sake."⁴ The variant passages are so interwoven as to form a distinct pattern in the poetic text. They are woven together into a "stylistic braid", a feature

¹Cook, The Christ, p. xlii.
³Leyerle, "Interlace Structure", 4.
of style which "is the literary counterpart for interlace designs in art that are decorative rather than structural"\textsuperscript{1} and form in effect a verbal carpet page. Peter D. Scott in "Alcuin as a Poet," tells us that "Bede's poetry is full of interwoven classical tags, for this weaving was the principle of poetic making which was taught at the time."\textsuperscript{2}

In the making of the Advent Lyrics the poet made abundant use of variation both in its simple form and in its combined form termed stylistic interlace. In the following lines is illustrated an example of simple variation on the subject of Christ:

\begin{verbatim}
Halig eart þu, halig heahengla brego,
sob sigores frea, symle þu bist halig,
dryhtna dryhten! A bin dom wunab
eorplic mid aeldum in aelce tid
wide geweorbad. þu eart weoroda god,
forþon þu gefyldest foldan ond rodoras,
wigendra hleo, wuldris þines,
heim alwihta. 11. 403-410.
\end{verbatim}

(Holy art Thou, holy, Lord of archangels, 
true Lord of triumph, ever art Thou holy, 
King of kings, ever Thy glory liveth, 
on earth among men to all eternity, 
honoured far and wide. Thou art God of hosts, 
for Thou hast filled the earth and heavens, 
Refuge of warriors, with Thy glory 
Protector of every creature).\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Leyerle, "Interlace Structure," 5. See also artistic interlace designs of Figures 1-9, p. v ff.
\textsuperscript{2}U.T.Q., 33 (1964), 236.
\textsuperscript{3}Underlining has been added to mark the position of each variant. Also, in order to stay closer to the original pattern of phrasing, a literal translation was preferred.
Here in the space of 8 lines are found six variations on Christ where each epithet reveals a different aspect of the figurative picture of God. The poet's praise of Christ rises to its highest emotional climax. It is widely represented throughout the twelve lyrics and evokes all the conceivable attributes that concern man's relation with God. At the same time these variations on Christ contribute directly to the structural theme of praise, which is one of the largest thematic threads in this poetic tapestry. It must, however, be remembered that the technique of variation can become very monotonous in the hands of a poor poet, wherefore Cook observes that "Wisdom and understanding are necessary for him who would charm with words."\(^1\) The Advent poet did indeed charm with words. Inherent in his recurring patterns is a conscious sense of balance which, through a contrasting imagery of tragedy and consolation, "allows the poem's form to reflect its meaning."\(^2\) It is as if the poet combined into his several series of variation, moments of great lyrical intensity.

---

\(^1\)Cook, The Christ, p. lxxxiii.

\(^2\)Ralph W.V. Elliott, "Form and Image in the Old English Lyrics," EIC, XI (1961), 1.
The following example illustrates an interweaving of two strands of variation. Strictly speaking, stylistic interlace begins with at least two strands. They are woven together into what Leyerle has called "a stylistic braid."

\begin{verbatim}
bu eart baet wealldor, burh be waldend frea
aene on pas eorpan ut sipade,
ondefe swa bec gemette, mehtum gehrodene,
claene ond gecorene, Crist aelmihtig.
Swa be aefter him engla beoden
eft unmaele aelces binges
liopucaegan bileac, lifes brytta. 1 Il. 328-334.
\end{verbatim}

(Thou art the wall-door; through thee the Lord Ruler once into this earth out travelled and even thus found thee in might adorned, pure and select, He Christ Almighty; thus the Prince of angels, the Lord of life, closed thee, all unblemished, after Him again, as with a wondrous key).

The subjects of the two strands are Christ and the Virgin. The strand dealing with Christ is made up of words dealing with His might and dominion. He is the Lord (328b), the Ruler (328b), Christ almighty (331b), the Prince of angels (332b) and the Lord of life (334b). The heavy stress which the poet places on Christ's divinity and power in this first strand establishes a shade of contrast with the second strand where the titles given to the Virgin denote a purified human being with allusion to man's sinfulness from which she was preserved. She is the wall-door (328a)

---

1Single underlining indicates variation on Christ, double underlining on that of the Virgin.
through which salvation, in the person of Christ, came to sinners; she is the might adorned (331b), the pure and select (331a) and the unblemished (333a).¹

Sometimes the antithetical aspect of the interlaced variants carries a heightened effect of contrast, as for example in lines 11-17, where the interlace shows three interwoven threads:

Nu is pam weorc beorl
baet se ceraetga cume ond se cyning sylfa,
ond bonne gebete, nu gebroser ad is,
hus under brofe. He baet bra gescop,
leorma laemena; nu scel liffre
bone wergan heap, wrapum ahredden,
earme from egsan, swa he oft dyde.

(Now is there in the work need that the Craftsman come and the King Himself, and should then rebuild that which now is in ruins the house beneath the roof. He that body created the limbs of clay; Now shall the Lord of life the hapless host from wrath deliver the miserable from terror, as he often did).

The passage contains a double antithesis. First, there is the image of a spiritual struggle between good and evil powers; Christ and Satan are contending for the possession of man. Thus the first strand shows, the work (11b), that which is now in ruins (13b), the house under the roof (14a), the body (14b), the limbs of clay (15a), the hapless

¹Additional two-strand variations are found in the following groups of lines: 219-223; 385-390; 395-402.
host (16a), the miserable (17a), which in the second strand need to be -- rebuilt (13a), delivered (16b) from wrath and terror by the third strand -- the Craftsman (12a) the King Himself (12b), the Lord of life (15b).\(^1\) Second, there is an implicit contrast in reference to man. On the one hand, man is the house that is in ruins and the hall whose walls have a tendency to fall apart; on the other, he is a masterpiece of God's work, whose creation is admirable and glorious, as implied by the words "He ðæt hra gescop" 14b (He that body created). The passage forms a distinct pattern of loss and consolation, giving it that elegiac tone so characteristic of all heroic poetry.

One of the most interesting examples of stylistic interlace is the four strand braid found in lines 261b-274:

Forbon we, nergend, þe
biddæþ geornlice breostgehygdum
þæt þu hraedlice helpe gefremme
weremum wrecan, þæt se wites bona
in helle grund hean gedrēose;
ond bin hondgeweorc, haeleþa scyppend,
mote arisan ond on ryht cuman
to þam upcundan æœelan rice,
þonan us aer þurh synlust se swearta gaest.
forœah ond fortylde, þæt wē, fiðrēs wonē,
a butan ende sculon ermpu dreogan
butan þu usic bon ofostlicor, ece dryhten,
aet þam leodsceapan, lifgende god,
heām alwēta, "hrēddān wille."

\(^1\)Additional three-strand variations are found in the following groups of lines: 104-117; 130-144; 147-161; 187-195; 282-290; 294-299; 351-357.
Wherefore we, Saviour, Thee pray earnestly with our heart's deepest thoughts that Thou speedily help grant to the weary in exile, that the destroyer of the mind into the inferior abyss of hell fall, and that Thy handiwork, creator of men, may come aright unto the exalted splendid kingdom whence us first, through love of sin, the black spirit seduced and misled, that we, of glory wanting without end must misery suffer unless Thou us often, eternal Lord from the enemy, living God protector of every creature, will save.

The passage is composed of contrasting shades of imagery in a kind of gradation from black to white, forming the verbal braid of:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strain 1</th>
<th>Line(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>269b</td>
<td>the black spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264b</td>
<td>the mind's destroyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273a</td>
<td>the enemy (who seduced and misled)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strain 2</th>
<th>Line(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>264a</td>
<td>the weary in exile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>266a</td>
<td>the handiwork of God (and)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strain 3</th>
<th>Line(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>263b</td>
<td>was granted help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274b</td>
<td>and saved (by)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strain 4</th>
<th>Line(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>261b</td>
<td>the Saviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>266b</td>
<td>the Creator of men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272b</td>
<td>the eternal Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273b</td>
<td>the living God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274a</td>
<td>the protector of every creature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second glance at this verbal interlace, however, reveals that there is lacking a certain regularity of form.

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1 Additional four-strand variations can be found in the following groups of lines: 87-98; 187-195; 201-207; 214-218; 219-223; 256-261; 301-314. There is also a six strand variation in lines 54-69 and a seven-strand variation in lines 164-177.
in the position of the variants which one would be led to expect in a type of poetry of such conscientious decorum. In the two-strand braid for example there is an apparent indication that variations on Christ take the b-verse while those on the Virgin remain in the a-verse. This theory, however, is not completely consistent with other groups of variation, although there is a strong tendency for epithets on Christ to take the b-verse. This irregularity has been attributed to a certain lack of method which characterizes Anglo-Saxon art in general.¹

Nevertheless, one can truly say that it is with a creative genius that the Advent poet has constructed his verbal carpet page when with undisguised simplicity of diction he dramatically communicates his own emotions, which simultaneously lend to his work a rising and falling tone, the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER III

TONAL INTERLACE

Tone may be defined as the emotional attitude which the author has toward his subject or the mood which he creates resulting from the manner in which he combines such things as diction, repetition, imagery and symbolism. The Advent Lyrics are written in a deeply moving tone creating a due sense of reverence in the relationship between God and man. The sentences have "an undeniable majesty and sweep, bearing the listener with the speaker...from a mood of despair to one of hope." Jackson Campbell observes of the Advent poet that "his is most often a singing mode, and he often presents a state of exalted emotion." One of the dominant characteristics inherent in the organization of the material in each lyric and which governs its tone is the principle of contrast, the placing side by side of opposites such as joy and sorrow, light and darkness, the heroic and the spiritual. These opposites in turn appear and disappear in irregular fashion forming a poetic tapestry in keeping with the artistic achievement of the

3"Structural Patterns," 247.
time. Through these contrasts the poet glorifies the Saviour in one breath and in the next laments the wretchedness of man. We rise as if intoxicated by Christ's triumphant glory, then fall weighed down by our despair and misery.¹

Both in the tonal interlace of joy and sorrow and that of light and darkness the poet has us feel such an all-pervading tone of balance that critics cannot decide which of these aspects dominates. A.S. Cook remarks: "It is disputed whether the tone of Advent is on the whole one of joy or sorrow, whether penitence or joyful anticipation give it its prevailing character."² The Advent poet has caught this alternating mood whereby man's joy in the promise of a Redeemer is constantly counterbalanced, defined, and interwoven with sorrow resulting from his fall. The tonal strand of sorrow actually defines the strand of joy so that one cannot exist without the other and as the two tones merge into one, a new tone is produced, a tone of hope. Illustrations of this tonal tapestry may be found in the following:

¹See Campbell "Structural Patterns," 234. He remarks that the requests in the lyrics are "spoken in the voice of a group of living human beings. This group includes the poet and people of his generation for whom he is speaking. It also of course, includes the reader of the poem."

²The Christ of Cynewulf, p. xxviii.
In his very praise of the Virgin the poet cannot forget man's servitude to sin. He posits her immunity to sin as the cause of her joy and implicitly alludes to the Saviour's healing power as a remedy to man's sorrow. The individual aspect of the two tonal strands takes on a different shade in lines 149b-154 and 158-163:

Come now Thyself High King of heaven. Bring salvation to the tormented slaves overcome with weeping, with bitter tears. The remedy is dependent completely on Thee alone. Visit us in extreme distress, captives sad in spirit.

The poet plays on the imagery of man's sorrow with accentuated decorum and immediately following weaves it into an imagery of joy:

Never the sign of sin shall in that dwelling be seen but every fault shall flee far from thee, all evil and strife. Thou art gloriously full of holy joy.

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(Prince of glory, let not the accursed have power over us. Grant us the eternal joy of Thy glory, that those whom Thou didst create formerly with Thy hands, worship Thee glorious King of multitudes. Thou dwellest forever in exultation with God the Father).

Tonal interlace is most clearly evident in lyric VII where the alternating speeches of Joseph and Mary reveal a consecutive attitude of deep sorrow and high exultation:

Joseph:  
Ic tearas sceal  
geotan geomormod. God eape maeg  
gehaelan hygesorge heortan minre,  
afrefran feasceafte.  
ll. 172b-175a.

(I,sorrowful in mind, must shed tears. God may easily heal the deep sorrow of my heart, comfort the miserable).

Mary:  
Nu ic his tempel eam  
gefremed butan facne, in me frofre gaest  
geeardode. Nu þu ealle forlaet  
sare sorgceare. Saga ecne þonc  
maerum meotodes sunu þaet ic his modor gewearþ  
faemne forþ seþeah  
ll. 206b-211a.

(Now I am made His temple without guilt, in me the Spirit of comfort has dwelt. Now dismiss all sorrowful care. Say eternal thanks to the glorious Son of God, that I have become His mother, a Virgin henceforth).

The Virgin is so full of joy that she completely misses the point of Joseph's cause for sorrow. Joseph is troubled over the Virgin's conception. He indirectly accuses her of adultery but she thinks he is accusing himself of some hidden fault and tries to defend him. Then, when Joseph does make himself explicit, she is not in the least troubled. She is too full of joy to be hurt even by Joseph's suspicions.
In Lyric XI the heavy emphasis is on joy, a
delirious joy in praise of the Holy Trinity:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{paet sopfaeste seraphines cynn,} \\
\text{uppe mid englum a bremende,} \\
\text{unapreotendum brymmum singab} \\
\text{ful healice hludan stefne,} \\
\text{faegre feor ond neah.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

11. 386-390a.

(the righteous, the race of seraphim above, with
angels ever praising, sing in unwearying numbers
full highly and with voice exalted, sweetly far
and wide).

But even there the poet requires the strand of sorrow to
bring out the beauty of his design:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pa mid ryhte sculon reordberende,} \\
\text{earme eorpware ealle maegene} \\
\text{hergan healice, nu us haelend god} \\
\text{waerfaest onwrah \textit{\text{\textipa{:\textipa{:#}}}}} \\
\end{align*}
\]

11. 381-384.

(Whom all the wretched dwellers upon earth,
endowed with speech, must rightly with all power
praise highly, for now the trusty Saviour hath
revealed God unto us, that we may know Him).

He calls on the "wretched earthdwellers" to fulfill their
duty, that they give exalted praise to the Trinity, that
they unite their voices with those of the race of Seraphims
because "gebletsad leofa" 412b (the blessed One) came to
"heanum to hrobre" 414a (the humble as a comfort).

When speaking of color in Old English poetry, W.E.
Mead remarks: "We may describe Old English religious poetry
as a series of studies in black and white or rather darkness
and light...darkness applying to hell and devils and light,
to heaven and angels and saints. The former was to the
Germanic mind something fearful and terrible, the latter was symbolic of joy and bliss.¹ Upon analysing the Advent Lyrics in terms of light and darkness, one finds that the words connoting light such as "sunnan, enlihted, earendel, beorhtast, leoma, torhtes, lixende, aeþelan," reappear throughout the twelve lyrics twenty-one times, while words connoting darkness such as "þrosme, þeostrum, sinmeahtes, deorc, þystro, swearta" reappear only six times. However, if we insert in both series the synonymous connotations to light and darkness by including words pertaining to glory, triumph, joy, blessedness, on the one hand and the words meaning miserable, abject, sad, captive, sin, affliction on the other, the number surprisingly balances off to seventy-six references to light and seventy-eight to darkness. The poet interweaves with apparent abruptness these images of light and darkness and creates a tonal interlace of color. In lines 104-114:

Eala earendel, engla beorhtast,
ofer middangeard monnum sended,
ond sopfaesta sunnan leoma,
torht oter tunglas, þu tida gehwane
of sylfum þe symle inlihtes!
Swa þu, god of gode gearo acenned,
sunu sopan faeder, swegles in wuldr
butan anginne aefre waere,
swa þe cnu for þearfum þin aegn geweorc
bideþ þurh byldo, þæt þu þa beorhtan us
sunnan onsende, ond þe sylf cyne

¹"Color in Old English Poetry," PMLA, 14 (1899), 175.
(O brightness, the brightest of angels, sent to men on earth, and true light of the sun, glorious beyond the stars, Thou from Thyself illuminest forever all the tides of time. As Thou, God of God, of old begotten, Son of the true Father, wast ever without beginning in the glory of heaven, so now, in need Thine own work prayeth Thee in confidence, that Thou send us the bright sun, and that Thou Thyself come).

there is Christ Himself, the true sunbeam out of the east, bright beyond the stars flooding all ages with His divine light immediately interrupted by lines 115-118:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bæt} & \quad \text{þu inleoh} \text{t}e \quad \text{þa} \quad \text{þe} \quad \text{long} \quad \text{æ}r, \\
\text{brosme} & \quad \text{beþe} \text{æhte} \quad \text{ond} \quad \text{in} \quad \text{beostrum} \quad \text{her,} \\
\text{saet} & \quad \text{ton} \quad \text{sinneah} \text{tes; synnum} \quad \text{bifealdne} \\
\text{deorc} & \quad \text{de} \text{æ} \text{þes} \quad \text{scead} \text{u} \quad \text{dreogan} \quad \text{sceoldan.}
\end{align*}
\]

(that Thou enlighten those who long since were wrapt in darkness and here in gloom sat in perpetual night, shrouded in sin, and had to suffer the dark shadow of death).

where man is wrapped in darkness, shrouded in sin and enduring death. These poetic figures of light and darkness, have a moral implication for man in his relation to his creator, where "misery is to /the poet/ synonymous with the deprivation of light, and bliss with its intensity and abundance."\(^1\)

In addition to the tonal strands which have just been discussed, there can be perceived woven into the lyric, image-fragments reminiscent of secular heroic poetry. These fragments supply the strands for the heroic tone. By their

\(^1\)Cook, *The Christ of Cynewulf*, p. lxxxvii.
earthly aspect they contrast with the main tonal strands of spiritual joy and sorrow, as they evoke heroic emotions which parallel the religious emotions that make up the main tonal strands. The heroic tone then, consists of concepts alluding to the Germanic lord-thane relationship, treasure giving, ruin and battle motifs. The lord-thane relationship is referred to in:

Swylce þa hyhstan on heofonum eac, 
Cristes þegnas, cwþan ondsingan
þaet þu sie hlæfdige halgum meahtum

(Also the highest in the heavens, the thanes of Christ say and sing that thou art lady with holy might).

Heaven is represented as a Germanic court where the loyal thanes of Christ sing the praises of the Virgin, who represents the queen or the peace-maker. Later in lines 397-399, is given the throne image around which the thanes eagerly crowd and from which the Lord distributes His gifts:

ond ymb þeodenstol þringan georne
hwylc hyra nehst mæge ussum nergende
flhte lacan friþgeardum in.

(and around the royal throne they crowd eagerly which one of them nearest may to our Saviour move about in flight within the home of peace).

And again in lines 409-410a, "wigendra hleo, wuldres þines,
helm alwhta," (Protector of warriors, with Thy glory, Protector of every creature), the poet refers to Christ as Protector of warriors, a formulaic title usually attributed
to a generous king. Greatness in heroic times consisted in being attached to a great king. In return the king became the protector of his warriors and admitted them around the gift throne as his special friends, who would give their lives and services in his defence. The concept describes beautifully the relationship which Christianity wished to establish between God and man.

In the following lines can be seen how the poet clothes, in heroic phrasing, heaven's spiritual gifts to man as he makes use of the treasure giving topos:

*bryd beaga hroden, þe þa beorhtan lac to heofonhame hlutre mode sibban sende.*

(ll. 292-294a.

*(ring-adorned bride, thou who dost send the bright gift back to the heavenly home with pure spirit)*.

The ideal of the lord-thane relationship included a constant interchanging of gifts in a spirit of pure love and loyalty. In the above lines the Virgin, the ring-adorned bride, sends back to heaven the gift she has received, that is, Christ the Saviour. In lines 372b-375a:

*Cym nu, haeleba cyning, ne lata to lange. Us is lissa þearf, þaet þu us ahredde ond us haelogiefe sopfaest sylle,*

*(Come now, King of men, do not delay too long. We need mercy, that Thou deliver us, and give us the righteous gift of salvation).*
the poet has man beg for the gift of salvation which he is sure to receive just as the thane was sure of the gifts of his lord. Finally, in one of the concluding lines of this lyric: "He him þaere lisse lean forgildeþ, se gehalgoda haelend sylfa," 434-435 (The holy Saviour Himself, will reward him of his love), the poet confirms all he has said, that the Saviour Himself will reward all those that love Him.

The ruin motif or exile topos is one of the largest threads in all secular poetry. It is also one of the dominant threads in the Advent Lyrics. However, while the secular exile was completely ruined when he lost his lord, the Christian exile is given hope even after he has lost his lord through sin. He waits patiently in his state of spiritual ruin:

\[
\text{Nu hie softe þæs bidon in bendum hwonne bearn godes cwome to cearigum.}\quad \text{Il. 146b-148a.}
\]

(Now they patiently awaited in bonds until the Child of God should come to the afflicted).

Unlike the secular exile, the Christian exile knows that his affliction will come to an end, that he will be accepted back into the friendship of his Lord.

The battle motif or blood feud is allusively referred to in the following:

\[
\text{Hreowcearignum help, þaet þin hidercyme afrefre feasceafte, þeah we faehþo wip þec}
\]
Help the wretched so that thine advent here may comfort the miserable, though through our lust of sin we have engaged in a feud against Thee).

The allusion to battle or feud can also be reminiscent of the heroic blood feud which consisted in avenging the death of a kinsman by killing someone in the enemy family. The inability to fulfill this requirement was a life-long shame for the Germanic hero. The concept is here carried over to Christian thinking, for Christ is asked to avenge the spiritual death of humanity which He has adopted as His kinsmen through His Incarnation. Through sin humanity has engaged in a feud against God and has killed in itself the image and likeness of its Creator. And only if Christ avenges this death, will humanity be restored again to its former place of honor. Here, the Advent poet skilfully makes use of heroic emotions and parallels them with the spiritual ones in order to express an abstract reality in concrete terms that could be understood by the Germanic warrior.

In this chapter we have seen how the poet, through the contrasting imagery of joy and sorrow, light and darkness, the heroic and spiritual, has joined meaning to form as he revealed the diversity of man's ills on the one hand and Christ's will and power to save him on the other. He has interwoven these opposing strands with creative competence and inspired them with a new poetic life in accord with his design and style.
CHAPTER IV

TIME INTERLACE

Another characteristic of interlace structure is its allowance "for the intersection of narrative events without regard for their distance in chronological time." The poet on entering into the realm of the spiritual enters at the same time into the realm of the timeless, which permits him to weave the images of time into the desired interlace pattern. The Advent Lyrics are an account of man's spiritual history from the time of his creation to that of his future admission to the heavenly kingdom, which is outside of time.

It is most significant and interesting to note how the poet constructs his pattern of time interlace by means of flashbacks and anticipations. Thus in Lyric I, the poet's reflection on the need of a Saviour, who would restore sinful man to his former honor (lines 14b-15), is interrupted by a flashback to man's creation, "He þæt hra gescop, / leomo laemena; (He that body created, the limbs of clay), an event that happened 4000 years before according to biblical testimony. In Lyric II lines 25-30a, the poet describes again man's need for a Saviour as he sits sorrowfully yearning for his protector after the fall. This

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1 Leyerle, "Interlace Structure," 8.
narrative is suddenly crossed by an allusion to his final admission to glory: "be he to wuldra forlet," 30b (whom He to glory hath admitted). Strangely enough the poet puts this phrase in the past tense even though it will take place only after the general judgment. Then immediately in the following line occurs a second flashback to the earthly paradise, which witnessed man's fall and his consequent exile: "þa we heanlice hwæorfan sceoldan / to þis eange lond, eþle bescyrede" 31-32 (when we miserably to depart were obliged unto this narrow land, of home deprived).

Again in Lyric IX lines 294a-298, from the image of the ring-adorned bride who offered back to heaven the glorious gift of the Saviour, the poet turns abruptly to the time of the Annunciation when she conceived Him:

\[
\text{Forþon heht sigores fruma}
\text{his heahboden hider gefleogan}
\text{of his maegenbrymme ond þe meahta sped}
\text{snude cypan, þaet þu sunu dryhtnes}
\text{þurn claene gebyrd cennan sceolde}
\]

(Wherefore the Lord of victory bade his high messenger hither fly, from his great glory, and make known to thee that thou in pure conception shouldst bear the Son of the Supreme).

In the same Lyric, lines 301-310 go still farther back to where the ancient prophet spoke of the Virgin who would be that door-way through which Christ would pass in order to come to the sinners:
Eac we þaet gefrugnon, þaet gefyrn bi þe sopfaest saegde sum wopbora in ealdagum Esaias, þaet he waere gelaeded þaet he lifes gesteald in þam ecan ham eal sceawode. Wlat þa swa sisfaest witga geond þeodland oþþaet he gestarode þaer gestapelad waes aeþelic ingong. Eal waes gebunden deoran since duru ormaete, wundurclommmum bewriþen.

(Also we have heard what of old concerning thee, Isaiah, a certain true prophet has said in times past. That he was led where was the dwelling place of life in the eternal home. The wise prophet looked and beheld beyond the inhabited region until he saw where was established a noble entrance. All was bound with precious gold, the immense door with wondrous bands encompassed).

It seems as though the Advent poet purposely makes an abundant use of time images so that by distorting their order or merging two categories of time into one, he can show that time does not exist in the spiritual kingdom. Words referring to timelessness such as, "worolde, sibban, symle, a to worulde forþ, butan anginne, eces, to widan feore, in aelce tid," are repeated thirty eight times.\(^1\)

Words evoking the past such as, "aer, in aerdagum, gearo, on frymbe, gefyrn, geardagum, ealddagum," appear twenty-three times. Words indicating the future such as, "toweard in tide, eft, siþe, forþ seþeah, þon tida geþong," are used ten times. And the word "nu" representing the present is repeated twenty-five times.

\(^1\)See Appendix III, pp. 74-75.
Very often two categories of time so weave into one another that one cannot distinguish which is meant. In the case of "siþpan forþ" 375b (forever henceforward), the time image could belong to the timeless or the future. Again in lines 122b the poet says, "nu eft gewearþ flaesc" (now later became flesh), in which the present "nu" and the future "eft" are all one to him. He weaves together these different categories of time in a complete neglect for order when without a sign of transition he abruptly returns to a dropped thought and fits it into a new order of time.
CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis of the Advent Lyrics from the aspects of thematic, stylistic, tonal, and time interlace, has revealed their beauty and technical excellence. The application of the concept of interlace to the themes of the Advent Lyrics, especially those of praise, longing for a Saviour, man's misery and the Virgin theme has shown how they merge with one another in a manner that makes each theme a necessary unifying element within the otherwise independent nature of each lyric in the group. Interlace has also affected the style of the lyrics as seen in a study of the poet's use of variation. Variational phrases or verse repeats are so interwoven as to form a distinct pattern in the poetic text. Stylistic braids resulting from the interweaving of from two to as many as seven variations have transformed the work into a verbal carpet page. From the point of view of tone, the poet has succeeded in creating a tonal carpet page by interweaving the opposing tonal strands of joy and sorrow, light and darkness, heroic and spiritual. Finally by interweaving the threads of past, present, future, and the timeless, he has made a time braid, where he reveals his complete detachment from chronological order. The poet's talent has carried him beyond the rules set by time; he has excelled them by his poetic genius.
Attributes of Christ

Eternal Godhead and Majesty:

1b cyninge -- King
8b wuldres ealdor -- Lord of glory
18a recend -- Ruler
18b riht cyning -- righteous King
46b waldend -- Ruler
61b heofones cyning -- King of heaven
83b wuldres brym -- Glory of glory
94a maere meotudes suna -- Son of the glorious God
104a earendel -- rising brightness
104b engla beorhtast -- brightest of angels
106 sobfaesta sunnan leoma -- true splendour of the sun
109a god of gode -- God of God
110a sunu sopan faeder -- Son of the true Father
113b beorhtan sunnan -- the bright sun
120a word godes -- Word of God
126a meotudes bearn -- Son of God
134b rodera weard -- Guardian of heaven
136a cyninga cyning -- King of kings
140a eces alwaldan -- eternal Ruler
143a suhu meotudes -- Son of the Creator
150a heofones heahcyning -- high King of heaven
158a wuldres aebeling -- Prince of glory
197b suhu meotudes -- Son of the Creator
204b lifes brym -- glory of life
205a beorhtne sunu -- the bright sun
210a maerum meotudes -- glorious Son of God
215a cyninga cyning -- King of kings
222b rodera weard -- Ruler of heaven
223b freobearne -- noble Son
239a snyttro -- Wisdom
257b dryhten -- Lord
258b waldend -- Ruler
272b ece drytenant -- eternal Lord
273b lifgende god -- living God
281 selestan swegles bryttan -- greatest Lord of heaven
297b suhu dryhtnesse -- Son of the Lord
328b waldend frea -- Ruler Lord
332b engla peoden -- Prince of angels
348 halga heofona dryhten -- holy Lord of heaven
366b ece dryhten -- eternal Lord
391a cyninge -- King
394a Waldend -- Ruler
Eternal Godhead and Majesty continued:

395b frean aelmhtges -- Lord almighty
396b ecan dryhtnes -- eternal Lord
402a aebelne ordfruman -- noble creative source
403b heahengla brego -- Lord of archangels
405a dryhtna dryten -- Lord of lords
423b rodera þrym -- glory of the skies
424a heofona heahfrea -- high Lord of heaven
435 gehalgoda haelend sylfa -- the holy Lord Himself

Triumphant Dealings with Humanity as Saviour:

2a weallstan -- corner-stone
4b heafod healle maerre -- Head of the temple
12a craeftga -- Craftsman
15b liffreea -- Lord of life
19a se be locan healdeb -- He who holds the keys
19b se be lif ontyneb -- He who life openeth
23b bone pe mon gescop -- He who created man
27a liffreea -- Lord of life
44b Lifes fruman -- Creator of life
126b monnes sunu -- Son of men
128a sigedryhtne -- triumphant lord
130a gaesta god -- God of souls
132a Emmanuhel -- Emmanuel
140b ae bringend -- bringer of law
141a lara laedend -- giver of wisdom
147b bearn godes -- Child of God
157b Crist nergende -- Christ Saviour
161a weoroda wuldrocyning -- glorious King of men
198a gaesta geocend -- Saviour of souls
205b bearn eacen godes -- the Great Child of God
215b Crist aelmhtig -- Christ almighty
227a Lifes ordfruma -- Creator of life
229b weoroda ealdor -- King of men
243b sigores weard -- Lord of triumph
244a meotod moncynnnes -- Creator of mankind
250b haelende Crist -- Saviour Christ
261b nergend -- Saviour
266b haeleþa scyppend -- Creator of men
274a helm alwihta -- Protector of every creature
294b sigores fruma -- Lord of victory
324b nergend god -- Saviour God
331b Crist aelmhtig -- Christ almighty
334b Lifes brytta -- Lord of life
Triumphant Dealings with Humanity as Saviour continued:

347b weoroda god -- Lord of men
358b haelend Crist -- Saviour Christ
361b nergende god -- Saviour God
372b haeleþa cyning -- King of men
383b haelend god -- Saviour God
391b Crist -- Christ
398b ussum nergende -- our Saviour
400a leoflicne -- the Dear One
404a sigores frea -- Lord of victory
407b weoroda god -- God of men
409a wigendra hleo -- Protector of warriors
410a helm alwihta -- Protector of every creature
412b gebletsad leofa -- Blessed One
417b milde scyppend -- merciful Creator
420b sigores agend -- Ruler of victory
426b folca nergend -- Saviour of mankind
428b dryhten weoroda -- Lord of men

In the above table are shown Christ's attributes as grouped into their two main categories. The underlining refers to titles included among the twelve exact repetitions.
Attributes of the Virgin

Purity of the Virgin:

36a maegb manes leas -- a maid free from sin
54b-55 Naefre wommes tacn in þam eardgearde eawed weorbeb -- Never of sin the sign, in that dwelling seen shall be
56 ac þe firina gehwylc feor abugeb -- but from thee every sin far shall flee
72 faemne freolicast ofer ealne foldan sceat Maiden the fairest over all the earth's surface
175b Eala faemne geong -- O Virgin young
176a maegb Maria -- maiden Mary
187b faemnan claene -- a maiden pure
188a womma lease -- free from sin
195b faemne -- maiden
211a faemne forb sebeah -- a Virgin henceforth
276a seo claeneste cwen -- the purest queen
289a maegphad -- maidenhood
290a butan synnum -- without sin
300a efne unwemme -- forever unspotted
331a claene ond gecorene -- pure and select

Her Power and glory:

50a sibbe gesiþp -- vision of peace
50b sancta Hierusalem -- holy Jerusalem
51a cynestola cyst -- best of thrones
51b Cristes burglond -- city of Christ
52a engla ebelstol -- home of angels
57b-58a wuldre full halgan hyhtes -- gloriously full of holy joy
71a wifa wynn -- joy of women
82b-83a treow in þe weorplicu wunade -- faith in thee exalted dwelt
88a symle sigores full -- ever full of triumph
98b-99a gewuldrad is se heanra had--glory of the humble sex
275a bu maera -- glorious lady
284 hlaefdige halgum meahtum -- lady with holy might
330b meahtum gehrodene -- in might adorned
Her Role in the Plan of the Redemption:

61b-63a cyning sibe gescebeb, ond sylf cymebeb, nimebeb eard in þe -- The King seeketh thee and cometh Himself, taketh dwelling in thee.

64 -65a witgan wisfaeste wordum saegdon cybdon Cristes gebyrd -- The wise prophets made known the birth of Christ for thy comfort.

122-123 efenece mid god ond nu eft gewearp flaesc firena leas þæt seo faemne gebaer -- the co-ternal with God became flesh free of sin that the maiden bore.

206b Nu ic his tempel eam gefremed -- Now I his temple have become.

297a-298 þæt þu sunu dryhtnes þurh claene gebyrd cennan sceolde -- that thou the Son of the Lord in pure conception shouldst bear.

320b-321 faeder aelmihtig, on þurh þa faestan locu foldan neosan -- the almighty Father Himself will through these firm locks visit the earth.

328-329 þu eart þæt wealldor, þurh þe waldend frea aene on þas eorpanut siþade, -- thou art that wall-door, through thee the Lord Ruler once on this earth travelled.

417b-418 milde scyppend onfeng aet faemnan flaesc unwemme, -- the merciful Creator from a virgin received flesh immaculate.
APPENDIX III

Time Imagery

Words referring to Timelessness:

8a worolde -- forever
39b sibban -- ever after
53b symle eawed weorþep -- eternally
88a symle -- forever
101b a to worulde forþ -- forever and ever
103b symle -- forever
107b tida gehwane -- of all time
108b symle -- forever
111a butan anginne -- without beginning
128b symle -- forever
140a eces -- eternal
159b ecne -- eternally
163a wideferh -- forever
194b sibban -- ever after
209b ecne -- eternal
230b a to widan -- forever
271a butan ende -- without end
272b ece -- eternal
277b to widan feore -- from time eternal
305a ecan -- eternal
313a on ecnesse -- eternally
322b ece -- forever
323a symle singales -- always forever
339b sibban -- ever after
346b sibban -- ever after
355b ecan -- eternal
375b sippan forþ -- forever henceforward
376b symle -- forever
393a symle singales -- always forever
396b ecan -- eternal
404b symle -- forever
406b in aelce tid -- to all eternity
411a ece -- eternal
417a butan ende ece -- without end eternal
432a symle -- forever
438b sippan -- ever after
439a ealne widan feorh -- forever and ever
439b butan ende -- without end
Words referring to the Past:

39b aer -- before
45a aer -- before
63b aer gefyrn -- of old
79a in aerdagum -- in days past
109b gearo -- of old
115b longe aer -- long before
121a on frymbe -- in the beginning
133a aerest -- first
135b gefyrn -- of old
161b gearo -- of old
115b longe aer -- long before
216a aer -- before
223a aet frymbe -- in the beginning
225b aet fruman aerest -- in the very beginning
238a aerbon -- formerly
251b geardagum -- in days of old
252a ful longe aer -- full long ago
258b aer -- before
269a aer -- before
301b gefyrn -- of old
303a in ealddagum -- in times past
349b gefyrn -- of old
355a aerest -- first
436b aer -- before

Words referring to the Future:

62a sibe geseceb -- in time will seek
82a toweard in tide -- in future time
86b eft -- afterwards
122b eft -- afterwards
133b eft -- afterwards
146a sibe -- in time
211a forb sebeah -- henceforth
232b cende weorben -- brought forth shall be
235b bon tida begong -- according to the passage
299b forb -- henceforth of time

Words referring to the Present are all represented by the word "nu" (now), and are found in verses: 9a, 11b, 13b, 15b, 66b, 83b, 100a, 112a, 119a, 134b, 149b, 166a, 188b, 206b, 208b, 219a, 230a, 243b, 247b, 122b, 341a, 342a, 370a, 372b, 383b, in a total of twenty-five repetitions.


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In the present thesis the twelve Advent Lyrics of the Exeter Book are examined and analysed from the point of view of Interlace Structure, revealing their beauty and technical excellence. Their interlace structure is considered under the four aspects of thematic, stylistic, tonal, and time interlace. Thematic interlace is subdivided and discussed as an interweaving of the thematic threads of praise, longing for a Saviour, man's misery and the Virgin theme. The themes of praise and longing are combined in the same unit for they seem most often to form a single thread but with two facets. For example the poet praises Christ, first in His eternal Godhead and majesty, then in His merciful dealings with man as Saviour. In the first case man is overwhelmed by the majesty of Christ as God; in the second, Christ is made attainable to man as Saviour, a fact which results in a form of praise that simultaneously expresses man's expectant longing for His advent.

The theme of man's misery stands out as the chief element of contrast with the other themes. It runs through the lyrics under the form of metaphors and allusions describing man's pitiful spiritual state in concrete picturesque imagery. This theme is shown to be closely interwoven with the themes of praise and longing.

The Virgin theme is developed under the three
aspects of her purity, her power and her role in the plan of the Redemption. The poet delights in extolling her praise under these three aspects and presents her as a necessary instrument in the reconciliation between God and man. She is the meeting place of the divine and the human, where man regains his friendship with God, and in whom the guilt of Eve is obliterated.

In stylistic interlace the variant threads or verse repeats are shown to be so interwoven as to form a distinct pattern in the poetic text, which is pure decoration for its own sake. The interweaving of two or more variants is referred to as a stylistic braid. Stylistic braids are shown to appear in different passages of the lyrics in combinations of from two to four variant strands braided together.

Tonal interlace appears in the placing side by side of opposites such as joy and sorrow, light and darkness, the heroic and the spiritual. These opposing strands create a rising and falling effect as each strand appears and disappears like in a woven tapestry.

Time interlace stresses the poet's complete detachment from following any chronological order. His numerous shifts from one period of time to another, and from time into the realm of timelessness, interweave to form a final pattern of poetic tapestry.