INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this document, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or “target” for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is “Missing Page(s)”. If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark, it is an indication of either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, duplicate copy, or copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed. For blurred pages, a good image of the page can be found in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted, a target note will appear listing the pages in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed, a definite method of “sectioning” the material has been followed. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For illustrations that cannot be satisfactorily reproduced by xerographic means, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and inserted into your xerographic copy. These prints are available upon request from the Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.
To my father,

who taught me strength.
Abstract

Anglo-Saxon Lexical and Literary Implications

In the Works of the Gawain-poet

Barbara Jane Huval

The works of the Gawain-poet have been examined for traces of French influence, of Celtic influence, and of Latin influence; they have not been systematically examined for that influence which was closer to home for the poet, Anglo-Saxon influence. Yet the poet's word choice and diction indicate a pervasive Anglo-Saxon influence, possibly reflecting the poet's knowledge of the language of the past, or possibly reflecting an extensive vocabulary in the vernacular which was heavily rooted in the Anglo-Saxon but which has not been preserved in manuscript.

In Cleanliness, the poet uses concepts which indicate his familiarity with an Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition. In Patience, Pearl, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the poet's word choice indicates a closer lexical indebtedness to the Anglo-Saxon parent language than has been heretofore examined. The poet does use words which are a traditional part of the "word-hoard" available to the alliterative poet. He also uses, however, words which are unique to him or words which appear for the first time in Middle English in this manuscript. Several of these words have homophones in Anglo-Saxon which point to possible double meanings not previously recognized.

The poet's Anglo-Saxon word choice lends a coloring of the comitatus to his works. Noah, Abraham, and Lot can be viewed as ideal thegns,
whereas Jonah can be viewed as a failed thegn. The *Pearl*-maiden can be viewed as a peace-weaver, mediating between her former earthly lord and her new heavenly Lord. The poet's word choice lends to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* faint epic tones reminiscent of the Anglo-Saxon epic, *Beowulf*. An Anglo-Saxon dimension is just one more of the many dimensions to be examined in this extremely complex poetry. The poet's Northwest Midland dialect, relatively unadulterated by contact with the court of William the Conqueror, is closer to the Northumbrian ancestor dialect than other regions which had been heavily influenced by the French, so this Anglo-Saxon dimension should not be ignored.
Acknowledgments

I owe a debt of eternal gratitude to Dr. Jane Chance. Her enthusiasm, her confidence in me, and her firm direction have made of this project a joy. I wish to thank also Dr. Edward Doughtie, Dr. Susan Clark, Dr. Douglas Mitchell, and Dr. Julian Wasserman. It is a pleasure to know and work with such kind and helpful people.

The greatest debt, of course, is a personal one. In the thirteen years since I became absorbed in scholarship, my husband and children have made countless sacrifices, and always without complaint. To my husband, John, and to my children, Bonnie, Bambi, and Phil, my heartfelt thanks. An equal portion of gratitude must go to my parents, Barnie and Hazel Bobbitt, who often took up the slack at home when I was preoccupied. My greatest wealth lies neither in money nor in a diploma, but in people who love and believe in me. I thank you all.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Gawain-poet in the Context of the Alliterative Revival</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Anglo-Saxon Biblical Tradition and Cleanness</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anglo-Saxon Word Play in Patience</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Pearl-maiden as Peace-weaver and the Garden of The Phoenix</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lexical Reflections of Beowulf in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Anglo-Saxon Dimension in the Works as a Whole</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface

There have been many editions of the poems in Cotton Nero A.x, from Madden's edition of *Syr Gawayn* and the *Grenee Knyght* in 1839 and Morris's edition of *Pearl, Cleanness*, and *Patience* (EETS OS 1) in 1864 to, most recently, Vantuono's edition of all four poems. In this study, the editions used for the four poems of Cotton Nero A.x are as follows: *Purity*, edited by Robert J. Menner; *Patience*, edited by J.J. Anderson; *Pearl*, edited by E.V. Gordon; and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, edited by J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, second edition revised by Norman Davis. Quotations from the Vulgate Bible are taken from the edition of *Biblia Sacra* authorized by Pope Clement VIII. All English Bible translations from the Old Testament are from the Douai-Challoner text. New Testament translations are from the Confraternity text. The Douai translation was first published in 1610 and was modernized by Bishop Challoner in 1750. All Anglo-Saxon quotations are from Krapp and Dobbie's *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. Where translations are not my own, they are identified in parentheses immediately following the translation.
Chapter 1

The Gawain-poet in the Context of the Alliterative Revival

The works of the Gawain-poet have been examined for traces of French influence, of Celtic influence, and of Latin influence; they have not been systematically examined for that influence which was closer to home for the poet, Anglo-Saxon influence. Yet the poet's word choice and diction indicate a pervasive Anglo-Saxon influence, possibly reflecting the poet's knowledge of the language of his past, or possibly reflecting an extensive vocabulary in the vernacular which was heavily rooted in the Anglo-Saxon but which has not been preserved in manuscript. The nature of the Anglo-Saxon heritage varies from one poem to the next, but it is present in all four poems of the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript. Three of the four poems, Cleanness, Patience, and Pearl, are overtly biblical in nature, and in these three poems one finds specific concepts which are present in the Anglo-Saxon versions of the Bible stories, but not in the Vulgate, the most obvious source for biblical material in the fourteenth century. In the fourth poem, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the poet's word choice evokes memories of the world of the comitatus and of Beowulf's foe, Grendel.¹

It seems patently obvious that the language of the poet would be heavily rooted in words derived from the Anglo-Saxon. He is, after all, a poet of the Alliterative Revival which flourished in the Northwest Midlands in the fourteenth century. The region was far removed from the French influence of the court of William the Conqueror, so the language had
remained considerably closer to the Anglo-Saxon than had that of London, which had evolved more rapidly due to foreign influence. In modern textbooks, in fact, Chaucer is presented in the original Middle English because even a college sophomore not very adept in language can read and comprehend with minimum effort the London dialect of the fourteenth century. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, on the other hand, also usually presented in the same sophomore literature surveys, must be offered in modern translation because the original Northwest Midlands language of the fourteenth century is incomprehensible to that same college sophomore student. The Northwest Midlands dialect is almost as unreadable to the student as *Beowulf* in the original Anglo-Saxon would be.

The poet does, certainly, use the alliterative technique which places him firmly in the ranks of the Alliterative Revival. Metrically, he is somewhere in between the rigid alliterative metre of *Beowulf* and the footed metre of Chaucer. He uses words which are distinctly Anglo-Saxon and which have come down through the alliterative tradition—words like "doupe," used seventeen times in Layamon's *Brut* to indicate the band of the faithful, those who are true to their lord. The word denotes the basic social unit of the society of the *comitatus*, that society of mutual obligation which bound lord and thgnl together in the Anglo-Saxon world. "Doupe" also appears in the *Peterbury Chronicle*, the *Lambeth Homilies*, *Saint Juliana*, the *Owl and the Nightingale*, and the *Proverbs of Alfred*, representing an unbroken use of the word from around 1121 to 1300 prior to its use by the *Gawain-poet*. "Doupe" could be considered part of the "word-hoard" available to poets of the Alliterative Revival, a common
stock from which to choose as needed.

The Gawain-poet, however, shows traces of his Anglo-Saxon heritage which are not present in Layamon’s Brut or in the poetry of his contemporaries in the Northwest Midlands. He uses words which are not found anywhere else, either before or since, words like "barlay." He uses words in his own unique sense—although "gryndelstons" abound in Middle English, nowhere else in Middle English does "gryndel," used alone, appear to be associated with extreme wrath. He uses "fale" in a sense which seems to be unique to him, a sense of unconcern at best or hostility at worst. "Fage" appears for the first time in Middle English in the works of this poet. In some cases, as with "lepe," "wamel," and "woneʒ," the poet seems to be using word play to give the passages involved a special meaning.

Of twelve words crucial to the interpretation of the passages involved, all of which seem to be associated either semantically or phonologically with the Anglo-Saxon, eight are not found in Chaucer at all. The twelve words are "barlay," "blunt," "clay," "doupe," "fage," "fale," "fende," "gryndel," "lepe," "strakande," "wamel," and "woneʒ." Each word will be discussed in detail in connection with the appropriate passage. Of these words, only "fende," "clay," "blunt," and "woneʒ" appear in Chaucer; "blunt" as it appears in Chaucer, however, is an adjective meaning "not sharp," a completely different word to that used by the Gawain-poet. Clearly, the language of the poet is more Anglo-Saxon than that of Chaucer, but this is not too surprising in the light of the foreign influence upon Chaucer’s London dialect. Perhaps a better measure of the poet's
language would be a comparison with another poet of the Alliterative Revival, a contemporary, Will Langland. One finds that ten of these same twelve crucial words are not found in either the A, B, or C text of Piers Plowman. Of the twelve words, only "fende" and "wones" appear in Piers Plowman. The dialect of Will Langland's youth, however, was that of the Malvern region in Worcestershire, considerably south of the Gawain-poet, and Langland's dialect had probably been altered somewhat by his years in London. The Alliterative Morte Arthure, like Sir Gawain and the Green Knight a product of the second half of the fourteenth century and written in a northwestern dialect, is in terms of subject matter more closely allied with its Anglo-Saxon past than any of the four poems by the Gawain-poet. The Alliterative Morte Arthure places emphasis upon battles and boasting, facets of literature which seem directly connected with the Anglo-Saxon epic tradition. Yet of the same twelve words listed above, nine are not found in the Alliterative Morte Arthure at all. Of the twelve words listed, only "fende," "clay," and "wones" appear in the Alliterative Morte Arthure. In fact, the word "doupe," so clearly associated with the world of the comitatus and the reciprocal bonding of lord and thegn, does not appear anywhere in the Alliterative Morte Arthure. The absence of this word in the Alliterative Morte Arthure seems to indicate that what we find in the works of the Gawain-poet is not a general poetic heritage but the individual word choice of one highly individual poet.

Although his subject matter is not as overtly Anglo-Saxon as that of the poet who composed the Alliterative Morte Arthure, the Gawain-poet deliberately chooses words which evoke an aura of the past, of the world
of the comitatus. The poet tells a Bible tale of Noah and the flood, but the loyal followers are members of God's "doupe," and God becomes enraged when "fende" impregnate the "dexter of the doupe." By his word choice the poet creates an analogy between the standard fourteenth-century ideal of obedience to God and the Anglo-Saxon ideal of obedience to one's earthly lord, the leader of the duged. The reciprocal obligations, the closeness of the lord/ thrgn bonding which characterized the Anglo-Saxon society, can be seen in the four poems of the manuscript, reinforced by word choice and diction. Abraham, Noah, and Lot can be viewed as examples of the good thgn; Jonah can be viewed as the failed thgn; the Pearl-maiden can be viewed as peace-weaver, emblematizing the ideal female role in Anglo-Saxon society; Gawain, although he strives mightily to be a good thgn, does at one point join the "doupe" of Bercilak. Various aspects of the lord/ thrgn metaphor are operative throughout the four poems.

The Critical Context

Although untitled in the manuscript as was the custom of the day, the poems of Cotton Nero A.x have come to be known by modern readers as Pearl, Patience, Cleanness, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and the author of these poems has come to be known, for lack of more certain identification, as the Gawain-poet or the Pearl-poet. At one time or another, almost everything written in the Northwest Midland region in the latter half of the fourteenth century was attributed to this one man,
but critics generally agree now that the most we can attribute to one poet with any degree of certainty are the four poems found together in this unique manuscript.\(^8\) The poet did not see fit to sign his name, and we cannot be certain whether he was a courtier or a religious.\(^9\) Because of the poor quality of the illuminations in the manuscript, Turville-Petre concludes that the manuscript must have belonged to a "country gentleman . . . [who] wished to be thought rather better than he was."\(^10\) Salter, on the other hand, finds library holdings which indicate a high degree of culture among the wealthy landowners of the West Midlands in the latter fourteenth century. John of Gaunt himself owned extensive holdings in the region; he might have served as patron or might have inspired local landowners to serve as patrons for the author of the four poems.\(^11\)

At any rate, the works of the Gawain-poet are among the jewels of any age of poetry. They share features in common with other alliterative poems of the region. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* opens with a reference to the founding of Britain by Brutus, as does *Wynmere and Wastoure*, one of the earliest poems of the Alliterative Revival. The hunting scene in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* bears strong resemblance to the hunting scene in *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, another early poem of the Revival. The poems contain, however, resemblances which go farther back than that—resemblances to the Anglo-Saxon forefathers of the poet. Charles Moorman notes a "persuasive imagery of paganism which everywhere makes itself felt just below the Christian surfaces of these poems."\(^12\) Although perhaps not pagan, there is
a strong Germanic element in the poetry which is at odds with the chivalric code of the day. Chivalry evolved out of the comitatus; Sidney Painter traces the civilizing effects which religion and women had upon the Germanic system.\textsuperscript{13} The church sought to turn the Germanic warrior's fierce love of battle to religious ends by promoting the crusades; the ideal warrior became a warrior for Christ. The rise of courtly behavior brought with it the idealizing of women. Yet the Germanic core was still there, and it shows in the Gawain-poet's depiction of the lord/thegn relationship.

None of the critics has explored in depth the Anglo-Saxon dimension in the works of the Gawain-poet. Moorman notes in passing a "deep-seated violence of nature," an "epic heroism," but he does not pursue these ideas at all.\textsuperscript{14} Rather, he uses these observations to support his contention that the roots of the Alliterative Revival lay in political unrest. Spearing mentions in a note the Green Knight's resemblance to Grendel, but he does not find it especially significant.\textsuperscript{15} Kean sees in Patience merely an example of the "old-fashioned genre" of verse paraphrase.\textsuperscript{16} Benson acknowledges the poet's debt to the Anglo-Saxon technique of variation in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and he notes in the Gawain-poet's use of secular and religious parallelism a similarity to The Wanderer and Seafarer.\textsuperscript{17} His work, however, concentrates upon Sir Gawain and does not explore similar parallels in the other works of the poet. Anglo-Saxon elements are present, however, in all four poems of the Gawain-poet. In the following chapters, one chapter for each of the four poems, \textit{Cleanness}, Patience, Pearl, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, we shall examine in depth the Anglo-Saxon word choice, word play, and diction therein and
their significance in these poems of the fourteenth century, three centuries removed from the Anglo-Saxon heritage of written poetry. Before proceeding, however, we must place the poet in his historical and poetic context.

Revival or Continuum?

The Gawain-poet used an alliterative form which may or may not represent a continuous poetic tradition, a matter still a subject of critical debate. A look at the background of the debate may prove enlightening for the present study. Anglo-Saxon poets used an alliterative metre and a stock of set phrases or poetic formulas. Most critics accept Sievers' five types of poetic line, and almost all Anglo-Saxon poetry fits neatly into these types. Yet this highly developed art form, after centuries of development, seemed to vanish almost overnight. With the advent of William the Conqueror in 1066, French became the new court language. As it had always been, Latin was the official language of the church. Anglo-Saxon continued to be written for a time in the chronicles, and some of the later poetry is contained there, but for all practical purposes the production of Anglo-Saxon poetry ended by the end of the eleventh century. The court literature of the day was written in Anglo-Norman French in rhyming couplets, in the continental style, and religious literature was written in Latin. Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, and poetry in the alliterative metre, became relics of the past.

Anglo-Saxon as a language began to evolve into what we know as
Middle English in the eleventh century, and critics still argue over the degree of continuity or lack of it which exists between poetry in Anglo-Saxon, composed from around 450 to 1066, and in Middle English, composed from around 1066 to 1475. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch finds "no derivation" from the poetry of Anglo-Saxon. Menner finds "not a jot of evidence" that a fourteenth-century poet could "even read a single line" of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Jacobs concurs, stating, "It seems very unlikely that Old English poetry was known, or would even have been comprehensible, to any of the fourteenth or fifteenth century poets." Other critics feel that a continuity exists, but they are not quite sure how or why. Chambers argues, "There must have been some parts of the country" where the alliterative tradition remained alive. Wyld finds "a continuity, not of conscious inheritance, but of something far more deeply interfused; namely, of national genius." Frederic Moorman admits it is "difficult to determine exactly to what extent Middle English poets were familiar with Old English poetry." Benson believes there was an unbroken tradition, "preserved by popular, unlettered poets who continued to compose and transmit poems by oral, non-written means from Anglo-Saxon times until well into the fourteenth century." Pearsall, however, discounts this theory: "All the evidence we have suggests that oral transmission makes wretched what it touches, and that the longer the process the more debased the product."

There was, whether as revival or continuum, an alliterative tradition of sorts, and it blossomed into prominence once more, in a new form known as the alliterative long line, in the fourteenth-century Alliterative
Revival. Oakden, in his meticulous two-volume study, examines all the fragments of alliterative poetry extant from the close of the Old English period and concludes, "The alliterative tradition never died, certain intermediary stages having been lost." He finds poems in the twelfth century in the alliterative line, including *Durham*, *The Grave*, the *First Worcester Fragment*, and the *Departing Soul's Address to the Body*. In the thirteenth century he finds the *Proverbs of Alfred*, *Layamon's Brut*, and the *Bestiary*. The ten survivals in this period occur "in all the dialects: Northern, Southern, South-Western, North-West Midland, North-East Midland, and South-East Midland." He denies that a shift to rhyme is a strictly continental innovation, calling attention to the more frequent use of rhyme in parts of the later Anglo-Saxon poetry such as *Judith*, *The Battle of Maldon*, *Be Domes Daegæ*, *The Phoenix*, *Elene*, and *The Rhyme Poem*. Pearsall maintains that knowledge of Anglo-Saxon never entirely died out, that monks with access to historical documents maintained contact with the language of their forefathers. Pearsall's conclusion is based partly upon the work of Angus Cameron, who examines notations in the margins of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. Out of 189 major Old English manuscripts described by Ker in the *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, "forty-four or nearly a quarter show signs of annotation from the period between 1200 and 1540." The fact that glossing was necessary indicates that knowledge of Anglo-Saxon was not widespread, but then as now a handful of scholars was interested in the language of the past.

Whereas Oakden bases his argument upon minute examination of alliterative words, metre, and dialect, Waldron applies the oral formulaic
techniques developed by Magoun and concurs with Oakden that there exists "an unbroken tradition of alliterative verse from the Anglo-Saxon period." Turville-Petre takes issue with both Oakden and Waldron, calling what happened an "essentially new creation," an alliterative long line. This poetic tradition, or "new creation," blossomed in the Midlands in the fourteenth century, and it is known as the Alliterative Revival.

How was the poetry of the Alliterative Revival like the classical alliterative poetry of the Anglo-Saxon? And how was it different? Oakden finds four major changes which indicate acquaintance with but alteration of the traditional alliterative metre.

1. In Anglo-Saxon poetry, enjambement was common. It sometimes took several short alliterative lines to form a complete thought. In poetry of the Alliterative Revival, enjambement became rare; each line tended to become a unit in itself.

2. In Anglo-Saxon poetry, vocalic alliteration frequently occurred on different vowels. In poetry of the Alliterative Revival, vocalic alliteration usually occurs on identical vowels. There was a higher percentage of vocalic alliteration in the north-west.

3. In Anglo-Saxon poetry, \textit{h} alliterates with itself only. In poetry of the Alliterative Revival, \textit{h} alliterates with itself or with vowels.

4. A gradual lengthening of the line occurred.\textsuperscript{33}

Although these tendencies indicate familiarity with the alliterative tradition, the poets of the revival were obviously not slavish imitators. Oakden also finds new tendencies in the poetry of the Alliterative Revival.
1. One finds occasional use of stanzaic form.

2. Poets pay attention to alliteration for the eye as well as for the ear. Unstressed verbal prefixes are allowed to alliterate to achieve this effect.

3. Alliteration tends to become excessive; poets move toward alliteration as ornament rather than as structural principle.  

Oakden takes issue with place-names as evidence for fixing dialect; he uses local documents instead. For the Northwest Midlands dialect he uses The Dukenhalgh Deeds, The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey, and Wills and Inventories from the Ecclesiastical Courts. He finds twenty-eight poems written in the long line between the early fourteenth century and the end of the Middle English period. The earliest of these are Wynnere and Wastoure and The Parlement of the Thre Ages, both written in mid-fourteenth century, and both written in Northwest Midland dialect. Other poems of the revival which he attributes to this region are Chevelere Assigne, Morte Arthure, Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy, and the works of the person commonly known as the Gawain-poet or the Pearl-poet. The Gawain-poet wrote in Northwest Midland dialect, which had descended from the Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon.

The seemingly sudden and certainly dramatic emergence of the Alliterative Revival is perhaps best illustrated by Pearsall. He points out:

... from the seventy-five years between the second recension of Layamon's Brut in the Otho manuscript and the writing of the earliest poems of the revival, that is, roughly 1275-1350, there are extant 28 lines of unrhymed alliterative verse, while from the seventy-five years that follow, roughly 1350-1425, there are over 40,000. Something clearly did happen.
The poetry of the Alliterative Revival appears in all genres popular in that
day, including historical chronicles, romances, didactic poems, saints' lives,
and poems of social protest. Among the earlier alliterative romances are
Alexander A, Alexander B, and William of Palerne, while later alliterative
romances include The Wars of Alexander, The Destruction of Troy, Morte
Arthure, and the religious romance, The Destruction of Jerusalem (Baugh
uses this title, but the poem is elsewhere entitled Siege of Jerusalem).³⁹
Wynne and Wastoure is the earliest (around 1352) of the poems in the
Alliterative Revival to utilize a theme of social protest, followed by Piers
Plowman, the longest and finest of the alliterative poems which address
social and ethical questions.⁴⁰ Later additions to the alliterative corpus of
social protest poems include Pierce the Ploughman's Creed, Richard the
Redeless, and Mum and the Sothsegger.⁴¹ The universal concern with life
and death are reflected in The Parlement of the Thre Ages and in Death
and Life. Religious subject matter appears often, as in St. Erkenwald and
in the Pistel of Swete Susan, a story of Susanna and the Elders based upon
the episode in Daniel. Turville-Petre lists forty-six poems which comprise
what he considers the corpus of the Alliterative Revival.⁴² This list
includes early works with imperfect alliterative meter like Joseph of
Arimathie as well as more polished works; in Joseph of Arimathie, sixteen
percent of the lines contain no alliteration at all, and only nine percent of
the lines follow the standard alliterative pattern of aa/ax.⁴³ Turville-Petre
also includes in his list later works which others do not include in the
corpus and which Turville-Petre himself classifies as "after the revival,"
like Dunbar's Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo, written
around 1500. Turville-Petre's corpus of forty-six poems, nevertheless, cannot include what may have existed but was lost. Wilson believes that not much was lost from Old English religious and didactic prose or from the "three great Matters of romance" in Middle English. In other genres, however, particularly the shorter narrative and lyrical poetry, the extant works may be only a fragment of what was once available.

Most of the poems of the Alliterative Revival exist in unique copies; only two, Piers Plowman and The Siege of Jerusalem, exist in more than two copies. Piers Plowman in its three versions exists in over fifty manuscripts, and The Siege of Jerusalem exists in seven manuscripts. The poems of the Revival range in length from very short (The Blacksmiths, 22 lines) to very long (The Destruction of Troy, 14,000 lines). In some cases, as with The Conflict of Wit and Will, what survives is but a mere fragment of the original whole. The poems indicate a movement that was probably established in, but not restricted to, the west midlands. Joseph of Arimathie and William of Palerne, early works based upon French sources, both contain evidence they were written in or near Gloucester. Piers Plowman, of course, comes from the Malvern Hills area in the south-west midlands. Richard the Redeless, Mum and the Sothsegger, and The Crowned King also originate in the southern half of the country. Both Alexander A and Alexander B, however, seem to originate further north, around Shropshire. The Northwest Midlands (from north Shropshire to Lancashire) produced Wynne and Wastoure, The Parlement of the Three Ages, Death and Life, St. Erkenwald, The Wars of Alexander, The Destruction of Troy, and, of course, the works of the
The Siege of Jerusalem and Morte Arthure show evidence of provenance in the east. The manuscripts, however, are from the fifteenth century. Turville-Petre concludes from this:

... wherever the poems were composed, several works of the Revival attracted a readership outside the west midlands, at least during the fifteenth century, so that even if the Revival was a localised movement in its early stages, by the fifteenth century its readership had become more widespread.

Pearsall's theory is the most recent one regarding the origin of this flowering of alliterative literature. He maintains that monastery libraries would be the most likely repositories for the wide variety of source material used—romances, chronicles, biblical material, and saints' lives, manuscripts in French, in Latin, and in Old English. He reminds us that monasteries were not purely centers of meditation and intellectual contemplation but were also centers of social activity, often visited by traveling nobility. There was commerce between secular and religious worlds—noblemen sometimes bequeathed to monasteries their libraries, providing "an aristocratic leavening" to the stern religious matter in monastery libraries, and clerks educated in monastery schools often moved out into the secular world, bringing with them their religious backgrounds. Pearsall sees this social intercourse as providing the ideal breeding ground for the blend of religious and secular subject matter manifested in the various poems of the Alliterative Revival.

Pearsall's theory, coupled with Angus Cameron's work regarding Middle English in Old English manuscripts, lends support to my own hypothesis, that works of the Gawain-poet reflect, more than has been
heretofore examined, the language of the poet's forefathers, Anglo-Saxon. Those libraries which contained French and Latin sources would also have contained Anglo-Saxon sources, and the poet could well have been conversant with all of them.

The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts

The bulk of Anglo-Saxon poetry is preserved in four manuscripts, and the whereabouts of three of those four manuscripts during the fourteenth century is shrouded in mystery. The fourteenth-century location of only one manuscript, the Exeter Book, seems reasonably certain. The Exeter Book was donated to Exeter Cathedral by Leofric, first bishop of Exeter, who died in 1072. The manuscript has been preserved in the cathedral library ever since.  

The Beowulf manuscript was written around the tenth century, and we assume from marginal notations that it was in the library of Lawrence Nowell, dean of Lichfield, by 1563; but there is no trace of the manuscript's location during the six hundred years from its composition to that date. Although written in West Saxon, it bears traces of Anglian dialect, so that a possible origin in Northumbria, the home of Northwest Midland dialect, cannot be ruled out. If the poem did indeed originate in Northumbria, there could have been other manuscripts of the poem written in Northumbrian and legible to the Gawain-poet, manuscripts which were later destroyed. Such idle speculation is merely that, however, for the ravages of time have left us no tangible support for such a theory.
The Junius manuscript, also preserved in West Saxon and also containing traces of a possible origin in the north of England, also presents a mysterious untraceable past. It was possibly composed around 1035 at the behest of Aelfwine, abbot of Newminster at Winchester; it was in the hands of Junius by 1654, and Junius obtained it from Archbishop Ussher. Once again, six hundred years remain unaccounted for.

The Vercelli manuscript we do know traveled far. It seems to have been written in England around the tenth century, but it appeared in the chapter library of the cathedral in Vercelli, Italy. When did it cross the channel, and how many stops did it make before arriving in Italy? No one can say with certainty. Foerster believed the manuscript left early, as early as the eleventh or twelfth century. It may, however, have arrived in Italy as late as the sixteenth century, when there was a tremendous revival of interest in the collection of old manuscripts. George P. Krapp acknowledges,

It is possible that the wanderings of the manuscript after it left England and before it reached Vercelli were extensive, but if so, the course of its travels cannot now be followed.

The same can be said for the other manuscripts. Though they did not all cross the channel and ultimately reside on the continent, they all "disappeared" in a sense from the view of modern scholars for hundreds of years. We cannot know whether they traveled, or how far they traveled. We cannot even know whether there were other copies, now lost to us, in the same West Saxon or possibly in Northumbrian dialects. Krapp believes they are but the "occasional survivals from an originally
much larger representation of the body of Anglo-Saxon literature." Ure agrees. In editing the Benedictine Office, Ure compared closely the English metrical verses in the Office and the corresponding metrical verses for the first fifty psalms in the Paris Psalter. He concludes,

Where we have a metrical rendering to set against the English metrical verses in the Office, the agreement is so complete as to leave no doubt that both versions are derived from the same source. . . . there must have existed at one time a complete Old English metrical Psalter. 64

How much of this body of literature would have been available to a poet of the fourteenth century? One must resort once more to speculation, but reason demands that surely he would have had access to more than remains to us today.

Whatever might have been available to a fourteenth-century poet probably vanished in the sixteenth century. In 1540, at the dissolution of the monasteries, vast stores of manuscripts were lost. Books that might be of value went to the royal library. Everything else of value was sold; lead from roofs was melted down and sold. Buildings were gutted or completely razed. Townspeople stole what they could, in at least one case "the very clapers of the bellys." 65 Whole libraries, such as those at Glastonbury, Malmesbury, and Crowcity, were destroyed. In all of England, only sixteen monasteries survived as cathedrals and colleges. If there were any lingering Northumbrian manuscripts which had survived Danish invasions and the reign of William the Conqueror, they were lost to us at this time of devastation.

In the fourteenth century there may have been no Northumbrian manuscripts left to be destroyed during the dissolution of the monasteries.
Even before the rise of the Anglo-Norman court, great quantities of Anglo-Saxon literature and records had been lost. The fine libraries founded and carefully nurtured by Aidan at Lindisfarne and by Benedict Biscop at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow in the seventh century suffered severely at the hands of Danish invaders in the ninth century. Lindisfarne was sacked in 793; a series of Viking raids between 865 and 869 decimated East Anglia so severely that virtually all written records were destroyed; Danes destroyed the York library in 866. By the end of the ninth century, libraries at Lindisfarne, Jarrow, Iona, Coldingham, Monkwearmouth, Whitby, and Hartlepool had all been sacked by Viking invaders. Blair states,

Posternity may perhaps regard the destruction of the monastic libraries, whose contents no amount of subsequent endeavor could restore, as the most disastrous aspect of this loss [of monastic life following Viking attacks].

It is impossible, therefore, to prove beyond a doubt that the Gawain-poet had access to and could read Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, either in Northumbrian or in West Saxon. Even if every manuscript in the region had been destroyed, however, we must presume a continuous oral tradition. The language of the Northwest Midlands did evolve from the Northumbrian, and the development of the spoken language was continuous. What we do have today is one manuscript. The poet's choice of poetic metre is an archaic one, an alliterative metre, whether revival or continuum, which harks back to his past. In some instances his word choice and diction are also archaic, evoking a world long past, the world of the comitatus. He may be reflecting his own knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, or he may be reflecting a rich vocabulary in the vernacular which has not
been preserved in manuscript.

What would impel a poet of the fourteenth century to invoke an aura of the past? Pondering over authorial intent can be only speculative at best, but several possible reasons exist. The poet may have been exhibiting a desire, whether conscious or unconscious, to return to a past time, a time which seemed to him to be more serene. Politics of the fourteenth century were turbulent; at least one critic, in fact, contends that the roots of the Alliterative Revival lay in political discord, "the growing opposition of the North- and West-Country magnates to the royal court." If the poet was unhappy in his political situation, or even if he was surrounded by those who were unhappy in their own, he might have yearned for a day when politics seemed more stable, when a man knew he owed instant, unquestioning obedience to his lord, but he knew also that his lord would take care of him.

The poet was obviously a religious man, and he may have had religious reasons for subtly presenting a lord/thegn metaphor rather than the king/vassal metaphor of his own day. The line between the lord/thegn metaphor and the king/vassal metaphor is a blurred one precisely because the latter relationship grew out of the former. Sidney Painter, in tracing the development of the feudal system, remarks that the men of the comitatus "swore absolute fidelity and obedience to the chief..." Painter sees in the society of the comitatus and its related Romano-German institutions "the prototype of the relationship between lord and vassal." He details the steps by which the social hierarchy became a network of landholding rights and taxing rights rather than mutual
reciprocal obligations of personal loyalty. "By the thirteenth century the barons of England were either paying the king sums of money to avoid military service or serving with a small band of hired knights. . . . In short, by 1300 the old personal relations between lord and vassals had disappeared to a great extent. What was left was largely a set of financial obligations." If Painter's conclusion is valid and there had indeed been a depersonalization in relationships between king and vassal, the poet may have been seeking a return to a personal relationship between lord and thegn which he found lacking in his own situation. The lord/thegn relationship as exemplified in Anglo-Saxon literature is a highly personal one; for example, The Wanderer speaks with longing of the days when he clasped and kissed his lord and lay hands and head on his knee. The poet may have longed to return to that Anglo-Saxon kind of close, personal bonding operating between man and earthly lord, and he may have seen that bonding as metaphor for the love between man and heavenly Lord. Thegn is to earthly lord as man is to God; his poetry indicates that he was a man who loved his Lord.

As a religious man who loved his Lord, the poet may have seen the lord/thegn metaphor as one more way of expressing the ideal of charity as opposed to cupidity. In discussing the iconography of cities and gardens, D.W. Robertson, Jr., writes:

This is not to say that cities and gardens afford the only means of making the contrast between Charity and cupidity. Since all creation is meaningful in the same way, the number of ways of making the contrast is infinite.

The concept of man as servant to God is a standard one in any century.
The poet may have seen in the lord/thegn metaphor, however, a way of expressing that concept. He may have seen in the selfless loyalty of the ideal thegn a kind of selfless love which is Charity, "the soul's movement toward delight in God for Himself"; and in the failed thegn, he may have seen the selfish love of cupidity, the love of oneself before one's God.73

Another possible reason for the poet's word choice, and perhaps the simplest one, would be an interest in the language of the past. Annotations in Middle English on Anglo-Saxon manuscripts indicate that then, as now, a handful of people were interested in the language and customs of the past; their number is seldom large, but they are always present.74

This study will examine each of the four poems, Cleanness, Patience, Pearl, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, in the light of that Anglo-Saxon dimension. Cleanness illustrates an Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition that is different from the Vulgate tradition, and within the lord/thegn metaphor Noah, Abraham, and Lot emblematize ideal thegns. Conversely, Jonah in Patience becomes a failed thegn. It seems fair to examine the positive examples first. Pearl, although not based strictly upon a Bible story like the first two, is more overtly biblical than the fourth poem, so it should be examined in conjunction with them. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, a tissue of indirect religious allusions, is nevertheless on the surface a secular romance; since its subject matter is so different to the other three poems, it has been relegated (reluctantly) to the position of "last but not least."
Notes to Chapter 1


2 Cable states, "The metrical patterns that are present in Middle English alliterative poetry become apparent only when close attention is paid to etymology, which scribal practice often fails to represent. A full reconstruction of Middle English reflexes of Old English inflectional endings, the strict assignment of metrical stress according to grammatical categories, and the treatment of loanwords as described in traditional historical grammars give a fairly consistent metrical text. . . . When a general metrical rule of apocope is added to the phonological rules, the meter of *Cleanness* becomes more regular than that of many passages from Chaucer or Milton, though it is not quite as regular as the meter of *Beowulf* or of *Exodus.*" Thomas Cable, "Final -E and the Count of Syllables," *The English Alliterative Tradition*, an unpublished study.

3 "Doupe" appears in Layamon's *Brut* in lines 1819, 2835, 3005, 3401, 4945, 6075, 7994, 10166, 10438, 14066, 15185, 17509, 19754, 20851, 25536, 25956, and 31188. The poem dates from the early thirteenth century. See

4 "Doupe" appears around 1121 in the Peterbury Chronicle; around 1225 in Saint Juliana; around 1225 in the Lambeth Homilies; around 1250 in Owl and the Nightingale; and around 1300 in the Proverbs of Alfred.


8 One heated controversy regarding identity of the poet is thoroughly reviewed in an article by Henry Noble MacCracken, "Concerning Huchown," PMLA, 25 (1910), 507-534. George Neilson in 1902 had attributed to the poet no fewer than nine poems in addition to the four in Cotton Nero A.x. See George Neilson, "Huchown of the Awle Ryale" the Alliterative Poet: A Historical Criticism of Fourteenth Century Poems ascribed to Sir Hew of Eglintoun (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1902).

9 Actually, some critics believe he did sign his name. Vantuono gives a thorough review of the controversy regarding authorial identity and proposes his own candidate, based upon a name found among the ornamental designs in Cleanness; the name, J. Macy, coupled with further research, leads him to suggest John de Mascy of Sale. Vantuono


19 Robert J. Menner, "Purity": A Middle English Poem, Yale Studies


27 Oakden, Vol. I, p. 44.


30 Angus F. Cameron, "Middle English in Old English Manuscripts," in Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of Rossell Hope Robbins,
38 Pearsall, p. 1.
40 Baugh, p. 240.
41 Baugh, p. 247.
42 Turville-Petre, p. 146.
43 Turville-Petre, p. 23.
44 Turville-Petre, p. 115.
46 Wilson, p. 244.
47 Pearsall, p. 7.
49 Turville-Petre, p. 29.
50 Turville-Petre, p. 31.
Turville-Petre, p. 31.

Turville-Petre, p. 32.

Turville-Petre, p. 31.

Turville-Petre, pp. 32-34.

Turville-Petre, p. 34.

The ensuing discussion is based upon Pearsall, pp. 1-24.

Pearsall, p. 17.


Some manuscripts did, of course, remain in England, and a very few can be traced for the thousand years or so since their origin. One such rarity is The Benedictional of St. Ethelwold, now Additional MS 49598 in the British Museum, noteworthy for its beautiful illuminations. Commissioned by Ethelwold some time between 971 and 984, the manuscript was probably preserved in Hyde Abbey at Winchester until the
dissolution of the abbey in 1538. At that time it lost its original binding. In the late seventeenth century it received its present leather binding. By 1720 the MS came into the possession of William Cavendish, second Duke of Devonshire, and it remained in the libraries of the successive Dukes of Devonshire until 1957. Such a complete history of an extant MS is rare. See The Benedictional of St. Ethelwold, with an introduction and notes by Francis Wormald (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959), pp. 7-9.

63 The Vercelli Book, p. xvi.


67 Michael Bennett believes the poet may have been a man of Cheshire in the service of Richard II during the last frantic days when Richard sought to retain his throne after the return of Bolingbroke. Bennett maintains that Gawain's journey through the wilderness may represent a poetic version of a real journey as the king's Cheshire retainers made their way homeward along the "tortuous track north through Wales and then eastwards to their homeland." See Michael J. Bennett, "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Literary Achievement of the North-west Midlands: The Historical Background," Journal of Medieval History, 5 (1979), 63-88. Quotation is from page 81.

68 Charles Moorman, "The English Alliterative Revival and the


70 Painter, p. 13.

71 Painter, p. 95.


73 Saint Augustine quoted in Robertson, page 165.

Chapter 2

The Anglo-Saxon Biblical Tradition

and Cleanness

Of the four poems contained in Cotton Nero A.x, Cleanness and Patience both have overtly biblical subject matter, but Cleanness is longer and more complicated in structure than Patience. Instead of concentrating upon one story, as he does in Patience with the story of Jonah, the poet transforms several stories, some from the New Testament and some from the Old Testament. He ties them together with didactic passages extolling the virtues of "clannesse," hence the title given the poem by editors.¹ Four of the stories also exist in the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, a poem attributed for a time to Caedmon. The poet of Cleanness uses the poetic techniques of variation and accumulation throughout the poem, including those sections inspired by the New Testament. The Old Testament sections, especially, contain evidence of the poet's familiarity, either through manuscripts or oral tradition, with an Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition. In the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, God becomes angry with the wacrlogona, the evil, faithless ones, so he decides to destroy the earth by flood. In Cleanness, God becomes angry with "fende," similarly evil creatures, who have come in unto the daughters of men. In Cleanness Noah's ark is caulked with clay, a substance close to the eordan lime of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, rather than with pitch as it is in the Vulgate. In Cleanness, the raven sent forth by Noah is a scavenger bird, an element not found in the Vulgate
but appearing in the Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition as early as the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*. The poet did, no doubt, use the Latin Vulgate Bible as one source for *Cleanliness*, but the poem contains elements not found in the Latin, elements which indicate that he may also have been aware of the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

Various theories have been proposed regarding unity within the poem, which is composed of somewhat disparate Biblical narratives, but none of the critics has examined the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Bible stories as a possible unifying element. Schreiber suggests,

> In simplest structural terms, the poem follows the common preaching technique of moral principle and amplifying exempla: the prologue narrating the parable of the wedding feast is the moral principle, and the remainder of the poem is the amplification.\(^3\)

Morse maintains "the vessel image controls the structure of the poem."\(^3\) The ark is a clean vessel containing Noah, a clean vessel; conversely, Baltassar has defiled the vessel of his body in defiling the vessels from the temple. Moorman sees the poem as concerned not just with impurity and disobedience, but with "the impurity which stems from disobedience."\(^4\) Spearing borrows a notion from anthropology, the notion that dirt is merely "matter out of place." He sees the poet's emphasis on cleanliness as an attempt to put matter back in its place, to establish a proper "hierarchical order" within God's universe.\(^5\)

All of the above theories have merit, but I see a different kind of unity. *Cleanliness* is an artistic creation, and as such it departs from a literal rendering of the Bible stories; it rearranges, amplifies, and modifies the Biblical outline. As in *Patience*, the poet greatly expands some
passages. Davenport comments upon the expansions and modifications, claiming they "turn attention to the specific uncertainties of the passing moment." On the contrary, in Cleanness there is nothing uncertain about man's relationship to God; it must be a relationship of obedience on man's part, or God will make his power known. Lexical evidence within the poem indicates that the poet saw in the Anglo-Saxon concept of comitatus a human situation analogous to man's relationship to God—thegn is to lord as man is to God. In the fourteenth century, the chivalric ethos had become dominant—but that chivalric ethos grew out of the world of comitatus. In Cleanness, word choices indicate that evolution; the daughters of men are "dēȝter of the doupe" (270), daughters of the loyal band, those who are obedient to their lord. The word has its roots in the Anglo-Saxon word dūgæþ, the band of noble retainers, the basic unit of the Anglo-Saxon society. The poet's modifications and expansions often add an Anglo-Saxon flavor to his Biblical narrative, demonstrating a possible familiarity with Anglo-Saxon verse and a recognition of the similarity between the unquestioning allegiance required in the earthly bonding arrangement of lord and thegn and the heavenly one between God and man.

It is not unreasonable to postulate that the poet could have knowledge of Anglo-Saxon Bible stories. One of the four remaining manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon poetry contains the aforementioned Anglo-Saxon Genesis, a poetic elaboration of the Biblical tales. Although preserved in a West Saxon dialect, the poem shows evidence of an original Anglian dialect, which indicates it may have been composed in the north of
England around 700. During the fourteenth century, before the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII, there were probably numerous additional copies in existence, and some of them could conceivably even have been in the Anglian, which to a native of the Northwest Midlands would have been more intelligible than West Saxon. We do have a Middle English Genesis and Exodus, a thirteenth-century manuscript written in the dialect of the southern portion of the East Midland district. We also have the Cursor Mundi, a poem, like Cleanness, of the fourteenth century and written in a northern dialect. In addition to manuscripts, the Bible stories must surely have existed in an oral tradition.

Although most of the episodes in Cleanness are versions of Old Testament stories, the first of the Bible stories in Cleanness is the parable of the wedding feast, a combination of the version found in Luke 14:16-24 and the one in Matthew 22:2-4, 8-14, both of which are found in several Anglo-Saxon translations as well as in the Vulgate. As in Patience, the poet expands upon the Biblical narrative, and his expansions add verisimilitude, a sense of color and immediacy to the situation. He is not content merely to mention a marriage feast or, as in Matthew, to declare that "tauri mei et altilia occisa" (Mat. 22:4), the oxen and fatlings are killed. In Cleanness, the host is a most beneficent lord, and his hospitality is properly emphasized with a detailed listing of the many bountiful offerings which grace his table.

For my boles and my borez am bayted and slayne,
And my fedde foulez fatted wyth sclaʒt,
My polyle pat is penne-fed and partrykez bope,
Wyth scheldez of wylde swyn, swanez and cronez—
Al is roshed and rosted ryʒt to pe sete. (55-59)
His feast includes not just oxen but boars, fowls, partridges, swans, and even cranes. The poet mentions boars twice, once as "borez" and once as "wylde swyn," and several variations on the word "foulez," including "polyle," "partrykez," "swanez," and "cronex." Let no man doubt that this host is unsurpassed in his generosity.

Following the poetic representation of the parable of the wedding feast, the poet interprets and makes quite clear his theme, that disobedience on the part of man will cause alienation from God, and subsequent punishment. His overall term for one who is not in God's favor is one who is "sowle" (168), or foul, and the unclean garment is a metaphor for one's works:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{Wich arn þenne þy wedez þou wrappez þe inne,} \\
\text{ðat schal schewe hem so schene schrowde of þe best?} \\
\text{Hit arn þy werkeþ, wyterly, þat þou wroþ haveþ} \\
(169-171) 
\end{align*} \]

The poet then returns to the poetic technique of variation and accumulation in order to emphasize the many ways in which a man can become unclean or "sowle" in the sight of God. Three Biblical sources can be found for this passage, Matthew 15:19, I Corinthians 6:9-10, and Galatians 5:19-21. All three sources combined, however, list only thirteen sins, and there is some duplication among the three sources. In Cleanliness, the poet lists no fewer than twenty-four sins, a catalogue which contains variations so that the reader, just in case he does not recognize himself under one term, might recognize himself under another. There is very little lexical difference between "bobaunce and bost, and bolnande pryde"
(179), but the poet lists all three as separate sins, ways in which one can sacrifice the favor of God. "Bobance" is "boasting, pride," and "bolnande" means "swelling," so the three terms are variations of the same sin, a boasting, swelling pride. In fact, shades of Jonah, for committing these sins a man can slide "into p[e develez prote" (180). Similar variations upon a sin are found in the amplifications of "colwarde and croked dedez" (181), "traysoun and trichcherye" (187), and "resounez untrwe" (184) and "fals famacions" (188). In addition to these the poet mentions "slau[pe," "covetys," "mon-sworne, and men-sclaqit, and to much drynk," "pefte," "prepyng," "roborrye, and riboudrye," "dysherie and depryye dowrie of wydoez," "marryng of maryagez, and mayntnaunce of schrewez," "tyrauntyre," and "fayne lawez" (178-188), in all, a list twice as long as all three Biblical sources combined. 12

Once he has defined "uncleanness" in these twenty-four ways, the poet returns to the very first sinner, Lucifer, and begins his series of tales which Schreiber sees as "amplifying exempla." Vantuono notes as the Vulgate source for this passage Isaiah 14:12-14, and that is certainly one source. 13 The passage resembles, however, an Anglo-Saxon account of the fall of the angels, Genesis B (a passage consisting of lines 235-851, from an Old Saxon original, interpolated within the Anglo-Saxon Genesis). 14 In Genesis B, Lucifer is depicted as a Germanic warrior, a member of the heavenly comitatus. Wrenn says Genesis B is "a true Germanic heroic poem, glorifying the comitatus spirit exemplified here in Satan and his followers." 15 God is, in this poem, a folcgestaelna (271), a "companion in war." Satan is a favorite of God; Satan is hwitne (254), wynlic (255),
gelic waes he þam leochtum steorrum (256). This angel who shone as radiant as the whitest of stars falls to the sin of ofermode (272), "pride, insolence," when he deems himself as mighty as his Lord. God had made him "swiène," "mihtigne on his modgeþohte" (252-253), "exceedingly strong, mighty in thought," and he thinks he is strong enough to form his own comitatus, with himself as leader of a band of bold warrior angels; but he is not as strong as his Lord, and his punishment for his defiance is exile.

The Middle English Genesis and Exodus, written around 1250, does not continue the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Lucifer as defiant warrior. The poet declares his work is based on a Latin source: "Ut of latin èis song is dragen / on engleis speche." The poem mentions Lucifer's pride, and the fall of Lucifer and his followers "ut of heuones ligt" (287), but without elaboration. The Cursor Mundi, however, continues the Anglo-Saxon tradition, portraying in a lengthy passage Lucifer, "fair and bright" (441), as a proudly defiant, disobedient thegn. In Cursor Mundi, Lucifer wishes to form his own comitatus: "For vndur him he wald all ware, / And be him self þair comandur." God sends Michael, who "Again him gaf a batell grim" (471) in a single combat which would be worthy of Beowulf cleansing Heorot of the presence of Grendel. Michael "schurd þat curt o þam sa clene, / Þat sitthen þar sted was neuer sene" (475-476).

Like the Satan of Genesis B and of Cursor Mundi, Lucifer in Cleanness is "Of alle þyse æpel ungelez attled þe fayrest" (207). Lucifer "were so fers for his fayre wedez / And his glorious gleem þat glent so bryȝt" (217-218). Like the Genesis B angel and that of Cursor Mundi, Lucifer in Cleanness is strong and proud in his defiance. He is punished
for his pride and his disobedience, but even in his punishment he remains unrepentent. Although "pikke powsandez" (220) of his followers are banished, like Lucifer, to hell,

... be wrecch saȝtled,
Ne never wolde for wyl[fulnes] his worpy God knawe,
Ne pray hym for no pite, so proud watz his wylle.
(230-232)

As in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the emphasis is on Lucifer's fairness, his radiance, and his final vehement unrepentance. He shines in his "fayre wedez / And his glorious gleam þat glent so bryȝt" (217-218); but God in his fury burns the fiends "ful Blake" (221).18

The Anglo-Saxon God was an anthropomorphic God, a God who exhibited almost-human emotions of hete, "hate." In Genesis B, when Lucifer proves an unworthy thegn, there is nothing moderate or benign about the response of the betrayed Lord.

... ⾊a wearȝ se mihtiga gebolgen,
hehsta heofones waldend, wearp hine of þan hean stole.
Hete haefde he aet his hearran gewunnen, hyldo haefde his ferlorene,
gram wearȝ him se goda on his mode. (299-302)

Then the Mighty One, the most high Ruler of heaven, was angered; He cast him off his lofty throne. He had won hate from his Master, he had forfeited His favour; the Righteous One was wroth at him in His heart.19

Margaret Schlauch says the first book of the Bible "held a particular attraction for the Anglo-Saxon imagination."20 And so it does for the fourteenth-century poet of Cleanliness. Although he tells of the first sinner, Lucifer, and mentions the disobedience of Adam, he saves his full poetic
power for the later stories in *Genesis*, the stories of Noah, Abraham, and Lot, men who emblematize the ideal thegn.

In order to examine Noah, Abraham, and Lot as ideal thegns, we must examine what was expected of a good thegn. The code of *comitatus* was a tightly knit system of male bonding which formed the core of Anglo-Saxon society. Greenfield describes it thus:

...the code of conduct stressed the reciprocal obligations of lord and thegns: protection and generosity on the one part, loyalty and service on the other, a mutuality that was the core of the *comitatus* relationship described as early as A.D. 98 by the Latin historian Tacitus in his *Germania* and demonstrated as late as the tenth century in the historic English poem *The Battle of Maldon*. Interestingly enough, this spirit and code of conduct, with suitable transmutation, also found accommodation in Old English poetic representations of Old Testament narrative, saints' lives, and the figure of Christ Himself.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells a moving story of loyalty to the death in the final confrontation between Cynewulf and Cyneheard. Cynewulf, away from home when he was attacked, fought bravely to the death, and his surviving thegns were offered their lives and a monetary reward if they would surrender.

Not one of them would accept it. But they continued to fight until they all lay dead except for one British hostage, and he was severely wounded.

When the rest of Cynewulf's retinue heard of their lord's demise, they came seeking revenge. They made a similar offer of amnesty if Cyneheard's men would surrender. Even though each band contained blood relations in the other camp, the code of *comitatus* was stronger than blood. Cynewulf's thegns declared they would never serve the slayer of
their lord; Cyneheard's men refused amnesty; finally, after fierce fighting, all of Cyneheard's men lay dead around their slain lord. Only one thegn survived, and "he was often wounded." The Chronicle tells us in another passage that eighty-four men died defending Cyneheard. The Battle of Brunanburh and The Battle of Maldon tell similar tales of loyal thegns willing to obey unquestioningly even unto death. Blair summarizes the reciprocal ideals of the comitatus code.

For the chief it was a disgrace to be surpassed in valour by his companions and for the companions it was lifelong infamy to leave the battlefield alive after their chief had fallen.

The ideal Anglo-Saxon thegn, according to Tolkien, was subordinate in the lord/thegn relationship, and he had a responsibility only upwards toward his master, not downwards. Correspondingly, the lord in the relationship had a responsibility downwards to his men; he must not endanger the lives of his men unnecessarily. Tolkien uses as example Beorhtnoth and his men. In August of 991 at the Battle of Maldon, Beorhtnoth allowed the Danes to cross a protective strip of water for a "fair fight," a gesture which anticipates the later chivalric emphasis on fairness in battle.

Bæ se eorl ongan
alyfan lándes to fela
for his ofermode
laþere ðeode.

Then the earl began in his pride to yield the hateful people too much land.

Beorhtnoth perishes in battle, and all his men loyally die with him. Beorhtnoth's men have upheld the ideal of the comitatus code, for they would rather die than desert their lord. Yet Tolkien points out that
Beorhtnoth's chivalric gesture makes of him a failed lord in the Anglo-Saxon code, for he endangered the lives of his men unnecessarily by yielding to ofermod, the sin of overmastering pride.

Although in Patience God is ultimately merciful toward the Ninevites, in Cleanliness he is not merciful. One unifying thread in the tapestry of Biblical tales in Cleanliness is the wrath of God, the "hatel of his wylle" (200), when his thegns do not obey. Certainly among his strongest poetic representations of the wrath of God must be his portrayal of the story of Noah and God's almost total destruction of evil in the world at the time of the flood.

If the poet based his account of Noah strictly upon the Vulgate, he must have wondered why God was so angry. According to the Vulgate,

... videntes filii Dei filias hominum quod essent pulchrae, acceperunt sibi uxor es ex omnibus quas elegerant...

Gigantes autem erant super terram in diebus illis. Postquam enim ingressi sunt filii Dei ad filias hominum, illaeque genuerunt, isti sunt potentes a saeculo viri famosi. (Genesis 6:2, 4)

The sons of God seeing the daughters of men, that they were fair, took to themselves wives of all which they chose... Now giants were upon the earth in those days. For after the sons of God went in to the daughters of men, and they brought forth children, these are the mighty men of old, men of renown. (Douai-Challoner)

This passage has puzzled Biblical scholars even into modern times. Sons of God, "filii Dei," would seem to have positive connotations, and the verse even mentions mighty men, men of renown. The Interpreter's Bible as late as 1956 comments,

It is to be noted that there is in verses 1-2 no
suggestion of reprobation of the conduct of the sons of God and the daughters of men; the passage is simply a "scientific" notice of origins, an objective statement of fact.  

The Biblical scholars go on to note that Milton was the first to conceive these sons of God as rebellious and fallen angels. But Milton was not the first, and there is good evidence that the poet of Cleanness knew of an instance even earlier than the fourteenth century in which the "sons of God" were unmistakably evil creatures. The poet of Cleanness makes it quite clear why God was angry, and his elaboration on this point could stem from his acquaintance with the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, which in turn may have come from Saint Augustine. In the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, it is not sons of God who go in to the daughters of men. Rather, the women are impregnated by waerlogan (1266), and they breed gigantmaecgas, gode unleofe (1268), "sons of Giants, unloved by God." The words have definitely negative connotations. Waerlogan, in fact, to the modern ear sounds remarkably like "warlock," a modern derivative defined as a male witch. To the Anglo-Saxon, it had negative connotations equal to those of the modern reader. A waerloga was "one who is false to his covenant, a faithless, perfidious person." Waer means "covenant, agreement, pledge." Loga comes from leogan, a verb meaning "to tell a lie, to break one's word, to deceive." The word appears in the Anglo-Saxon Genesis not only in line 1266 in connection with the evil ones who "went in to the daughters of men," but also in connection with the people of Sodom who, by their disobedience, precipitated their own destruction (2411, 2505, 2532) and also as a name for the apostate angels who followed Satan into the exile of hell (36). In Judith, the heroine slays
Holofernes, "done waerlogan, / laðne leodhatan," "the traitor, the hateful tyrant" (Gordon). The poet of Widsith denounces Eormanric, "wræpes waerlogan" (9), "savage faithless one," who is reputed to have killed his peace-weaver wife, Ealhilda. In Andreas, Andreas knows he is in the hands of "waerlogan" (71), "faithless men" (Gordon). In his response to Andreas's prayer, God calls the cannibal Mermedonians "waerlogan" (108), "traitors" (Gordon). In the same poem God calls Satan himself "wræðum waerlogan" (613), "angry traitor" (Gordon). Clearly the word connotes the most vile kinds of evil, fiendish creatures.

The word was not used by Chaucer, and it is not found in the Middle English shorter poems. The word did survive into Middle English, however, for it appears earlier in the same manuscript with Cleanness and it appears four times in a roughly contemporaneous manuscript which is also a product of the alliterative revival. In Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy, Merion calls Hector "warloghe wolfe." Diomedes finds himself unable to flee, trapped between the Trojans and a monster archer. "The warloghe with a wicked arowe [would have] woundit hym behynd" (7765). In Gest Historiale as in the Anglo-Saxon Andreas, the devil himself is warloghe. "There this warloghe, I wis, a water eddur is cald, ... Writhyn is that warloghe with willis ynoghe" (4439, 4444) In Patience, Jonah fears the "warlok" (80) (in this case some kind of foot-shackle), but he finds himself "in warlowes guttez" (99). Thus we see that the poet was familiar with the word and its monstrous connotations (certainly Jonah was convinced he was in the "guttez" of a monster). It is highly probable that the fourteenth-century poet was familiar with the Anglo-Saxon Genesis or
with an Anglo-Saxon tradition of Bible stories, for there is no question in his poem as to why God is angry. He makes quite clearly evil the creatures who impregnate the daughters of men. God is enraged to the point of "malys mercyles and mawgre" (250). Man has found "fylpe in fleschlych dedez" (265). These are not sons of God but "fende" (269), fiends who "fallen in falegnshyp" (271) with the daughters of men and engender upon them grotesque creatures, "jeauntez wyth her japez ille" (272). These daughters are "de3ter of the doupe" (270), or daughters of the dugue, under the direct protection of God's comitatus. God finds the purity of his dugue irreversibly sullied. "Al schal doun and be ded and dryven out of erpe / Dat ever I sette saule inne" (289-290). Although the poet does not use the word "warlow" in this passage, he does use it elsewhere, indicating his knowledge of it. His elaboration of the evil nature of the creatures, the "fende," who impregnate the daughters of men, is more in keeping with the tone of the Anglo-Saxon tradition than with the Vulgate. There can be no doubt, in Cleanness or in the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, why God is angry and will avenge himself. The punishment for defilement of His fair creatures and the spawning of grotesque monsters is death by drowning, described in a stirringly realistic scene of human agony.

God chooses to save the seed of a new dugue in Noah and his sons, and one aspect of Noah's ark in Cleanness emphasizes the flood as a new beginning of life, a new comitatus for God. In the Vulgate, God tells Noah to make the seams watertight with "bitumine," or pitch.

Fac tibi arcam de lignis levigatis; mansiunculas in arca facies, et bitumine linies intrinsecus et extrinsecus. (Genesis 6:14)
Make thee an ark of timber planks: thou shalt make little rooms in the ark, and thou shalt pitch it within and without. (Douai-Challoners)

The Anglo-Saxons had a word for pitch—pic—but the poet of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis chose not to use it. In the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, God tells Noah to make his ark watertight, specifically and wiet yde gewyrce / gefeg faeste (1309-1310), "and against the waves make the joints fast." Noah, the obedient thegn, heeds his Lord. He cements the joints of his ark innan and utan eordan lime (1322), "inside and out with earthen cement." Bosworth-Toller defines lime as "lime, material which causes adhesion, cement, mortar, glue, gluten, bird lime, thick substance made of earth, paste." This definition is obviously broader than simply "bitumine." The Anglo-Saxon might use the word lime for bitumen, but he might also use it for clay, cement, or any sticky substance. Wright's Anglo-Saxon Vocabularies list fifteen examples of lime taken from various glossaries; of the fifteen, only four list bitumen and lime as synonyms. Other listings, however, equate the word with "cementum" and "gluten." In the Middle English Genesis and Exodus, the ark is "limed a-gen de flood" (562). In the Cursor Mundi, God advises Noah: "Wit pike þou lok it be noght thyn, / Plaster it wit-oute and wit-In" (1673-1674). The poet of Cleanness follows neither Vulgate nor Middle English versions of the caulking material. In Noah's fourteenth-century ark in Cleanness, Noah is scrupulously obedient to his Lord, as he is in the Vulgate and Anglo-Saxon versions. He builds his ark exactly according to directions; but God specifically directs him in Cleanness: "And þenne cleme hit wyth clay comly wythin[n]e. / And alle þe endentur dryven daube wythouten" (312-313). God queries Noah to be
sure he has followed instructions, and there can be no doubt of what material he meant Noah to use as caulking compound.

"Now, Noe," quod oure Lorde, "art þou al redy? Hatz þou closed þy kyst wyth clay alle aboute?" (345-346)

The poet makes no mention of tar, or pitch, or bitumen. He certainly knew what pitch was, and he used the word when he needed it for alliteration, for later in the same poem, when Abraham looks toward Sodom on the morning after the destruction, "Nou is hit plunged in a pit like of pich fyled" (1008). In his graphic description of the lifeless desert after the destruction of Sodom, the poet describes the pungent remnants of the scorched earth: "ðe clay þat clenges þerby arn corsyes strong, / As alum and alkan, þat angre arn bope" (1034-1035); the area is filled with "spu[m]ande aspaltoun" (1038). "Alkan," "aspaltoun," and "pich" all denote bitumine more clearly than "clay," yet the poet does not use them in the passage detailing the building of the ark. The poet deliberately ignores the Vulgate on the point of caulking compound; he has his Noah make the seams watertight with "clay," a word which connotes "lime of the earth," a sticky clay mixture, more than it does bitumine. In fact, lest anyone misunderstand his intention, he emphasizes how comfortable Noah was in his finished craft. "And much comfort in þat cofer þat watz clay-daubed" (492). Perhaps the poet wished to evoke memories of creation, when God made Adam from the clay of the earth. The flood is the antithesis of creation, for it brings with it total destruction; yet in the newly cleansed earth, God sends Noah forth to begin life anew, signalling, in a sense, the second creation. In this same passage, he refers to Noah as "lede" (347),
reinforcing Noah's role as fellow-countryman, compatriot, loyal member of God's comitatus.

As in Patience, the poet uses specific nautical terms to add versimilitude to his narrative, and his use of the terms emphasizes that God is in control and Noah is the loyal thegn, submitting to the guidance and protection of his Lord.

Withouten mast, oþer myke, oþer myry bawelyne,
Kable oþer capstan to clyppe to her ankrez,
Hurrokt oþer hande-helme hasped on roþer,
Oþer any sweande sayl to seche after haven
(417-420)

Noah's ark had neither mast nor mast support, neither bowline nor cable nor capstan. Neither hurrock nor hand-helm is attached to the rudder, so the craft is incapable of guidance by man; and it is without sail, so even the wind cannot aid it. One can hardly imagine a more helpless water craft, completely at the mercy of the elements; yet, built to the specifications provided by God and protected by Him, it is invulnerable. In Patience, all the man-made improvements are stripped away in the fury of the storm. Rudder, tiller, mast, mast-stays all fall, and the men find their puny efforts at rowing ineffectual in the face of the raging ocean. The sailors are saved only when they renounce their pagan gods and accept the omnipotent God, and when they rid the ship of the traitor Jonah. In Cleanness, the poet emphasizes that this water craft, built strictly according to God's specifications as to length, breadth, height, building material, and even caulking material, is totally bereft of man-made devices which would give man control. The ark's lack of artificial aids to
guidance emphasizes Noah's total submission to the will of his Lord when he is cast adrift in the midst of the mightiest storm known to earth. Yet Noah and his passengers are perfectly safe, because a good lord does not ask his thegns to risk life unnecessarily, and Noah knows he is in the hands of a good lord. God is in control and at all times has control over his creatures. He raises the waves at will, and he stops them at will. When the waters have been upon the earth 150 days, he causes them to subside. In the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, the anthropomorphic God personally locked Noah in.

\[
\text{Him on hoh beleac heofonrices weard}
\text{merehuses mused mundum sinum (1363-1364)}
\]

And the Warden of that heavenly kingdom, the God of victories, locked the door of the ocean-house behind him with His hands. (Kennedy)

In Cleanliness, God takes an equally personal and physical part in the process—his hand is on the helm of the helpless ark. "Nyf oure Lorde hade ben her lodezmon, hem had lumpen harde" (424). But God's hand was on the helm, and Noah needed no protection other than that.

Among the elaborations in this poem, the flood scene stands out as spectacular; in keeping with the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Bible stories, as reflected in the Anglo-Saxon Genesis and Cursor Mundi, the scene contains a value judgment concerning the drowned. The Vulgate account makes clear that all life is destroyed, but it speaks in totalities.

Consumptaque est omnis caro quae movebatur super terram, volucrum, animantium, bestiarum, omniumque reptilium quae reptant super terram: universi homines, et cuncta in quibus spiraculum vitae est in terra mortua sunt. (Genesis 7:21-22)
And all flesh was destroyed that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beasts, and of all creeping things that creep upon the earth: and all men. And all things wherein there is the breath of life on the earth, died. (Douai-Challoner)

The Middle English Genesis and Exodus, following the pattern of the Vulgate, speaks of total destruction but in general and dispassionate terms: "Ðo was ilc fleis on wer[1]de flagen, / Ðo gunnen ðe wateres hem wid-dragen" (590-591). The Anglo-Saxon Genesis also speaks in totalities, but particularizes with a value judgment the nature of those who died—not just the dispassionate "universi homines," all men, of the Vulgate, but manfaehed bearn middangeardes (1378), the "sinful sons of middle earth," perish in the flood. "Wuldarkyninges / yða wraecn arleasra feorh / of flaeschoman" (1384-1386), "the King of glory's waves drove the lives of the impious from their carcasses" (Thorpe). The Cursor Mundi elaborates the flood scene considerably.40 Here one finds emphasis upon the leveling aspect of the disaster. Former instinctual rivalries and class distinctions fade in the face of the general disaster. Among the animals, "wolf and ram" (1786) swim side by side, as do "leon" and "hert" (1787), "sparhawk" and "sterling" (1789). "Bath riche and pour" (1797) drown together; "for þar misdedes wepe þai þan" (1799). In Cleanness, however, the poet elaborates considerably more than either his Vulgate or his Anglo-Saxon predecessor, and in a way more highly personal than the Cursor Mundi.41 He avoids the impersonality of the genus and makes of the scene one of individual agony. One does not envision a massed lump of sinful humanity, but innocent ones perishing along with the sinful in God's effort to cleanse the earth.42 One sees every individual mother and child fleeing in fear.
"Uuche burde wyth her barne pe byggyng bay levez, / And bowed to be hyȝ bonk ðer brentest hit wer[el]" (378-379). One sees lovers part. "Luf lokez to luf and his leve takez" (401). Animals also flee, and the reader feels pity for the frightened creatures. "Rwly wyth a loud rurd rored for drede" (390). As in the marriage feast scene, when he used accumulation to add detail to his rendering, the poet lists individual species, not just whole categories of "animantium" and "bestiarium."

Harez, herttez also, to be hyȝe runnen, 
Bukkez, bausenez, and bulc泽 to pe bonkkez hyȝed (391-392)

In this flood scene, realistically depicted, men make one last effort to form an earthly bonding, a desperate comitatus of sorts, and face the raging storm together. "Frendez fallen in fere and fæned togeder" (399). But their power is nothing in the face of the power of God. This is not the comitatus of the brave. These men sink to the ground in fear and embrace one another in terror as the waters rise. Those warriors who drown together are the disloyal thegns, those who were unwilling to obey their Lord. Their sins bring upon them the deluge, the sea as God's agent of destruction. For the loyal thegn, Noah, the sea becomes agent of salvation.

The raven in Anglo-Saxon literature reflected a dual thread of mythological tradition, raven as messenger and raven as symbol of evil, and so does the raven in Cleanness. In the Vulgate, after the waters subside Noah sends forth a raven, who does not return, and then a dove, apparently the same dove three separate times. The raven in the Vulgate
is purely a messenger, albeit a failed messenger.

Cumque transissent quadraginta dies, aperiens Noe fenestram arcæ quam fecerat, dimisit corvum; qui egregiebatur et non revertebatur donec siccarentur aquae super terram. (Genesis 8:6-7)

And after that forty days were passed, Noe, opening the window of the ark which he had made, sent forth a raven: Which went forth and did not return, till the waters were dried up upon the earth. (Douai-Challoner)

The raven in Cleanness, however, is clearly in the in malo tradition. The poet emphasizes the scavenger aspect of the bird, an aspect that entered Anglo-Saxon literature as early as the Anglo-Saxon Genesis.

In Christian tradition, the raven is a helpful bird. The ravens fed Elias (III Kings 17:4-6), and God provides food for the raven (Job 38:41, Psalm 147:9, Luke 12:24). The raven's role as messenger goes as far back as Babylonian sources for the Bible itself. The raven as messenger carried over into Germanic legend; Odin's two ravens, Hugin and Munin, "flew abroad every day over the whole world to gather news, and returned to whisper what they had learned as they perched on his shoulders." In Germanic legend, the raven could be an aid to mariners. It is said that on his voyage to Iceland in 864 A.D., Floki used ravens as pilots to find land. The raven can even be a prophet of victory to the warrior. William the Conqueror is depicted on the Bayeux tapestry under a raven banner. Ingersoll quotes St. Neot's biographical Chronicles for 878, concerning the arrival of a "wild Danish rover" who came with twenty-three ships.

They say, too, that in every fight wherein that flag went before them, if they were to win the raven in the midst thereof seemed to flutter, as if it were alive, but were their
doom to be worsted, then it would droop, still and lifeless. 48

Although the raven as messenger, as pilot, as prophet of victory was one definite thread of the mythology surrounding the bird in Germanic tradition, the reader of Anglo-Saxon literature probably thinks more often of another thread, that of raven as beast of battle, a creature hungry for carrion. At the Battle of Maldon, "hremmas wundon, / earm aeses georn," "ravens wheeled, the eagle greedy for carrion" (Gordon). 49 In Judith, following the death of Holofernes, the beasts of battle watch the scene and listen to the sound of shields ringing as Judith's army demolishes the now-leaderless army of Holofernes.

... ðæes se hlanca gefeah
wulf in walde,  ond se wanna hrefn,
vaeglifre fugel.    Wistan begun
 þæet him þa þeodguman  þolton tilian
fylle on faegum;  ac him fleah on last
earn ætes georn,    urigfedera,
salowigpada  sang hildeleð,  
hyrnednebba.(205-212)

The lean wolf in the wood rejoiced at that, and the dark raven, the bird greedy for slaughter; both knew that the warriors purposed to provide them with a feast of fated men; and behind them flew the dewy-feathered eagle, hungry for food; dark-coated, horny-beaked, it sang a song of war. (Gordon)

Anglo-Saxon poetry is replete with similar images of the raven as feeder upon carrion, and the Anglo-Saxon Genesis is no exception. Later in the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, when the men of Sodom rebel against the lord of Elam,

... Sang se wanna fugel
under deore sceaftum,  deawigfedera,
hraes on wenan. (1983-1985)
Amid the spears the blackbird, dewy-feathered, croaked in hope of carrion.

In the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*, when Noah sends forth his raven, the Anglo-Saxon poet elaborates upon the reason for his failure to return and the raven's role as scavenger.

... Eft him seo wen geleah,
ac se feonde gespearn fleotende hreaw;
salwigfedera secan nole. (1446-1448)

But Noah's hope failed him! Exulting the raven perched upon the floating bodies of the dead; the black-winged bird would not return. (Kennedy)

In the Middle English *Genesis* and *Exodus*, written around 1250 in a Suffolk dialect, more southern than that of the Gawain-poet, the raven appears as it does in the Vulgate as pure messenger, with no mention of carrion.51

De Rauen ut-flec, hu fo it gan ben,
Ne cam he nogt to de arche a-gen; (603-604)

The Cursor Mundi, a fourteenth-century poem in a northern dialect, like the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*, mentions the scavenger aspect of the bird; it does not, however, mention the blackness of the bird.52

Lete vte a rauen, and forth he flou,
Flou vp and don, soght here and tare
A sted to sitte a-pon sunquare;
Apon þe watur welsun he fand
A druned beist þar lai flettand,
O þat flesse was he sa fain,
To scipp com he neuer again; (1886-1888)

The fourteenth-century poet of Cleanness chooses not to follow the Vulgate original or the Middle English *Genesis*, with the raven as pure
messenger. He chooses not to stop with a mere mention of the carrion-eating aspects of the bird like that found in the *Cursor Mundi*. Like his Anglo-Saxon predecessor, the poet of *Cleanness* emphasizes the blackness of the bird and the bird’s role as scavenger. The Vulgate merely calls the bird "corvum," with no special emphasis on color. The Anglo-Saxon Noah sends out *swæartne hrefn* (1441), emphasizing the "swarthy, dark, black" color of the bird. In *Cleanness*, the bird is "colored as þe cole" (456), certainly emphasizing the blackness of the bird. Like his Anglo-Saxon predecessor and like the poet of *Cursor Mundi*, the poet of *Cleanness* makes of his raven a vile bird, feeding upon the carrion in the wake of the flood. In fact, he expands the passage and elaborates upon the gruesome image even more than his predecessors:

```
Dat watz þe raven so ronk, þat rebel watz ever;
He watz colored as þe cole, corbyal untrwe.
And he fongez to the flyȝt and fannez on þe wyndez,
H[oly]ez hyȝe upon hyȝt to herken tyȝnyngez.
He croukze for comfort when carayne he fynde;
Kast up on a cllyffe þer costese lay drye;
He hade þe smelle of þe smach and smoltes þeder sone,
Fallez on þe foule flesch and fyllez his wombe,
(455-462)
```

In the Vulgate and in the Middle English *Genesis*, the raven simply "went forth and did not return." There is no mention whatever of carrion. In the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis* and in the *Cursor Mundi*, the raven perched upon the floating bodies of the dead. The bird of *Cleanness* is vile, an untrue corby. He soars in flight, seeking information, but his is not the attitude of a loyal messenger. He croaks for joy at the sight of carrion; drawn irresistibly by the smell of putrifying bodies, he "fallez on þe foule flesch"
and gorges himself. The poet has not only used the image of the black raven feasting upon carrion, he has used the senses of hearing, sight, smell, and even taste to impress upon the reader this aspect of the raven, a scavenger bird completely unworthy of Noah's trust.

It is ironic that, after the earth has been cleansed by the flood, the first creature to wander abroad in the newly cleansed world is the unclean raven; and this surely is why the fourteenth-century poet chose to emphasize the bird's taste for carrion, as the Anglo-Saxon Genesis does and as Cursor Mundi does, when his Vulgate original did not. All his Biblical tales are bound together by the overall thread of uncleanness and/or disobedience to God. In order to be in God's grace, one must be clean, and to be clean means to be obedient to one's lord. The raven is physically unclean in his feasting upon carrion, and he is spiritually unclean in his disobedience to his earthly lord, Noah. Thus the first creature out of the ark introduces into the world the disobedience which God strove to eradicate. Sin grows once more upon the earth, of course, and the next tale in Cleaness concerns God's next attempt to purify the world, although this time only partially by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, the men who storm Lot's home, demanding his guests, are gode unleofe (2454), unloved by God, as were those monsters who corrupted His world in Noah's time. Abraham cannot stop the destruction of Sodom, because his Lord has decided. The enormity of the sins of Sodom becomes clear from the words which equate the sinners of Sodom with those grotesque giants of the earth, the
creatures who defiled the daughters of men and thereby brought on the flood. Not just once but three times in the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, they are called _waerlogona_, which Kennedy consistently translates "faithless ones" and Bosworth-Toller defines as "one who is false to his covenant, a faithless, perfidious person." God says of the citizens of Sodom, "forpon waerlogona sint, folces firena hefige" (2411-2412), "heavy are the sins of this people and the offenses of these faithless men" (Kennedy). The angels of God caution Lot to flee and bring with him wife, daughters, and any persons dear to them. "by laes þu forweorðe mid þyssum waerlogan" (2505), "lest thou too perish with these faithless men" (Kennedy). The angels will not wreak vengeance "on waerlogum" (2532) until Lot and his family are safely removed from the city of Sodom. In Cleanness, Sodom is the city "þat synned had þenne / In þe faute of þis fylþe" (679-680). It is a city of "mansed men þat han þe much greved" (774), cursed men who have offended God. In this passage the poet uses no fewer than ten phrases designed to name the citizens of Sodom in a way that will impress upon the reader their evil nature. They are "wrechez" (851), "wekked knavez" (855), "harlootez" (860). Lot accuses them of "vylayne" (863); their "japez ar ille" (864). This phrase recalls those grotesque creatures who came in to the daughters of men, precipitating the flood. They "engendered on hem [the fair maidens] jeauntez wyth her japez ille" (272). In Sodom, the lustful crowd of "rebaudez so ronk" (873) threaten Lot's life if he will not surrender his guests. They are a "banned peple" (885), a cursed people, "wyȝez so wykke" (908). God's angels urge Lot to flee "hem þat arn combred" (920), the "tyrauntez" (943), vile sinners. The poet could hardly
make clearer the evil nature of the people who have angered God to the point that he tells Abraham,

The grete soun of Sodamas synkkez in myn erez,  
And þe gult of Gomorre garez me to wrath. (689-690)

The poet of Cleanness is firmly within the Anglo-Saxon tradition in describing the intentions of the crowd at the gate to Lot's house. In the Vulgate, the mob demands of Lot, "Educ illos huc, ut cognoscamus eos" (Genesis 19:5), "bring them out hither that we may know them." The Anglo-Saxon Genesis, however, uses a much more explicit verb to make the intentions of the crowd crystal clear.

... wordum cwaedon  
þaet mid þam hæcleðum haeman wolden  
unscomlice, arna ne gymden. (2459-2461)

The Latin verb "cognosco" can mean "to become acquainted with, learn, perceive, understand." The Anglo-Saxon verb haeman means "to have intercourse with, cohabit," so there can be no misunderstanding the nature of the assault intended upon God's messengers. The Middle English Genesis and Exodus is, like its Anglo-Saxon predecessor, direct; the mob comes to Lot's house with "lecher-crafte" (1064) in mind. In Cursor Mundi, "þat sorful sin on þam þai thoght / Wit þaim to haue don, if þat þai moght" (2785-2786). In Cleanness, the poet is as direct as his predecessors in the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

ȝete uus out þose þong men that þore-whyle here entred,  
þat we may lere hym of lof, as ooure lyst biddez,  
As is þe asyse of Sodomas to seggeþ þat passen.  
(842-844)
The poet cannot resist a poetic aside here, giving full vent to his outrage at the impropriety of the behavior of the Sodomites.

*Whatt! B*ay ȝeʒed and ȝolped of ȝestande sorgȝ, 
Dat ȝet be wynd, and ȝe weder, and ȝe worlde stynkes 
Of ȝe brych ȝat upbraydez ȝose bropœlych wordez.
(845-847)

He is offended by the "sorgȝ," the filth of their intent. As with the raven, he uses sensory images to underscore his disapproval. He tries to make the reader hear the sound of the "yelping" of the lecherous crowd and smell the odor of evil which lingers after the "bropœlych wordez," or vile words. With sensory imagery and elaboration, he conveys even more clearly than his Anglo-Saxon predecessor the carnal nature of the sins of the Sodomites who are destined to perish in a rain of fire.

The poet created his own artistic work in *Cleanness*, but his description of the destruction of Sodom, with its detailed attention to the fear of the panic-stricken sinners, and the mention of the fruit trees in conjunction with ashes, may possibly demonstrate acquaintance with the Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition; the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*, the thirteenth-century Middle English *Genesis* and *Exodus*, and the fourteenth-century *Cursor Mundi* all contain references to fruits in connection with ashes. The Vulgate statement regarding the destruction of Sodom is as dispassionate as was that of the flood.

*Igitur Dominus pluit super Sodomam et Gomorrhâm sulphur et ignem a Domino de caelo, et subvertit civitates has, et omnen circa regionem, universos habitatores urbiuem et cuncta terrae vitentia.* (Genesis 19:24-25)

And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha
brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he destroyed these cities, and all the country about, all the inhabitants of the cities, and all things that spring from the earth. (Douai-Challoner)

In the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, however, the reader finds a detailed account of the destruction, a description of "swefl of heofnum and sweartne lig ... weallende fy[r]" (2543-2544), "brimstone out of heaven and black fire ... raging flame" (Kennedy). The Anglo-Saxon poet speaks of the screams of the dying, the great fear that grips them, and he even speaks of fruit trees.

... Bearwas wurdon
to axan and to yslan, eorean wæstma,
efine swa wide swa ēa witelac
reede geraehton rum land wera.
2554-2557)

Fair groves and fruits of the earth were turned to ash and glowing ember, even as far as that grim vengeance swept the broad land of men. (Kennedy)

The poet of Cleanness, like his predecessors in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Bible stories, uses the idea of fruit trees and ashes as a macabre comment on the fruits of sin. In Cleanness, the poet follows a step-by-step development of the storm and describes in vivid detail its aftermath. Nature, as it was in Noah's time, is an obedient servant to God. The results of the flood were of worldwide scope, and the destruction of Sodom is regional; nevertheless, the effect is just as completely devastating within the limited area affected. God begins "to wakan wederez so wylde" (948); he calls up "windez" (948), "clowdez" (951), and "pik þunder-prast" (952). The rain that falls is not the rain that drowns, but a rain of "felle flaunkes of fy`r and flakes of soufre," Al in
smolderande smoke smachande ful ille" (954–955). The citizens of Sodom are "rosted and brenned / And ferly flayed" (959–960) until the gates of hell itself open to receive them, and "Al þo citees and her sydes sunkken to helle" (968). The enraged mob had given a "schrylle scharp schout" (840) when they demanded Lot's guests for their amusement. Now, in the face of God's wrath, they raise a "ʒomerly ʒarm of ʒellyng" (971), but to no avail. When the flood was over, the earth would at least sustain life. When this new destruction is over, however, the whole area is "plunged in a pit like of pich fylled" (1008), and it becomes a hell on earth. The scene is one of complete absence of life, a livid, surging mire that is reminiscent of the ghastly pool that was home to Grendel's dam.

Blo, blubrande, and blak, unblype to nege,
As a stykande stanc þat stryed synne,
Þat ever of s[mell]e and of smach, smart is to fele.
Forþ þe derk Dedem See hit is demed evermore.
(1017–1020)

God was angry at the perversion of nature in life, and the scene of His vengeance becomes a perversion of nature in its death. In this pit that is "broad and boþemlez, and bitter as þe galle" (1022), a lump of lead "fletez" (1025) and a feather "synkkez" (1026). The trees which grow by this accursed lake "borgounce and beres blomez ful fayre" (1042), but the fruit which they bear, lovely on the outside, is filled with ashes. This passage is so strikingly similar to Mandeville's Travels that there surely must be a connection. The idea of ash-filled fruit trees, however, did not originate with Mandeville, for it is also found in the Middle English Genesis and the Cursor Mundi. Ash-filled fruits appear as a feature of the destruction of
Sodom in the Middle English Genesis in the mid-thirteenth century: "quane here apples ripe ben, / Fier-isles man mai dor-inne fen" (1129-1130). "Fier-isles" are ashes. Powder-filled fruits appear also in Cursor Mundi, where

Wit appuls selcut fair to se,
Quen pai ar in hand, als a fise bal,
To poudir wit a stink pai fal. (2878-2880)

Ultimately, as noted in three editions, the idea of bitter fruit by the Dead Sea can be traced to the first-century writings of Josephus.56

In the poet's final Biblical tale in Cleanness, he uses references from Daniel, Paralipomenon, Jeremias, Kings, Lamentations, Baruch, and Exodus; from bits and pieces of these books, he composes a cohesive tale of Baltassar's sin.57 His elaborations in this section portray, in a manner reminiscent of the sermons of Wulfstan, heathen armies as agents of God's vengeance. In the days of Noah and in the days of Lot, the sinners had blasphemed by defiling the temple of the body, violating God's law of "kynde" (263). Baltassar, however, violates inanimate relics of the temple, the golden treasures which Nebugodenzar had removed from God's holy temple in Jerusalem.58 In the case of Noah and of Lot, God used the forces of nature as his instruments of vengeance—the rain and wind of the deluge, and the devastating fire-and-brimstone storm of Sodom. In the case of Baltassar, God uses armies of rival nations as instruments of vengeance. The poet uses Anglo-Saxon words to describe the omnipotent God at least seventeen times in various places within the poem, and he makes clear that Nebugodenzar is an agent of the sovereign who is "apel
over alle, Israel Dryȝtyn" (1314). In the Anglo-Saxon Daniel, Baltassar declares his false gods more powerful bonne Isrelæ ece drihten (716). When Sededias "used abominaciones of idolatrye" (1173), God sends the armies of the Chaldeans to end Sededias's reign. As usual, the fourteenth-century poet elaborates upon the Biblical account to create a sense of immediacy. When Nebuzardan sacks Jerusalem upon orders from Nebugodenezar, the Vulgate handles the situation with dispatch.

Et incindit domum Domini et domum regis et omnes domos Hierusalem et omnem domum magnam ignem conbusit. (Hieremias Propheta 52:13)

And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; and every great house he burnt with fire. (Douai-Challoner)

Elsewhere the Bible tells of the wholesale slaughter of all ages.

Iacuerunt in terra foris puer et senex; virgines meae et iuvenes mei ceciderunt in gladio; interfecisti in die furoris tuî percussisti nec misertus es. (Threni seu Lamentationes 2:21)

The child and the old man lie without on the ground: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword: thou hast slain them in the day of thy wrath: thou hast killed and shown them no pity. (Douai-Challoner)

Nowhere in the Vulgate Bible, however, does one find the grisly detail that one finds in Cleaniness.

Nabizardan noȝ t forpy nolde not spare, Bot bede al to þe bronde under bare egge; Þay slowen of swettest semlych burdes, Bap ed barnes in blocl, and her brayn spylléd, Prestes and prelates þay presed to deþe, Wyves and wenches her wombes tocorven, Þat her boweles outborst aboute þe diches, And al watz carfully kylde þat þay cach myȝ t. And alle [þat] swyppped unswoyled of þe sworde kene, Þay wer cagged and kaȝt on capeles al bare,
Festned fettres to her fete under folc wombes,
And troope broght to Babyloun her bale to suffer;
(1245-1256)

Certainly the images of babies with their brains "spyll’d," of women with their wombs carved open, of murdered priests and virgins, are more vivid and therefore more memorable than the sparse Vulgate account. The account is quite similar to another account of slaughter, that of Wulfstan in his Sermon to the English. In an analogous passage, Wulfstan also speaks vividly of rampant violence inflicted by a rampaging army—of rape, of the murder of children, of the abuse and murder of holy men, of people sold or captured into slavery, all atrocities committed by another heathen army, an army seen by Wulfstan as agent of God’s divine vengeance. In the Bible, the sack of Jerusalem was a direct result of Sedeceias’s sin. Wulfstan sees the attacks by the heathen Danes and the resultant widespread destruction in England in the eleventh century as the direct result of the sins of the English.

Hy hergiæ 7 hy baernæ, rypæ 7 reafiæ 7 to scipe laææ 7 la, hwæt is ænig ødær on eallum þæm gelimpum butan Godes yrre ofer þas þeode, swutol 7 gesaene?

They ravage and they burn, plunder and rob, and carry away on board; and indeed, what else is there in all these events but the wrath of God clear and visible towards this nation?

The style of the fourteenth-century poet is amazingly similar to that of Wulfstan in describing the ravages of the heathen horde acting as God’s avenging instrument.

The usage of "warlæs" in the passage describing Baltassar’s feast more nearly approximates the modern meaning of the word, for it is
clearly associated with witchcraft. It does not, however, contradict the earlier usage, for Baltassar at first seeks the advice of "faithless ones," heathen wizards, in deciphering the inscrutable writing. Just as God used the heathen Chaldeans to punish Sedecias, He uses a different heathen army to avenge the offense of Baltassar in the same tale, and here too the fourteenth-century poet emphasizes with gore the might of the wrath of God. At Baltassar's feast, he seats his concubines "upon dece" (1398), at the dais, a perversion of rank. Earlier in the poem, at the wedding feast, rank was very important. Baltassar defiles the golden goblets taken from God's temple in Jerusalem when he allows these concubines to drink from them. God warns him with the inscrutable handwriting on the wall, and Baltassar seeks the help of "wychecrafte and warlages" (1560) in interpreting the writing. Once again the poet uses the poetic techniques of variation and accumulation, this time to enumerate all the categories of people who might have knowledge of the supernatural. Baltassar calls upon

... be sage sathrapas bat sorsory coupe,
Wychez and walkyries wonnen to bat sale,
Devinores of demorlaykes bat dremes cowpe rede,
Sorsers, and exorsismus, and fele such clerkes;
(1576-1579)

There is at best only a fine shade of difference between "wychez" and "walkyries," "sorsers" and "exorsismus." None of these practitioners of magical arts can help; only Daniel can interpret the strange writing, and Daniel's interpretation can explain but not forestall God's sentence.

For his sin, Baltassar dies in his bed that night, and the passage as depicted in Cleanness is completely in keeping with elaborations we have
examined earlier in the poem. The Vulgate treats the matter succinctly:

Eadem nocte interfectus est Baltassar rex chaldaeus, et
Darius medus successit in regnum annos natus sexaginta duos.
(Daniel 5:30-31)

The same night, Baltassar the Chaldean king was slain.
And Darius the Mede succeeded to the kingdom, being
threescore and two years old. (Douai-Challoner)

The Anglo-Saxon Daniel, at least as much as remains to us, ends abruptly
in the middle of Daniel's interpretation of the handwriting on the wall and
before Baltassar's death. The poet of Cleanness, however, once more
emphasizes with gore in the manner of Wulfstan. He is not content merely
to report Baltassar's death; he must impress upon the reader its
importance as manifestation of the will of God by elaborating the incident,
 describes in great detail the demise of the sinner. He prolongs the
description of the feast, which goes on all the rest of the day, until
evening "blykned be ble of be brygt skwes" (1759). "Baltazar to his bedd
with blysse watz caryed" (1765), but his bliss is to be short-lived. The
poet details the entry into the city of Darius and his "ledes of armes"
(1773), who

. . . sca[l]ed be walles,
Lytte laddres ful longe and upon lofte wonen,
Stelen stylyl pe touner any steven rysed.
(1776-1778)

They take the town silently but not bloodlessly, killing the "segges
slepande" (1785) who are incapacitated by their drunken stupour.
Baltassar's end is fittingly gruesome for one who has so callously defiled
the golden vessels of God's temple.
Baltazar in his bed watz beten to depe,
Dat bope his blod and his Brayn blende on pe clopes;
The kyng in his cortyn watz kaȝt by pe heles,
Feryd out by the fete, and fowl dispydes,
Dat watz so dogyDat day and drank of pe vessayl;
Now is a dogge also dere Dat in a dych lygges.
(1787-1792)

All the world, and all creatures in the world, even heathens, are available
to God as tools for his vengeance. Just as Nebugodenozar, a heathen at
the time, served as instrument of vengeance when Sedecias sinned against
God, Darius the Mede serves as instrument of vengeance against the
blasphemous Baltassar. Once again, as he did in the scene of Nebuzardan's
sacking of Jerusalem, the poet (in a graphic manner reminiscent of
Wulfstan) uses the images of "bloed" and "brayn" to emphasize the violence
of the destruction—he is not content with the relatively mild "interfectus"
of the Vulgate.

In Cleanness, the poet surpasses even his Anglo-Saxon predecessors in
depicting Abraham's tenacity, and he does so in a manner which
emphasizes the close bonding of kinship between him and Lot. Prior to the
destruction of Sodom in the Vulgate, when God appears in the form of
three men, Abraham is "sedenti in ostio tabernaculi" (Genesis 18:1), in the
door of his tent. In Cleanness, however, Abraham is resting not in the
door of his tent but under a very English oak tree. In fact, Spearing sees
in the scene and in Abraham's gestures of hospitality an English picnic.63
When the Lord departs for Sodom and makes known to Abraham his
intention to destroy the place for its evil ways, in the Vulgate Abraham
argues persuasively, urging God not to destroy "iustum cum impio" (Genesis
18:23), the just with the wicked. He obtains God's word that he will spare
the city if fifty good men can be found, then he bargains for forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, and finally stops at ten. In the Middle English Genesis and Exodus, as in the Vulgate, Abraham stops at ten: "Durste Abraham freinen nunmor" (1047). In the Cursor Mundi also, God agrees to spare the city if ten loyal men, or "tuis fiue" (2759), could be found. In Cleanness, however, Abraham goes even further. As God continues on the road to Sodom, Abraham reveals that he has a personal reason for asking this favor; Lot, Abraham's "lef broper" (772), resides in Sodom. Later in the manuscript the angels tell Lot he is to be saved for two reasons: because he has remained his own man, the only clean man "out of pis fylpe" (923), and because "Abraham, hy[n em], hit at himself asked" (924). Abraham had proven himself a loyal, worthy servant of God, so God was willing to consider his request; Lot also had proven a loyal, worthy servant of God, so he was deserving of God's mercy in his own right as well as because of his kinship to Abraham.

By the standards of the comitatus, Noah, Abraham, and Lot exemplify the ideal thane. They have complete confidence in the protection and generosity of their Lord, and they offer total loyalty and service. In contrast to Lucifer, they exhibit a complete absence of ofermod, obeying God's commands unquestioningly and completely; God, as the ideal Lord, does not expose them unnecessarily to danger, for he is at all times in complete control of their well-being. They are not put to the test of battle as were Beorhtnoth's men, but Noah does face the flood, and Lot does face the raging mob, each unarmed except for his faith in his Lord.

Cleanness is a long and in some respects unwieldy poem, but it is
the most "Anglo-Saxon" of the four poems in the manuscript. In his conception of Lucifer as defiant in his unrepentence, the poet anticipates Milton, but he harkens back to Genesis B. His depiction of the "filii Dei" as "fende" parallels the evil connotations of the waerlogan in Anglo-Saxon Genesis rather than the ambiguous connotations of the Vulgate. Like his Anglo-Saxon predecessor and like poets of every age, he adds his own unique details to make the story his very own; he also borrows, in typical medieval fashion, details from other poets which aid his poetic expression. Some of his passages are very similar to Cursor Mundi and to Mandeville's Travels, indicating either direct source or possibly the access of both poets to a common heritage. Yet in ways large and small, the poet reflects his knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon versions of his stories. His definition of cleanliness is obedience to God's will, and the Anglo-Saxon code of comitatus serves as a prime earthly example of the heavenly ideal, unquestioning obedience to one's lord. Jonah will prove to be a failed thegn, but Noah, Abraham, and Lot provide the positive examples, the perfect thegns who obey instantly and without question. They know they are safe, because they know their God is in control. He can raise the "flood" and he can rain "flaunkes of fyr and flakes of soufre" from the heavens, but he can save whomever he wishes—and he saves only those who are loyal thegns.
Notes for Chapter 2


8 Menner, p. 140. The poet's use of the word "doufe" places him firmly in the alliterative tradition and in the tradition of the *comitatus*, for it could be called part of the "word-hoard" of alliterative poets. The word "doufe" appears in the early thirteenth century in Layamon's *Brut* no fewer than seventeen times, in lines 1819, 2835, 3005, 3401, 4945, 6075, 7994, 10166, 10438, 14066, 15185, 17509, 19754, 20851, 25536, 25956, and 31188.


10 All Biblical quotations in Latin will be from *Biblia Sacra: Vulgatae Editionis*, Sixti V Pont. Max. Iussu recognita et Clementis VIII auctoritate
edita, 2nd edition (Marietti: S. Sedis Apostolicae Typographi Ac Editores, 1965). Translations in English immediately following the Latin will be from the Douai-Challoner translation.


12 See Vantuono, volume 1, page 298, for biblical sources of this list of sins. Matthew 15:19 lists as sins "cogitationes malae homicidia adulteria fornicationes furta falsa testimonia blasphemiae," or "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, immorality, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." I Corinthians 6:9-10 bars the gates of the kingdom of God to those who are "iniqui ... neque fornicarii neque idolis servientes neque adulteri neque molles neque masculorum concubitores neque fures neque avari neque ebriosi neque maledici neque rapaces" will possess the kingdom of God, thus excluding the unjust, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, the effeminate, sodomites, thieves, the covetous, drunkards, the evil-tongued, and the greedy. Galatians 5:19-21 lists "opera carnis" or "works of the flesh" as "fornicatio immunditia luxuria idolorum servitus veneficia inimicitiae contentiones aemulationes irae rixae dissensiones sectae invidiae homicidia ebrietates comesationes," or "immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witch-crafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions, parties, envies, murders, drunkenness, carousings." There is obvious duplication in these three lists of sins--fornication is specifically condemned in all three passages, and murder, adultery, theft, idolatry, and drunkenness are mentioned twice.
The distinctions between some of the other sins are blurred; there is a fine line between avarice and greed, or between bearing false witness and being evil-tongued. Many of the other categories seem to be almost synonymous, such as enmity, evil thoughts, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions, parties, and envies. Similarly, uncleanness, sodomy, effeminacy, licentiousness, and carousing could all be grouped roughly as sins of immoderation and/or perversion. When one combines these highly similar categories and eliminates obvious duplication, one is left with about thirteen basic major sins which can bar the way to salvation. An unduplicated list of the thirteen would include fornication, homicide, adultery, theft, drunkenness, idolatry, false testimony, avarice, uncleanness, enmity, blasphemy, iniquity, and witch-craft. Some of these thirteen obviously come under the heading of the traditional seven deadly sins: pride (the sin of Lucifer), covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth.

13 Vantuono also lists other suggested sources for Cleanness on page 383.

14 First discovered by E. Sievers, Der Heliand und die angelsachsische Genesis (Halle, 1875). His theory was confirmed in 1894 when the Old Saxon original was found in a library in the Vatican.


16 The Story of Genesis and Exodus, an Early English Song about A.D. 1250, ed. Richard Morris, EETS 7, 46 (London: Trübner & Co., 1865), lines 13-14. All citations of Middle English Genesis will refer to this
edition and will be by line number within the text.

17 **Cursor Mundi** (The *Cursur o the World*), ed. Richard Morris, EETS 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, 99, 101 (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1874), lines 452-453. For dialect and date, see page 125 of volume 101. All references to this work will refer to this edition and will be by line number within the text.

18 Vantuono notes two other possible connections with an Anglo-Saxon tradition. In his commentary regarding line 208, he suggests separating manuscript "areward" to place Lucifer "are Ward," or "before (his) Guardian," noting that thereby "one may note a connection to Anglo-Saxon tradition" (page 300). He also suggests that "smylt" in line 226 "may be from OE smelt 'sardine', as the poet describes devils like fish in the lake of hell" (page 302). Anderson notes the tradition, reflected in the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*, that God created ten orders of angels, one of which fell with Lucifer. See Anderson, *Cleanness*, page 67, note to line 216. This tradition continues in *Cursor Mundi* line 515, as well as in *Cleanness* line 216.


22 Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (New

23 Whitelock, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 31.

24 Whitelock, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 34.


30 Saint Augustine, writing in the early fifth century, suggested in De Civitate Dei that God was angry because the sons of Seth married the daughters of Cain. Ogilvy says of this work, "The Civitas Dei was one of the most popular, if not the most popular, of Augustine's works among the English. . . . [It] probably reached the island at least as early as the times of Hadrian and Theodore." See J.D.A. Ogilvy, Books Known to the English, 597-1066 (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1967), p. 82. Anderson notes this explanation in his edition of Cleanliness (page 69). Menner notes Peter Comestor's Historia Scholastica, De Causa
Diluvii as a statement of the same traditional patristic explanation. See Menner, page 80. Vantuono notes a possible connection with the apocryphal Book of Enoch. See Vantuono, volume 1, page 303. The Middle English Genesis and Exodus (lines 527-543) indicates familiarity with Augustine. The Cursor Mundi does not mention Seth and Cain specifically, but it does mention "pe topers wijf lai be pe broper" (1573), a possible indirect reference to the Augustinian tradition as continued in the Anglo-Saxon Bible tradition. Mandeville's Travels also reflects this tradition, as noted in Anderson's edition of Cleanness, page 69.

31 Gigantmaecgas has been translated by Thorpe as "giant-progeny" (p. 76 of Thorpe translation), by Kennedy as "sinful giant sons" (p. 46 of Kennedy translation), and by Clark-Hall as "sons of Giants" (p. 155 of dictionary). It is not clear whether son is giant or father is giant or both; it is clear, however, that the creatures are without favor in God's eyes, gode unleofe. See Benjamin Thorpe, ed. and trans., Caedmon's Metrical Paraphrase of Parts of the Holy Scriptures, in Anglo-Saxon, with translation (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1832); Charles W. Kennedy, ed. and trans., The Caedmon Poems, translated into English Prose (London: George Routledge & Sons Limited, 1916); and John R. Clark Hall and Herbert D. Meritt, eds., A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).


Subsequent references to Judith will be from this edition by line number within the text.


George A. Panton and David Donaldson, eds., The Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy: An Alliterative Romance translated from Guido de Colonna's "Hystoria Troiana," EETS OS 39, 56 (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1869, 1874), line 6425. Subsequent references to this work will derive from this edition and will be by line number within the text.


Wright's Vocabularies. For cementum: vol. I: 12, 36; 314, 23. Cementum is also defined as grundstanas. For gluten: vol. I: 95, 12; 164, 11; 314, 22; 541, 12.

Menner notes Carleton Brown's discussion of the building of the ark in Cleanness as compared to the Middle English Genesis and Exodus and Cursor Mundi. The Middle English Genesis and Exodus treats the passage briefly (lines 561-568), and the Cursor Mundi contains a "curious reduction of the dimensions of the ark." See Menner, page 81.

Vantuono, volume 1, page 304, notes Kelly and Irwin's discussion of the flood as a type of Baptism and the ark as a symbol for the vessel of the body. See T.D. Kelly and John T. Irwin, "The Meaning of Cleanness: Parable as Effective Sign," Mediaeval Studies, 35 (1973),
232-260. Kelly and Irwin interpret the discrepancy in caulking material between Vulgate and **Cleanness** as a reminder that God created man "of the slime of the earth."

40 In Anderson's edition of **Cleanness**, he notes the forty-line elaboration of the flood scene in **Cursor Mundi** (page 71), but he finds "no evidence of a direct connection between the two poems" (page 5). See J.J. Anderson, ed., **Cleanness** (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977).

41 Menner notes for comparison the storm scene in **Patience** and storm scenes in **Destruction of Troy**, **Sege of Jerusalem**, and **Alexander C**. However, Menner states, "... No poet of the alliterative school has written anything comparable to the swift and sustained narration of the wild flight of those vainly endeavoring to escape the rising waters of the flood." See note to lines 363-434, page 82 in Menner edition.

42 Clark and Wasserman state that the poet "completely omits the question of the innocent few who must inevitably suffer if the guilty are to be punished." Although the poet does not sermonize over the innocent, he does make a point of describing the terror of mother and child, and the terror of innocent animals, so he does not completely ignore the problem of the innocent few; in fact, his deliberate mention of "uuche burde wyth her barne" (378) emphasizes his awareness of the problem. Later in the poem, when Abraham pleads with God not to destroy the innocent with the sinful, God's mercy reigns, and he saves Lot and Lot's daughters. See S.L. Clark and Julian N. Wasserman, "The Pearl Poet's City Imagery," *The Southern Quarterly*, 16 (July, 1978), 304.

43 Clark and Wasserman see the raven and the dove as
representative of the two groups into which all characters in the poem fall; the raven represents those who are cast out from the favor of the Lord, and the dove represents those who are "cast out only to be brought back inside." See S.L. Clark and Julian N. Wasserman, *Purity: The Cities of the Dove and the Raven*, *American Benedictine Review*, 29 (1978), 284-306. The quotation is from page 289.

44 According to Ingersoll, the "earliest available accounts of such a deluge as the Noachian are engraved on clay tablets recovered from the ruins of Babylonia, and written 2000 or more years before the beginning of the Christian era. . . . the patriarchal shipmaster sent out as explorers a dove, a swallow, and a raven. The dove and the swallow returned; the raven did not." Ernest Ingersoll, *Birds in Legend, Fable and Folklore* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923; rpt. Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1968), p. 99.


46 See Ingersoll, p. 16.

47 See Armstrong, p. 74.


52 Cursor Mundi (The Cursur o the World), ed. Richard Morris, EETS 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, 99, 101 (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1874). For dialect and date, see page 125 of volume 101. Menner presents a long note regarding the history of the raven as carrion-eating bird, which seems to originate in Jewish and Arabic tradition and was popularized through the writings of Isidore of Seville. The scavenger aspect of the bird also appears in the writings of Alcuin, Rabanus Maurus, and Peter Comestor. See Menner, page 85 for most complete note; also see Anderson, Cleanness, page 74, and Vantuono, volume 1, page 309. The tradition probably entered Anglo-Saxon literature by way of Isidore; according to a letter by the monk Cuthbert, the venerable Bede knew the works of Isidore and had begun translating into English extracts from De Natura Rerum. See Stanley Greenfield, A Critical History of Old English Literature (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 16.

53 At least one Anglo-Saxon source portrays the raven as an angel of the Devil.

...odær biē Godes engel, se biē hwit swa snaw, odær biē deofles engel, se biē swa sweart swa hraefen oðere siharewä.

In this Anglo-Saxon homily, the soul at death is met by two angels, an angel of God (white) and an angel of the Devil (black as a raven). See Rudolph Willard, Two Apocrypha in Old English Homilies (Leipzig: Verlag

54 Kennedy, p. 70. Bosworth-Toller, p. 1157.

55 In Mandeville's Travels, one also finds "yryn" which floats in the Dead Sea, "a fedyr" which sinks, and apples filled with ashes. The Middle English translation of the Travels dates from later, some time in the fifteenth century. The stories exist in Old French and Latin versions, but the earliest of these is an Old French version which dates from between 1366 and 1371. See The Bodley Version of Mandeville's Travels, ed. M.C. Seymour, EETS OS 253 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 61, 63; and Arpad Steiner, "The Date of Composition of Mandeville's Travels," Speculum, 9 (1934), 144-147.

56 See notes in Vantuono (page 324), Anderson (page 88), and Andrew and Waldron (page 154) editions of Cleanness.


58 Menner attributes to Mandeville's Travels many of the lush details of Baltassar's feast. See Menner, page 109, note to line 1464 ff. See also Anderson, Cleanness, page 97, note to lines 1405-12, and page 100, note to lines 1469-72; and see Vantuono, volume 1, page 338, note to lines 1469-72.


61 Michael Swanton, ed. and trans., Anglo-Saxon Prose (London: Dent, 1975), p. 120.

62 See Anderson, Cleanness, page 102 for derivation from Anglo-Saxon alliterative phrase wycan and waelcyrian. See also Vantuono, volume 1, page 342. Anderson maintains the phrase, perhaps as early as in Anglo-Saxon, did not necessarily refer to females; Vantuono, however, believes the poet "was precisely designating females in this line."


64 Menner indicates that a later scribe, one seeking literal agreement but probably unaware of the generational ambiguity intended, tried to correct the manuscript by writing "broper" over the "n" in "byn" and "em." The intention of the original scribe is discernible, however. See Menner, p. 36.
Chapter 3

Anglo-Saxon Word Play in *Patience*

The Anglo-Saxon heritage in *Cleanness* is a heritage of concepts found in the Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition but not in the Vulgate. The Anglo-Saxon heritage in *Patience*, however, is a lexical one. A close examination reveals possible word play on the part of the poet, indicating the poet's familiarity with Anglo-Saxon or his familiarity with an oral tradition deriving from the Anglo-Saxon. In particular, the words "fale," "tres," and "lepe," and the passages in which they appear, acquire new dimensions of meaning when viewed in the light of possible Anglo-Saxon word play.

A common thread of obedience (or disobedience) within a hierarchical structure runs throughout the four poems of the manuscript, but nowhere is the penalty for disobedience more effectively and extensively portrayed than in *Patience*. The poet views Jonah as a negative example, all that a good obedient servant is not, and he uses Anglo-Saxon poetic techniques to emphasize the omnipotence of God and the powerlessness of any mere man who thinks he can refuse the commands of the Almighty.¹ Jonah refuses his obligation to his heavenly Lord, only to find that he does not have the power to refuse. God will be obeyed, regardless of Jonah's wishes in the matter. Jonah, in breaking his contract of obedience to his superior, becomes a failed thegn. The concept of man as servant to God was a medieval commonplace, but the poet depicts Jonah with a decidedly Anglo-Saxon flavor. He uses images and diction drawn from the
Anglo-Saxon Gospels, Andreas, Riddles, and the Anglo-Saxon Genesis. These Anglo-Saxon images give an added depth of meaning to some crucial passages; the parallels to Andreas and the Riddles are particularly evident in the storm scene. In some cases, as in his use of "tres," he may be creating a play on words based upon the root word's multiple meanings in Anglo-Saxon.

No one has conducted a thorough examination of the poem for Anglo-Saxon lexical parallels. Kean makes an implicit comparison with the poem's Anglo-Saxon parent literature, perhaps, though in a negative way, when she dismisses it as a mere example of the "old-fashioned genre" of a verse paraphrase. ² Spearing sees Patience as diptych in structure, a tale of two separate tests, the test in the whale's belly and the test in the shelter under the vine.³ Anderson, however, sees a tripartite structure consisting of Jonah's first lesson, his repentance, and his second lesson.⁴ Critical attention has focused upon Biblical affinities. Andrew sees Jonah as a type of Christ.⁵ Friedman, on the other hand, sees Jonah as a failed type, an unwilling prophet.⁶ Anderson, the editor of the definitive edition, declares Patience a homily "explicitly concerned with teaching one of the virtues of the Beatitudes."⁷

Along with Christian typology and homiletic intent, however, one must acknowledge a strong Anglo-Saxon element in the poem, particularly involving the poet's elaboration of Biblical story; in fact, the poem bears strong traces of the poet's familiarity specifically with the Anglo-Saxon Gospels. It is highly unlikely that the poet was working directly from an Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the story of Jonah. If he was, the manuscript
has become victim to the ravages of time, for nowhere in the extant manuscripts do we find a complete Anglo-Saxon version of the book of Jonah. The poet does, however, develop the story in a manner characteristic of Anglo-Saxon elaboration of Biblical tales. That is, the poet of Patience starts with the bare bones of the Biblical narrative, but he expands, using detail and color and extensive elaboration, to make the story come alive for the reader. Some of his word choices indicate possible word play which gives added depth to the passages involved. The poet of Patience was five hundred years closer to the Anglo-Saxon than we are. The lexical evidence in Patience suggests that he may have known the language of Anglo-Saxon or had access to a rich oral heritage which is lost to us, and that he used his knowledge to add shades of meaning to his poem which, without careful scrutiny, are lost to us today. He depicts Jonah and the forces of nature as thegns to God, members of God's comitatus; man (or nature) is to God as thegn is to lord. He uses Anglo-Saxon poetic techniques such as elaboration and variation and he uses words rich in Anglo-Saxon connotations of the comitatus to reinforce his metaphor.

Anderson not

The Patience-poet develops the biblical narrative not allegorically but realistically, after the manner of the Old English verse paraphrases of Old Testament stories.

The Anglo-Saxon tendency was to expand in order to make a point clear, and the poet of Patience follows this pattern of expansion. Time after time he expands considerably upon the spare Vulgate account, adding material which emphasizes the seriousness of Jonah’s refusal to
acknowledge his responsibilities as thegn to God. This tendency to expansion becomes especially noticeable in his treatment of Jonah's flight, the storm at sea, Jonah's sojourn in the belly of the whale, and the lesson of the woodbine. The storm scene, for instance, takes just one sentence in the Vulgate; in *Patience* it becomes fifteen quatrains of elaboration. Jonah's descent into the whale, one brief verse in the Vulgate, expands in *Patience* to nine full quatrains of description before Jonah even begins to pray to God; the poet's vivid and lengthy treatment of Jonah's sojourn in the whale's belly and his evolution from rebellious to obedient thegn becomes a major feature of the poem.

Whether through heritage or the poet's actual perusal of a manuscript, throughout the Beatitude passage which opens the poem the language of *Patience* is closer to that of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels than to that of the Vulgate. In *Patience*, the insistent "Day ar happen . . . For pay . . ." recalls the parallel structure often found in Anglo-Saxon poetry. Also readily apparent in the poet's word choice is a similarity to the Anglo-Saxon, which could be simply a matter of heritage or could be the result of the poet's familiarity with Anglo-Saxon translations of the Gospels. Although critics consider the Vulgate Bible as the source, an examination of individual words within the Beatitude passage suggests the Anglo-Saxon Gospels as another possible source. In *Patience* the reward in the first Beatitude (and also in the eighth) is not the "regnum caelorum" of the Vulgate but "hores is pe heuen-ryche." An examination of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels reveals that there, for those who are poor in spirit, "hyora is heofena riche." In *Patience*, blessed are those who "for her
harme wepes" (17); in the Anglo-Saxon, blessed are those who "wepe...".\(^{12}\) The corresponding Vulgate word would be "ludent."\(^{13}\) In Patience, blessed is he who "hungeres after ryȝt" (19); in the Anglo-Saxon, blessed is he who "rihtwysnissa hingred."\(^{14}\) The Vulgate equivalent would be "iustitiam" (Mat. 5:6). In Patience, blessed are they who "arw of hert clene" (23); in the Anglo-Saxon, blessed are they who are "claene of hearte."\(^{15}\) The Vulgate would read "mundo corde" (Mat. 5:8). The lexical correspondence points the way to a thematic correspondence between the poet and his forefathers. His message is one of submission to the will of one's Lord. He declares that it is "lyȝtloker" (47) to accept one's destiny; the word derives from Anglo-Saxon "lehtlucor," meaning easier, lighter. If he is "dyȝt" (49) to be poor, he will endure his Lord's will gladly. The poet must do what his "lege lord" (51) bids him, for obedience is basic to his code. His poem will be the tale of one who was not obedient.

Following the prologue, when the poet announces he will tell a tale based upon "holy wryt" (60), the tale of Jonah, who in his frantic effort to flee the will of his Lord finds danger undreamed of, he consistently chooses not words from the Vulgate "holy wryt" or French words from the more recent court language, but Anglo-Saxon words. Jonah in his flight "vnsounde he hym feches" (58). The word "vnsounde" derives from the Anglo-Saxon word "sund" meaning "safe, whole, uninjured, healthy, prosperous."\(^{16}\) By refusing his responsibility to obey his Lord, Jonah "feches" for himself "vnsounde"; he sacrifices safety, wholeness, health, and prosperity. Although the poet tells us he will talk of patience, at least equal in importance is the theme of disobedience. Jonah is disobedient to
his Lord, and disobedience to one's lord was the most serious behavioral flaw according to the code of Anglo-Saxon society.

In Patience, the poet's heritage is manifest early by his use of words still closely associated with the Anglo-Saxon language. When God first speaks to Jonah, he speaks not in courtly, polite phrases but in the strong commands of one who knows he is in control. God's words "roghlych rud rowned" (64) in Jonah's ear. According to Anderson, the three words derive from Anglo-Saxon rug, reord, and runian; they denote an imperious shout from a lord who is not asking—he is telling. He expects Jonah to obey instantly and unquestioningly, "wyth-outen oFER speche" (66). Jonah must go to Nineveh and God's "sa3es soghe alle aboute" (67). Once again the poet chooses key words which are derived not from the Vulgate but from Anglo-Saxon; "sa3es" derives from sagu and "soghe" from sawan. One does not often sow laws as one would sow corn, but that is what God asks of his servant in hopes that he will reap a bountiful harvest of good men who will overcome the "wykke" (69) who predominate in Nineveh. He wants Jonah to "swe3e me 3ider swyftly and say me 3is arende" (72). "Swe3e" is from Anglo-Saxon swegan, meaning to hurry, to make haste; "arende" is from Anglo-Saxon aerende, or message. Jonah recognizes God's words as more than a mere request; he considers what will happen "if I bowe to his bode" (75). He clearly acknowledges God's words as "bode," an order, the bidding of a superior, but he makes a conscious choice to disobey. In one of the three Anglo-Saxon sermons extant which mention Jonah, the word depicting God's order is bebudu. In the Anglo-Saxon sermon, Jonah tries to flee God's command, Godes bebudu forfleon. At this point, when
he fails to recognize that God's word is indeed "sa3e" or law and that his responsibility lies not to himself but only to his lord in this relationship, and when he fails to trust in his lord for protection, Jonah becomes a failed thegn according to the ideals of the comitatus code. Jonah has no intention of dying for his Lord; in fact, he specifically states he does not wish to go to Nineveh because he is afraid of possibly fatal physical torture. Jonah fails his Lord because of his cowardice; the Ninevites, he fears,

\[ \ldots \text{arn typped schrewes;} \]
\[ \text{I com wyth ðose typynges, ðay ta me bylyue,} \]
\[ \text{Pyne3 me in a prysoun, put me in stokkes,} \]
\[ \text{Wrype me in a warlok, wrast out myn y3en. (77-80)} \]

They are "mansed fendas" (82), meaning cursed, excommunicated.\(^{21}\) The negative aspects of the Ninevites early in the poem would be completely in keeping with the portrayal of Jonah's dilemma in the Vercelli sermon, one of the three Anglo-Saxon sermons extant which mention Jonah. Szarmach comments that the Bible does not emphasize the evil of the Ninevites until Chapter 3, but the Vercelli sermon portrays the Ninevites from the very beginning as "a cursed and lawless people."\(^{22}\) In the sermon, the first mention of them declares, "ðæt folc waes awyrged 7 aebreca," "those people were abominable and despising of the law."\(^{23}\)

In view of his grotesque imaginings, Jonah's conviction that "þæt fader þat hym formed were fale of his hele" (92) is understandable.\(^{24}\) The word "fale" may have more ominous connotations than have been previously noted. This line has been considered problematical; in this case, the problem is one of the basic meaning of the word "fale." No one seems
quite sure what it means. The poet may have intended ambiguity to emphasize Jonah's misunderstanding of his responsibility to his Lord. The OED lists a word, "fale," which they declare "of obscure origin; it has been conjectured to be a substitute use of OE faele," meaning "dear." In this sense the word means something like "comrade, fellow," as in "stand pou per by by fale."25 This meaning, however, would make no sense as used in Patience. Following this definition, the OED does list the word again, with Patience as example, but with no definition listed for the word used as an adjective. The MED offers a definition, but a tentative one: "?Unheeding, unmindful, willing to dispense (with something)."26 Anderson glosses it "unconcerned about his [Jonah's] safety."27 He follows Gollancz's lead in assuming the word "fale" derives from Old Norse far, or venal; however, he acknowledges, "There is no other occurrence of this word in ME."28 Since the word is not found anywhere else in Middle English in this sense, we cannot search for analogous uses elsewhere in literature—we must examine the context within this line in order to determine its meaning. A word almost homophonic to Anglo-Saxon faele, meaning "dear," but opposite in meaning is Anglo-Saxon faelaececan, "to be at enmity with, show hostility to."29 The word appears in The Laws of Aethelstan, in a long passage detailing a thegn's responsibilities to his lord and the penalties for those who disobey. If a man is faelaece, at feud with, any of the king's loyal thegns, "ponne beo he fah wie pone cyn3 7 wie ealle hir freond," "then be he foe to the king, and to all his friends."30 According to this passage, if a man breaks the laws of the king, the whole band of loyal thegns must ride after him, seize his property, and imprison
him. If the lawbreaker will not submit to punishment, he will be killed. The word *faelæcan* denotes much stronger emotions than "unconcern." At this point Jonah, creature of little faith, is convinced that what his Lord has asked him to do involves more than just "unconcern." His lord is sending him into the hands of villains who will put him in prison, place him in stocks, bind his feet in shackles, and tear out his eyes. It would be logical for him at this point to be convinced that God is not merely "unconcerned" regarding his health but is actively hostile toward him. Of course, the reader knows, and the poet knew, that Jonah was at all times in good hands, for God was a good Lord; so the ambiguity of the passage becomes significant of Jonah's flawed vision at this point. The poet makes clear in this passage that God is the lord in the relationship. God is "Drygæten" (110), a word which in Anglo-Saxon could mean earthly lord, leader of the *comitatus*, as well as heavenly Lord. He is "wyf" (111), which tends to make of him an anthropomorphic God since it derives from Anglo-Saxon *wiga*, or "man." God is "fader" (92) and "syre" (93), clearly the elder in the relationship, deserving of respect and obedience. God's position within the hierarchy is clear, but Jonah cannot bring himself to obey. Actually, by his decision to disobey God's orders, Jonah deliberately places himself outside the realm of protection of the *comitatus*. God will, in fact, enlist other thegns, loyal thegns, to follow after the renegade Jonah and punish him. If he will not submit to punishment, he will be killed. In this case, the loyal thegns who obey their Lord's bidding are the forces of nature, the winds and the waves and even the creatures of the sea. God's original order to Jonah was not given out of hostility or
enmity, but Jonah, deficient in trust, arouses God's enmity with his refusal to obey. God becomes "wrothaker" (132). Jonah does not understand that, within the lord/thegn relationship, his responsibility lies only upwards toward his master. He must trust in his master not to place him in an unnecessarily hazardous position.

In the Vulgate source for the story of Jonah, the ship itself upon which Jonah takes refuge is incidental to the story and is hardly mentioned. In his expansion, however, the fourteenth-century poet once more reveals his familiarity with the Anglo-Saxon culture and language. In Patience, the ship itself becomes a major part of the first portion of the tale, and details of its design lend authenticity to a poem originating in a land where ships and shipping are an integral part of daily life. In the Vulgate, Jonah finds a ship, pays his fare, and that is the end of that. In Patience, detailed description accompanies his boarding, the sailing, and the behavior of the sailors during the storm. The details given us depict not a modern fourteenth-century craft, but a strange amalgamation of past and present, indicating an artist in touch with his seagoing heritage.\(^{31}\) Jonah's ship has a rudder, a comparatively modern feature.\(^{32}\) His ship, however, bears slightly archaic features reminiscent of an earlier day. The typical ship of the fourteenth century seems to have had one mast with one square sail, and the ship in Patience has that; yet much of the dramatic action in the storm scene relies for effect upon oars, and ships had not been powered primarily by oar for quite some time. In fact, by the end of the fourteenth century, galleys were almost extinct.\(^{33}\)

In the Vulgate original, all action from Jonah's reception of God's
command to the beginning of the storm is covered in one sentence; in Patience, however, what takes one sentence in the Bible becomes fifteen quatrains. The Vulgate states succinctly:

Et surrexit Ionas, ut fugeret in Tharsis a facie Domini; et descendit in Ioppen, et invenit navem euntem in Tharsis, et dedit nauulum eius, et descendit in eam ut iret cum eis in Tharsis a facie Domini. (Jonae 1:3)

And Jonas rose up to flee into Tharsis from the face of the Lord and he went down to Joppe, and found a ship going to Tharsis: and he paid the fare thereof and went down into it, to go with them to Tharsis from the face of the Lord. (Douai-Challoner)

In the very next sentence, God invokes the storm. In Patience, however, Jonah's "grucching," his decision to ignore the will of his Lord, and his journey to the ship expands to seven quatrains (lines 73-100). Jonah is not only a disloyal thegn, he is disloyal vocally and at great length. The ship's embarkation and the poet's expansive description of Jonah's ofermod fill another eight quatrains (lines 101-132) before God orders the storm.

The poet wants the reader to feel the excitement of the journey, the hustle and bustle of embarkation, and especially the terror of the storm at sea. His detailed treatment of the ship and his elaboration of his source begin with Jonah's very first step on board the ship, when Jonah "tron on po tres" (101), and within this act lies a play on words which illuminates the passage. We have found in CLeanness evidence that the poet was familiar with the Anglo-Saxon Genesis or with a tradition of Bible stories deriving from it; his knowledge may have enabled him to enrich Patience with the multiple meanings of treow. Among his many seafaring details, the poet may have been making a subtle play on words with his use of
"tres" (101), a word deriving from *treow*, a word of multiple meanings. Anglo-Saxon *treow* could mean "tree," or it could mean "truth, fidelity."34 "Tres" has been variously interpreted as beams, railings, or deck boards. In an exegetical sense, it has even been interpreted as a reference to the cross, the tree on which Christ sacrificed himself.35 Anderson opts for deck boards, since the word does come from the Old English *treow*, and Sandahl finally concurs.36 Sandahl, who examined for sea terms over three hundred documents in the Public Record Office, documents dated 1290-1500, and who found over eight hundred such terms, is a valuable resource for the understanding of the passage in *Patience* relating to the ship. The documents were written mostly in medieval Latin, but since appropriate sea terms were often missing from the Latin vocabulary, clerks often used Middle English words for nautical nomenclature. Regarding "tres," Sandahl comments,

But it must be remembered that there are Middle English compounds in -tree (i.e. waist-tree, wale-tree, possibly roof-tree and shaltree) which refer to spars or long pieces of timber used as a railing, and on which Jonah may well have stepped when going on board.37

He does ultimately select deck planks as the "best translation."

Thus at the literal level Jonah steps either on the deck or on a railing made of wood. The poet may, however, have been making a subtle play on words, a pun using the double meaning of *treow*. "Tres" derives from Anglo-Saxon *treow*, a neuter noun meaning "wood, timber." An identical spelling in Anglo-Saxon, however, *treow* as a feminine noun, meant "truth, fidelity, pledge, promise, agreement, favour, grace, kindness."38 The word appears in the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis* four times in
this context. God swears to Noah that he will never again destroy the earth by flood: "IC eow treowpaes / mine selle" (1535-1536), "And unto you I give my covenant." Adam demands of his tempter a token of God's "treowe" (541), God's "grace and favour" (Kennedy), as proof that he is indeed an agent of God. When Noah falls asleep naked, his son Ham laughs and fails to show the proper respect for his father, his earthly lord. Ham is lacking in "hyldo and treow" (1592), which Kennedy translates "reverence or love" and Thorpe translates "love and faith." The same phrase appears in the tale of Lot, when he asks of the angels, "Treowe and hyldo tidiaet me" (2518). Kennedy translates this phrase, "Grant me grace and favor" (p. 83); Thorpe, "faith and favour" (p. 152). Clearly, the Anglo-Saxon word stands for one of the fundamental principles of the comitatus. It represents the favor of the lord toward his thegn, the contract of mutual responsibility between them, the responsibility of the thegn to obey and the responsibility of the lord to safeguard his charges. Treow represents the fidelity, pledge, agreement, which was the very cement binding lord and thegn together. The poet knew of this aspect of the word, for in Cleanliness Abraham is "Habraham be trwe" (682), the one who keeps faith. In Patience, when Jonah "tron on po tres" (101), he does literally tread on a piece of wood, either deck or railing. But he also treads on his fidelity to his Lord—he breaks his contract with God; in fleeing the direct order of his God, he violates his "pledge, promise, agreement," and in doing so, he sacrifices his Lord's "favor, grace, kindness."

The poet's Vulgate source does mention oars in connection with the
vessel, but only very briefly at the height of the storm scene, and not at all in connection with embarkation.

Et remigabant viri ut reverterentur ad aridam; et non valebant quia mare ibat et intumescebat super eos. (Ioniae 1:13)

And the men rowed hard to return to land: but they were not able, because the sea tossed and swelled upon them. (Douai-Challoner)

In Patience, once Jonah is on board, the crewmen heave to with alacrity, but they do so in a way which is reminiscent of Beowulf; they use oars for embarkation.

\[
\begin{align*}
\ldots & \text{pay her tramme ruchen,} \\
\text{Cachen vp } & \text{be crossayl, cables pay fasten; } \\
\text{Wijt at } & \text{be wyndas wesen her ankres,} \\
\text{Spynde spak to } & \text{be sprete be spare bawe-lyne,} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Gederen to } & \text{be gyde-ropes, be grete clop falles, } \\
\text{Day layden in on ladde-borde and } & \text{be lofe wynnes.} \\
\text{Be blype brepe at her bak } & \text{pe bosum he fyndes,} \\
\text{He swenges me } & \text{pys swete schip swefte fro } \text{pe hauen.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(101-108)

The scene is one of energetic and professional seamanship. Most of the explicit sea terms are of Anglo-Saxon origin. The word "sayl" itself comes from the Anglo-Saxon segl. \(^{41}\) "Sprete" derives from Anglo-Saxon spreot. \(^{42}\) "Bawe-lyne" derives from Anglo-Saxon boga+line. These, however, are merely remnants of a language with a long sea-going history. Jonah's ship, in spite of its cross sail, is reminiscent of Anglo-Saxon ships in that it is not devoid of the need for oars. The ship which brought Beowulf and his comrades from the land of the Geats to Denmark had a maest (1898) to which was fastened a merehraegla (1905), a "sea-garment" or sail. \(^{43}\) On his
triumphal return to the court of Hygelac, Beowulf's craft is *lyftgeswenced* (1913), "driven by the wind." The craft was not, however, completely sail-powered to the point of not needing oars. The men had to push off, *scufon* (215), from the shore with oars and position the craft before it could be *winde gefysed* (217), "impelled by the wind." In the event of a calm, oars were the only means of propelling the ship. Like Beowulf's men, the men on Jonah's ship in *Patience* must "layden in" (106) or lay in the oars on the "ladde-borde" (106) or larboard (port) side in order to bring the ship around into the wind, so the ship can gain the windward side, or "lofe wynnes" (106). 44 Though the ship does have a rudder, the crew, rather than position the ship with the rudder, applies muscle to the oars to position the ship, in a manner reminiscent of the Anglo-Saxon ships which had no rudder.

This use of the oars for embarkation, unmentioned in the Vulgate source, hence an elaboration of the poet, seems unremarkable, part of the poet's depiction of a routine but highly professional embarkation procedure. The oars become more important later, at the height of the storm. 45 The wind and waves, acting as agents of God, "braste alle her gere" (148), and whatever might be "modern" about Jonah's ship is stripped in the storm. In the storm scene in *Patience*, the sea, obedient servant to God, is enemy to man as long as man is disobedient to God. God is willing to sink the entire ship, killing the sailors, if He must in order to impress upon Jonah the importance of unquestioning obedience to his Lord and the impotence of man in the face of God's wrath. At this point in the poem, the sailors are not thegns to God, for they believe in a multitude of pagan
deities. Only after those sailors who are pagan have converted, and after the sinful Jonah is cast from the ship, does God's mercy allow the storm to abate.

In Cleanness, the ark was from the first, specifically by God's design, bereft of devices which would offer any semblance of control by man; in Patience, however, the ship becomes similarly vulnerable because its manmade steering devices are stripped by the might of the storm. The poet elaborates considerably regarding exactly what gear was shattered, or "braste." The "helme and pe sterne" (149), the tiller and rudder, are swept away. "Furst to-murte mony rop and pe maest" (150). In a storm of the magnitude of this one, the loss can well mean death. The "sayl" (151), of course, with the mast, falls into the sea from the might of the winds and waves, until the ship is in danger of capsizing from the weight. At this point the poet inserts a line almost humorous in its dainty rendition of a life-threatening situation: "penne suppe bhoued / De coge of pe colde water" (151-152), or, "then it behoved the ship to drink of the cold water." The sailors must cut the ropes in order to avoid being pulled under by the weight of the debris: "3et coruen pay pe cordes and kest al per-oute" (153). The men bail frantically, "scopen out pe scapel water" (155), and they lighten the ship of all excess weight in a desperate attempt to remain afloat. They toss overboard

Her bagges and her feper-beddes and her brv3t wedes,  
Her kysttes and her coferes, her caraldes alle,  
And al to ly3ten pat lome, if lepe wolde schape.  
(158-160)

"Lepe" in line 160 is another problematic word. Once more, the poet
could be creating a play on words with a possible double meaning for "lepe." Anderson glosses "lepe" as "calm" but acknowledges the etymology uncertain.\textsuperscript{46} In his translation, Gardner translates "lepe" as "leak."\textsuperscript{47} Vantuono translates it "calm" and connects the word with "leth."\textsuperscript{48} There is, however, a homophone for "leth" which could give the word a double meaning. The OED traces the development of a word spelled "leth" and meaning "hatred, ill-will" from Anglo-Saxon \textit{laedeu}, which meant "wrong, injury; hatred, malice."\textsuperscript{49} The word appears in the tenth century as "laeppe," in the early thirteenth century as "leede," and in the early fifteenth century as "leth."\textsuperscript{50} The sailors are bailing frantically, throwing gear overboard with all their might, "And all to lighten that ship, in case injury should occur."

As in \textit{Andreas}, God's omnipotence renders man's efforts futile in this passage, and the poet emphasizes with his choice of language each creature's place in the hierarchy. Three times he refers to the men as "ledes" (168, 173, 180), a term which stands for a "fellow-countryman, a compatriot" of the \textit{comitatus}.\textsuperscript{51} The "lodes-mon lyghtly lep vnder hachches" (180), but to no avail. In \textit{Cleanness}, we have seen that God serves as "lodes-mon" to the ark; but here in \textit{Patience}, the human "lodes-mon" is impotent in the face of God's wrath. Early in the poem, Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh because he thought the Ninevites were "typped schrewes" (77); they were villains, out of favor with God, and Jonah thought of himself as a good man. Now the roles are reversed, for the sailors call Jonah "syn-ful schrewes" (197); since he is the cause of this terrible storm, he certainly is out of favor with God; he has become
identified with those he feared, has joined the company of those beyond the protection of the heavenly comitatus. Jonah's error was in thinking of his God as an earthly comitatus lord. He thought he could run away from "\textit{Dat wyʒe I worschyp}" (206), and that God could neither see nor follow him if he ran far enough and fast enough. The poet makes clear God's supremacy in this hierarchy. Jonah could not run fast enough to "\textit{flawen fro þe face of frelych dryʒtyn}" (214), for the "\textit{frelych dryʒten}," the most high God, has power over the forces of nature as well as of men.

In the storm scene in \textit{Patience}, nature serves as a lesson to man. At the height of the storm occurs the sole mention in the Vulgate source of oars, but the Vulgate mentions them in the same brief manner that it mentions the storm. The fourteenth-century poet elaborates this mention of oars to two full quatrains, emphasizing the desperation with which the sailors try to save themselves.

\begin{verbatim}
Hapeles hyʒed in haste with ores ful longe,
Syn her sayl watʒ hem aslypped, on sydeʒ to rowe,
Hef and hale vpon hyʒt to helpen hym seluen;
Bot al watʒ nedles note, þat nodde not bityde. (217-220)
\end{verbatim}

In the ferocious storm they "bursten her ores" (221). All of man's resources, modern innovations of ship design like rudder and tiller, mast and sail, and even man's most basic resource, brute muscle, are ineffectual against the might of God's power. Man, whether using modern technology or using primitive strength, is powerless against God. Man, with or without technology, cannot move the ship in the face of God's power. God uses another force of nature, a creature of the sea, to teach Jonah yet another lesson.
The next instrument used by God in the education of Jonah is, of course, the whale. As in his treatment of the sea, the poet of *Patience* expands considerably upon his Vulgate source, and in his word choice he indicates familiarity either with one of the Anglo-Saxon homilies or with an oral tradition descended from those homilies. In all three of the surviving homilies which mention Jonah, he is swallowed not by a "piscem grandem," or big fish, but by a *hwaell*. In *Patience* the poet expands one verse to nine full quatrains of description before Jonah even begins to pray to God. Within this description, the whale, like the winds and seas, is acting as agent for his Lord. The Bible covers Jonah's descent into the whale in one brief verse.

Et preparavit Dominus piscem grandem et deglutit Ionom et erat Iona in ventre piscis tribus diebus et tribus noctibus. (Iona Propheta 2:1)

Now the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonas: and Jonas was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (Douai-Challoner)

The poet of *Patience*, however, wants the reader to feel the horror of Jonah's situation. Jonah is forcefully evicted from "bat schended schyp" (246). The "wylde walterande whal" (247) does not just happen to be cruising in the vicinity. With the smaller fishes, he had taken refuge from the storm at the bottom of the sea, but upon God's command he "watȝ beten fro be abyme" (248). He knows his mission, for he is "war of bat wyȝe bat be water sogte" (249). Like the winds when commanded by God to "blowes bope" at God's "bode," the whale responds "swyftely" (250), positioning himself at the side of the ship with his "swoȝ" (250) open. In the phrase "be fysch hym tyd hentes" (251), the poet repeats his emphasis
on the whale’s swift response with the use of "tyd," which Anderson connects with Anglo-Saxon _tid_. If one accepts Anderson’s connection, the word also adds to the poem religious overtones of the whale’s role as dutiful servant to God, for the Anglo-Saxon word means not only "time, period, hour" but also "feast-day, festal-tide, canonical hour or service."

The whale, an eager servant of God, rises upon his tail in the water to receive Jonah, and takes special care not to damage God’s property in the process of swallowing. Jonah is not even scratched by the giant teeth on his way down to the stomach: "with-outhen towche of any tothe he tult in his _prote_" (252). Like the whale in the Anglo-Saxon _Physiologus_, the whale in _Patience_ dives with his prize "to _pe se bopem_" (253), with Jonah, "_pe_ mon in his mawe malskred in _dred_" (255). The poet makes clear once Jonah is inside the whale that Jonah is, after all, still safe, and he does so with words associated with the _comitatus_. Jonah is a "_lede_" (259), a compatriot of the band; he is after all still alive, "warded" (258) by his Lord. "Warded" derives from Anglo-Saxon _weardian_, which meant "guard, guardian, protector, lord, king," clearly the superior in the lord/thegn relationship. Life is something "lent" (260), granted, leased (according to Anderson, from Anglo-Saxon _laenan_), to someone only so long as the Lord decrees. A good lord does not ask of his thegn unreasonable demands, and this is a good lord. In spite of Jonah’s seemingly perilous situation, he is in good hands; he "watȝ sokored by _bat syre bat syttes so hiȝe_" (261).

When Jonah slides down the gullet of the whale, "purȝ glaymande glette" (269), he tumbles "hele ouer hed hourlunde aboue, / Til he blunt in a blok as brod as a halle" (271-272). The poet uses the word "blunt" here
in his own unusual way. The word "blunt" seems to mean "stopped, fetched up," but Anderson declares it of obscure origin.\textsuperscript{56} He mentions the parallel development of Anglo-Saxon \textit{styntan}, meaning "to make blunt." Vantuono, however, although retaining the meaning, connects the word with Middle English "blinnen," "to cease."\textsuperscript{57} The Middle English word "blinnen" in turn derives from Anglo-Saxon "blinnan."\textsuperscript{58} Jonah gropes his way, "fathmeg aboute" (273), and finds himself in the midst of slimy filth, "glaymane glette" (269), in the whale's "stomak þat stank as þe deuel" (274). The scene is one of ironic contrast to his abode later in the paradisal bower of vines, for this is a "bour" (276) that "saym and in sorge þat saoured as helle" (275). This is the bower of one who is out of favor with his lord, and indeed it is not a pretty sight.

Jonah is sufficiently frightened that he calls upon his Lord, and he does so using the term associated with the \textit{comitatus}; Jonah "to þe lede called" (281). In the Vulgate, Jonah utters one long prayer culminating in submission. In \textit{Patience}, however, Jonah utters two prayers. His first prayer is only seven lines long, and he does not yet realize the condition required of him in order to gain God's favor. He asks God to have "of þy prophete pite" (282), and he begs for "mercy of þy man and his mys-dedes" (287), but he does not yet offer complete submission to the will of his Lord—and he does not yet get out of the whale. Clark and Wasserman examine fully the Anglo-Saxon technique of variation in the poet's treatment of the prayer sequence.\textsuperscript{59} Jonah, the reluctant thegn, is not yet ready to acknowledge his responsibility upwards to his Lord. He admits he is "fol and fykel and falce of my hert" (283), "gulty of gyle, as gaule of
prophetes" (285); but he is not yet ready to offer the unquestioning obedience demanded of a proper thegn of God—and he is not yet released from the whale. His lot does improve somewhat, however, for following the first prayer he does find a clean place, "per no de-foule of no fylype wat3 fest hym abute" (290), in which he can meditate, "penkande on dryȝtyn" (294). When next he is ready to pray, he knows what his Lord requires of him if he is to obtain that mercy and pity he had first asked for. As Jonah's attitude changes, even prior to his second prayer, God senses his reversal of attitude and begins to make him an unwelcome guest in the bowels of the whale. The whale comes to feel sick, "to wamel at his hert" (300). "Wame" is the Scotch and northern dialect derivative of Anglo-Saxon "wamb," or belly.60 The whale begins to feel sick at his stomach, nauseated; he prepares to vomit forth his cargo at God's bidding.61

Only at the end of his prolonged meditation and a longer, properly penitent prayer (lines 305-336), culminating in complete submission to the will of his Lord, is Jonah released. Within this prayer he again refers to God in a term associated with the comitatus; this time he calls his lord not "lede" but "renk," derived from Anglo-Saxon řinc, meaning "man, warrior, hero."62 At last he offers his whole self to his Lord.

Bot I dewoutly awowe, þat verray bet3 halden,
Soberly to do þe sacrafyse when I schal saue worþe,
And offer þe for my hele a ful hol gyfte,
And halde goud þat þou me hetes, haf here my trauthe.
(333-336)

And God responds immediately. He gives a direct order to the whale, and
just as the waves instantly changed from enemy to friend and sped the ship toward land, the whale instantly obeys his Lord.

Thenne oure fader to be fysch ferslych bidde\footnote{3} 
Dat he hym sput spakly vpon spare drye.
Be whal wende\footnote{3} at his wylle and a warpe fynde\footnote{3}.
And ber he brake\footnote{3} vp be buyrne as bede hym oure lorde.
(337-340)

The whale acts at the command of God, "at his wylle," without question, without delay, "as bede hym oure lorde." God tests Jonah's resolve.

\footnote{3}enne a wynde of Godde\footnote{3} worde ete be wy\footnote{3}e bruxle\footnote{3}:
'Nylt pou neuer to Nuniue bi no kynne\footnote{3} waye?' (345-346)

And Jonah at last passes the test. Jonah, finally an obedient "lede," answers, "3isse, lorde" (347).

When Jonah finally arrives in Ninevah, he wants to be known as the messenger of doom. Jonah paints a grim picture of the devastation to be wrought by God upon the sinful Ninevites.

Truly his ilk toun schal tylte to grounde;
Vp so doun schal \footnote{3}e dumpe depe to be abyme,
To be swol\footnote{3}ed swyftly wyth \footnote{3}e swart erpe,
And alle \footnote{3}at lyuyes here-inne lose \footnote{3}e swete. (361-364)

When God spares the Ninevites, this makes Jonah appear ineffectual, a failed prophet, and Jonah becomes angry with God for what Jonah perceives as his personal humiliation. Jonah, inordinately concerned with the opinion of his peers and insufficiently concerned with his obligation to his Lord, believes the Ninevites will consider him not as the successful prophet who literally put the fear of God in them but as les (428),
"untruthful," a liar. Jonah, the thegn, is guilty of ofermód, for he believes his own human judgment to be superior to that of his omnipotent Lord. In anger, he withdraws into a kind of voluntary exile.

At the end of this poem, the narrator cautions the reader, "Be not so gryndel" (524), meaning "fierce, angry." The word is used again in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, in line 2338; derivatives, "grindellaik" (312) and "grindelli" (2299), also appear in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.63 These four instances, all in the unique Gawain manuscript, represent the only literary uses of the word in Middle English in which the word is associated with extreme wrath. "Gryndel" does not appear in the Middle English shorter poems, nor does it appear anywhere in Chaucer; neither do any logical variant spellings, such as "grendel" or "grindel." The only instances of use recorded in the Middle English Dictionary are place names such as Grendelbroc or Grendelvesmere, words possibly derived from the Anglo-Saxon heritage and meaning "inhabited by a monstrous being" or perhaps referring to another meaning for "grendel," a "gravelly stream."64 Maner says there is "not a jot of evidence . . . that either the Gawain-poet or any of his contemporaries was familiar with Old English poetry, or could even read a single line of it."65 I cannot prove, of course, that the Gawain-poet had direct access to Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and could read them, but the unique literary use of the word "gryndel" in this manuscript seems to be evidence which should not be ignored.

The fourteenth-century poet had ample precedent for the winds and waves as thegn to God in Anglo-Saxon poetry. One such example in Anglo-Saxon poetry, an example which also contains thematic relevance to
Jonah, is the storm scene in Andreas. Like Jonah, Andreas is reluctant to set out upon a journey which promises physical hardship and possibly death. In this case, God's servant must venture into a land of cannibals. Andreas tactfully suggests perhaps God should send an angel instead. Unlike Jonah, however, Andreas does not attempt to run away from his duty to his Lord; he embarks at daybreak. God tests Andreas' will with a terrible storm at sea. The magnificent storm scene is an invention of the Anglo-Saxon poet, an expansion from either the Greek or the Latin original of the story of Andreas. The sea becomes here a member of the holy comitatus, an instrument and obedient servant of God. When God wishes to test Andreas, "Waeterregsa stod / preata pryelum" (375-376), "the terror of the tempest rose up with the might of hosts." Andreas is true to his Lord, and Andreas' thegns in turn honor their own pledge to the comitatus—they refuse to leave their master Andreas on board the ship and seek safety ashore, though this option is offered them. When He is satisfied with Andreas' faithfulness, God orders an end to the test, and mere sweoderade, "the storm subsided" (465).

Just as his Anglo-Saxon predecessor in Andreas expanded considerably upon his original Greek or Latin source, the poet of Patience expanded considerably upon his Vulgate source in his development of the storm sequence. Some critics, in fact, have postulated a possible second source in addition to the Vulgate, the early Latin De Jona et Ninive, attributed to Tertullian. Nicholas Jacobs, however, disagrees. Although Jacobs does believe the storm topos in Middle English literature can generally be attributed to the Latin rhetorical tradition, he does not find evidence for
a Latin source in *Patience*. In fact, of the nine poems he examined, he declares, "It is only in the Gawain group that we find evidence of individual poetic originality." Jacobs finds the Gawain-poet "consistently the master of the storm-topos rather than its servant." If the poet had a source of inspiration for his storm scenes, it may have been the Anglo-Saxon *Riddles* and *Andreas* rather than Tertullian.

The poet's Vulgate source is brief and to the point regarding the storm at sea, but in *Patience* this segment becomes one of the poet's most impressive expansions. The Vulgate states:

\[ \text{Dominus autem misit ventum magnum in mare, et facta est tempestas magna in mari, et navis periclitatur conteri.} \]

But the Lord sent a great wind into the sea: and a great tempest was raised in the sea, and the ship was in danger to be broken.

In *Patience* as in the Bible, the forces of nature are clearly the servants of God, and instantly obedient, unquestioning servants they are. The poet, however, shows a God who exhibits wrath at Jonah's disobedience, an almost human wrath. The poet's God speaks directly to his servants, giving them specific orders, and "wro\text{PELY he cleped" (132). God calls upon Ewrus and Aquilon, the east and north winds; they "blowes bo\text{PE" at his "bode" (134), at his bidding, and they respond immediately. Jonah ignored God's "bode," but Ewrus and Aquilon leap into action.

\[ \text{Denne wat\text{E3 no tom \text{ER bytwene his tale and her dede,} 
So bayn wer pay bo\text{PE two his bone for-to wyrk. (135-136)} \]

The poet makes clear the hierarchical structure with words of authority;
the winds are "bayn," eager, to do his "bone," bidding. The storm which
follows bears a strong resemblance to that in Andreas, including mention
of the disturbance to the fishes.

An-on out of þe norþ-est þe noys bigynes,
When boþe breþes con blowe vpon blo watteres;
Roj rakkes þer ros with rødnyng an-vnder,
Þe see souȝed ful sore, gret selly to here.

Þe wyndes on þe wonne water so wrastel to-geder
Þat þe wawes ful wode waltered so hîȝe
And efte busched to þe abyme, þat breed fysches
Durst nowhere for roj arest at þe bothem. (137-144)

The winds and the waves, obedient as Jonah was not, wreak havoc when
and where He tells them to. The passage is filled with strong words,
words nearly identical to the Anglo-Saxon semantically and phonetically,
depicting the "maȝt" of God. The sea "soȝed" (140), roared; "roj rakkes"
inged with "rudnyng" (139), storm clouds tinged with red, gather at the
first breath of wind. The waves gather intensity with a "wode" (142),
insane, fury. The "breed fysches" (143), terrified (according to Anderson,
deriving from Anglo-Saxon bregan, "to terrify"), hide at the bottom of the
ocean in an effort to escape the terrible upheaval.

In Patience as in the Anglo-Saxon Andreas, the forces of nature
become benevolent upon order. When the sailors embrace God and rid the
ship of Jonah, the traitor to God, God has no further quarrel with the
ship, and he orders the storm to abate.

He watz no tytter out-tulde þat tempest ne sessed;
Þe se saȝtled þer-with as sone as ho moȝt.

Þenne þaz her takel were torne þat totered on þipes,
Styffe stremes and streȝt hem strayed a while,
The storm ceases as soon as Jonah is "out-tulde" (231), derived from Anglo-Saxon *tyltan*.72 Those forces that have been destructive become friendly, "styffe stremes and streʒ" (234), driving the ship to shore even though it no longer has sails. God asked Jonah to "swæðe" to Nineveh, and he refused; the waves, however, at God's bidding "swæðed to bonk" (236) the ship they had just previously threatened. It is no accident that God uses the same verb to make requests of both man and nature; earlier he had used the same noun, "bode," for commands given to Jonah and to the winds. The poet uses the forces of nature in this passage as metaphor for the lord/thegn relationship. Nature is to God as thegn is to lord—instantly, unquestioningly obedient. The forces of nature in this passage become symbolic of the kind of loyalty and obedience expected by God, a loyalty and obedience which are not manifested by his human servants.

Certainly in *Patience* the sea provides an opportunity for moral instruction, not only for Jonah but for the pagan sailors who renounce their pagan gods and accept Jonah's God in order to save themselves. Bourke maintains the sea did not become a symbol until Shakespeare.73 Schlauch, however, sees the beginning of symbolic method as early as the eighth century. She says of Anglo-Saxon poetry, "All of manifest nature is regarded . . . as a huge panorama presenting opportunities for moral instruction."74 The sea is, in *Patience* as well as in *Andreas*, obedient servant; the sea is powerful and is instantly obedient to the will of its
Lord. The sea is a tool used by God for the education of man. This note of powerful sea controlled by God prevails in the Anglo-Saxon Riddles, where the riddles concerning the forces of nature consistently depict nature not as autonomous, but as controlled by a higher power. God controls the storm on land.

wrecan on waðe

heahum meahtum
wide sended

By the powers above I am driven far and wide on my avenging path.

God controls storms beneath the surface of the waves.

losian aer mec laete
on sīpa gehwam

sundhelme ne maeg
se þe min latteow bid-

Nor can I escape from the sea’s surface until He permits who guides all my ways. (Baum)

God controls the earthquake.

Hwilum mec min frea
sended þonne
bearn þone bradan

faeste geneærawæ
under salwonge
(Riddle 3, ll. 1-3)

Sometimes my Lord constrains me close and forces me under the broad bosom of the fertile fields. (Baum)

And, in a riddle depicting awesome destruction to the wave-battered ship and death to the panic-stricken sailors, God controls the storm at sea.

þera þe ic hyran sceal
strong on stiþweg
(Riddle 3, ll. 35-36)

hwa gestilleð þaet.

But I must obey, strong on my fierce way. Who will
still that? (Baum)

This riddle, with the foaming waves, the noises of a ship breaking up, the cries of the doomed sailors, portrays a scene of terror remarkably similar to the poet’s expansion of the storm scene in *Patience*. The Anglo-Saxon *Riddles* make the Anglo-Saxon position clear. The sea and the earth are under the dominion of God. In the fourteenth century, another poet, the poet of *Patience*, makes the same position clear. The winds and the waves respond to God's order, and "ðenne watʒ no tom þer bytwene his tale and her dede" (135).

By the ideal standards of *comitatus* Jonah is, at best, a reluctant warrior for his "Dryhten." Indeed, this might be why Jonah is so conspicuously absent from Anglo-Saxon literature. The Anglo-Saxon biblical translators did not choose to translate the Vulgate book of Jonah into Anglo-Saxon, and Jonah does not appear at all in the *Blickling Homilies*. He appears in only three extant Anglo-Saxon homilies, all Rogationtide sermons. One very brief recapitulation of his story appears in Aelfric's *Catholic Homily, I 18*, the "Sermon on the Greater Litany" (one of the three extant). In this sermon, the emphasis is on the fasting and penance of the Ninevites, and Aelfric emphasizes Jonah's fear and his flight from God's service, his disobedience to his Lord. Jonah would have been a very unattractive character to the Anglo-Saxons. He is all that the good Anglo-Saxon thegn is not; Jonah is the epitome of the failed thegn by Anglo-Saxon standards, a bad servant of his Lord. Unlike the warriors of Cynewulf and Cyneheard, he is unwilling to die for his lord.

According to Tolkien's definition of the hierarchy of the lord/thegn
relationship, the lord was responsible for the safety of his thegns, and the thegns were responsible only upward toward their lord in complete and unquestioning loyalty. By this standard, Jonah in *Patience* is certainly a failed thegn, but God is true to his responsibilities as lord. Jonah is responsible, as subordinate in the relationship, only to his lord. Even if he is convinced of God's error of judgment in sending him into a dangerous situation, it is his responsibility to obey, even unto death. God, on the other hand, is not endangering his thegn's safety unnecessarily. He proves his complete mastery of the situation; he can cause a mighty storm, yet he can accomplish Jonah's delivery from the whale when he pleases. Jonah is at no time in danger, because his Lord is at all times in control. God proves his "**maȝ**" (112) in the storm scene, in which he enlists his loyal thegns, the forces of nature, to pursue and punish Jonah, the reluctant thegn. The poet uses the forces of nature as a metaphor to demonstrate the kind of unquestioning obedience God expects from his human subjects. Jonah might not obey, but the winds and the waves do.

For the Anglo-Saxon warrior, the worst possible punishment for failing one's lord was exile. To be deprived of the warmth and fellowship of the mead hall, to no longer be worthy of receiving gifts from his lord, was the worst fate possible for the Anglo-Saxon thegn. Jonah is rebuked by God for his recalcitrance, and he suffers a kind of voluntary exile when he retires to the edge of the city and withdraws into his shelter of woodbine. The poet of *Patience* expands upon the mention of the vine found in the Vulgate. He dwells upon its lush green foliage, so thick that "no schafte" (455) of hot sun can penetrate into the cool bower. This
bower is not like the earlier one in the midst of the "glaymande glette" (269), the one "in saym and in sorge bat sauoured as helle" (275). The poet gives the reader a detailed description of Jonah's snug little shelter, complete with the "nos on þe norþ syde" (451), the cool north side.⁷⁸ Jonah in his bower is truly one of the chosen ones, and the poet makes the reader well aware of his joy. He spends his time "loltrande" (458), he "laged" (461) in sheer exuberance. By the time God sends the "worme" (467) to gnaw at the roots and wither overnight the "grene graciosa leues" (453), the reader has sufficient empathy, thanks to the poet's elaboration, to feel with Jonah a sense of utter desolation at the loss of the lush vine and, concomitant with it, the loss of God's favor. God will not long reward a disloyal thegn.

At this final sign from God, the withering of the vine, Jonah at last realizes the futility of his egocentric love, his cupidinous love, and he becomes a properly subservient thegn to God. We are far removed from the time, and we have access to no diaries or letters such as exist for later authors in more modern periods. All we have is the manuscript, and in this case only one manuscript written by a poet whose identity is still debated. The evidence within that manuscript, however, suggests that this poet's language was more firmly grounded in Anglo-Saxon than has been previously observed. His word choices reinforce a basic metaphor of Jonah as thegn to God and of nature as thegn to God. D.W. Robertson, Jr., writing of cities and gardens as religious metaphors, states:

This is not to say that cities and gardens afford the only means of making the contrast between Charity and cupidity. Since all creation is meaningful in the same way, the number of ways of making the contrast is infinite.
Similarly, the ways of depicting man as servant to God are infinite, and one of the ways of contrasting charity with cupidity would be with the use of the lord/thegn metaphor. Charity, the love of God, would be emblematized by the ideal thegn who puts his lord's will first; cupidity, the love of self, would be emblematized by the thegn who puts his own self-will above the will of his lord. The poet's word choice reinforces this metaphor. Jonah is a "lēde" (259, 347, 489); God asserts his sovereignty in the relationship when he issues an order, a "bode," to both Jonah (75) and to the winds, Ewrus and Aquilon (134). He expects the instant and unquestioning obedience of a loyal thegn from both man and nature. Jonah is ordered to "swēȝe ... swyftly" (72) upon his bidding, and at God's command the winds halted their destructive force and "swyþe ... swēȝeđ" (236) the ship to the shore. When Jonah refuses his lord's "bode," he violates the legal code of the comitatus and incurs the enmity of his lord; God becomes "fale of his hele" (92). When Jonah steps upon the "tres" (101), he literally boards the ship; but he also violates his faith, his pledge, his fidelity to his lord—and in doing so, he becomes a negative example of what God expects from a good servant. Jonah becomes a failed thegn.

We have no Anglo-Saxon story of Jonah, so these allusions are indirect, woven within the fabric of a greatly expanded Vulgate tale. We do have three fragmentary tales of Jonah in three Anglo-Saxon sermons, and in them God issues bebodu, commandments, lexical precursors of the "bode" in Cleanliness. In those Anglo-Saxon homilies, as in Patience, the Ninevites are evil creatures from their first mention in the tale. In those
homilies Jonah descends into a hwaell, not a "piscem grandem." The poet of Cleanliness may have been directly acquainted with the sermons, or he may have been familiar with an oral biblical tradition directly descended from the Anglo-Saxon. His poem has an Anglo-Saxon coloring not found in the Vulgate.
Notes to Chapter 3

1 Clark and Wasserman comment upon the Old English poetic techniques of variation and accumulation used within Jonah's prayer sequence and remark that the technique "is operative throughout the entire poem." See S.L. Clark and J.N. Wasserman, "Jonah and the Whale: Narrative Perspective in Patience," Orbis Litterarum, 35 (1980), 8.


7 Anderson, p. 7.

8 Anderson, p. 19.


12 Skeat, p. 44.


14 Skeat, p. 44.

15 Skeat, p. 45.


17 Anderson, p. 100.

18 Anderson, pp. 101, 103.

19 Anderson, pp. 104, 80. See also Anderson's note to line 72, on page 53.

20 The three sermons are fully discussed and previously unpublished portions appear in Paul E. Szarmach, "Three Versions of the Jonah Story:


25 *Oxford English Dictionary*, volume 4, p. 36. Both OED and MED
cite the quotation "stand þer by þy fale" and list line 1845 of Firumbras as the source of the quotation. The word appears in a similar sense on line 1891. See Sir Firumbras, in The English Charlemagne Romances, part 1, ed. Sidney J. Herrtage, EETS ES 34, 35 (London: Trübner & Co., 1879; rpt. 1903).

26 Middle English Dictionary, volume F, p. 379.

27 Anderson, p. 54.

28 Anderson, p. 54.

29 Clark-Hall, Dictionary, p. 111.


31 Anderson sees the ship as a cog. See note to lines 101-108, page 54.

32 The modern rudder, apparently a Northern invention, necessitated changes in basic design of the ship's hull. Introduced possibly as early as the twelfth century, the rudder was at first hung over the right side of the stern. Hence the modern term "starboard" for right side of a ship, or "steering board" side. Since this was inefficient, gradually the stern became square-shaped so the rudder could hang in the center of the stern. For a complete account of the development of the rudder, see M. Oppenheim, "Shipping," in Medieval England, ed. Francis Pierrepont Barnard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924); and Romola and R.C. Anderson, The Sailing-Ship: Six Thousand Years of History (New York: R.M. McBride, 1947). Oppenheim says the rudder "appears in an English manuscript of
about 1300, and on the seal of the town of Domme in 1309. From the fact that it is shown in Northern manuscripts, seals, and coins earlier than in those of South French or Italian provenance, it may be presumed to be a Northern, perhaps a Flemish, invention" (p. 254). Romola and R.C. Anderson remark, p. 86, that the font in Winchester Cathedral, a Belgian work of around 1180, shows what appears to be a stern rudder.

33 Oppenheim, p. 269, describes the Galie Subtile, built as late as 1544. It had a two-hundred-ton capacity and carried 250 mariners. The brightly painted ship, depicted in a drawing in the Pepysian Library in Magdalene College, Cambridge, was, however, a curiosity in its day, showing "conventional shields along the gunwale, a dummy ornamental survival of the actual shields of Viking days." Sail-assisted ships had been a feature of navigation for some time; the ship which brought Beowulf and his comrades from the land of the Geats to Denmark had a maest (1898) to which was fastened a merehraegle (1905), a "sea-garment" or sail. Sails as primary motive power were introduced certainly no later than the twelfth century. See Oppenheim, p. 253 ff.

34 Clark-Hall, Dictionary, p. 348.

35 See S.L. Clark and J.N. Wasserman, "Jonah and the Whale: Narrative Perspective in Patience," Orbis Litterarum, 35 (1980), 3. Clark and Wasserman find reinforcement for this image in the use of the term "crossayl." It must be remembered that the poet could hardly have named any other type of sail, as fore-and-aft sails did not come into use until much later. Since all sails of the day were cross-sails, square sails set athwartships, the poet could have simply used the term sail, but he needed
the "k" sound for alliterative purposes.


37 Sandahl, volume II, p. 115.

38 Clark-Hall, Dictionary, p. 348. The Anglo-Saxon long diphthong eo underwent monophthongization in the eleventh century, becoming /e/; thus Anglo-Saxon seen becomes Middle English seen. See Thomas Pyles and John Algeo, The Origins and Development of the English Language, third edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1982), p. 149. Although the two words were often spelled identically in Anglo-Saxon, they grew apart as they evolved. Within the mainstream of language, the w after a vowel became a u-glide. See Pyles and Algeo, page 150. Hence Anglo-Saxon treowp became Middle English troupe and eventually Modern English truth. See OED volume T, pages 402 (troth) and 312 (tree).


Subsequent references to this translation will appear within the text.


42 Sandahl points out that from the end of the fifteenth century onward, "spriet" would become a common short form for bowsprit, but that this short form is probably original with Patience. Originally the word meant "A pole, especially one used for propelling a boat." The term spread had been "in continuous use since Old English times." Sandahl, Vol. 2, pp. 102-103.


44 Sandahl gives a detailed history of the word "loof." Originally an oar or steering paddle, by the thirteenth century it had come to mean a spar, a tacking boom used to guide the sail so it could catch the wind. By the latter thirteenth century, the spelling had evolved to "lofe," and it had become a general term for the windward side of the ship. Sandahl, Vol. 2, pp. 57-62.

45 See the Vantuono note regarding the storm sequence, volume 2, page 215. Destruction of Troy and Siege of Jerusalem also contain dramatic storm sequences, at least one of which may have been influenced by Patience.

46 Anderson, Patience, p. 93.

48 Vantuono, volume 2, pages 17 and 575.


51 See lead in Clark-Hall, Dictionary, p. 215.


53 See Anderson, page 105, for connection of "tyd" with Anglo-Saxon "tid." Vantuono, however, (volume 2, page 660) refers the reader to "tite." The OED does not mention "tid" in connection with "tite." See OED, volume T, page 74.


56 Anderson, Patience, pp. 62, 82.

57 See Vantuono, volume 2, page 222.


59 Clark and Wasserman, p. 8.


61 See Oxford English Dictionary, volume W, page 59. Line 300 of Patience is the first usage listed for "wamble," meaning "to be qualmish, feel nausea."


63 Anderson states, "This word occurs in English only here and three times (including two derivatives) in GGK." See Anderson, p. 69. Vantuono notes that Gollancz suggested a possible relationship to OE Grendel in Beowulf. See Vantuono, volume 2, page 234.


See Vantuono, volume 2, page 215, note to line 137.


Biblia Sacra: Vulgatae Editionis, 2nd ed. (Marietti: S. Sedis Apostolicae Typographi Ac Editores, 1965), Iona 1:4. All Latin quotations in this chapter will refer to this edition.

The Holy Bible, Douay-Challoner translation (Chicago: Catholic Press, Inc., 1950). Translations from the Vulgate will be from this translation. Subsequent citations will appear within the text.
72 Vantuono, volume 2, page 665; OED, volume T, page 32.

73 John Bourke, *The Sea as a Symbol in English Poetry* (Eton: Alden
and Blackwell Ltd., 1954), p. 43.

74 Margaret Schlauch, *English Medieval Literature and Its Social

75 George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, eds., *The Exeter
Book*, volume III in *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (New York: Columbia
University Press, 1936), Riddle 1, p. 180, lines 10-11. Subsequent quotations
from this volume will be cited within the text.

76 Paul F. Baum, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Riddles of the Exeter Book*
from this volume will be acknowledged within the text.

77 See note 20 above.

78 See Vantuono, volume 2, page 229 regarding derivation of "nos"
from OE nosu.

79 D.W. Robertson, Jr., "The Doctrine of Charity in Medieval
Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach Through Symbolism and Allegory," in
*An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame,
Chapter 4

The Pearl-maiden as Peace-weaver

and the Garden of The Phoenix

Pearl, which has received more critical attention than either Patience or Cleanness, is less obviously "Anglo-Saxon" than either of them. The comitatus theme which manifests itself in the positive examples of Noah, Abraham, and Lot and in the negative example of Jonah is present in Pearl, but obliquely. Since in the male-dominated Anglo-Saxon society the thegn was usually thought of as masculine, the pearl-maiden of the poem would not at first glance seem to be a loyal thegn; the dreamer viewed as thegn can only be a failed one, and viewed as lord he is scarcely in control. Nevertheless, we shall see that the comitatus theme is present, and the poet uses it to point the way to the heavenly ideal of unquestioning obedience to the Lord. The maiden serves as guide to the dreamer, a Middle English topos; the poem opens in a garden, another Middle English topos. Yet the poet uses a word for the maiden, "hynde," which may suggest the hynden, an Anglo-Saxon unit of society. This association makes of her a member of the duged. Also, the garden in Pearl is an autumn garden analogous to that of the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix; both gardens are symbolic of regeneration, of that life which comes from death, emphasizing the maiden's membership in the heavenly duged and her role in helping the dreamer recognize his responsibilities if he is to join the heavenly duged after his own death. The poet's individual word choices
lend a coloring of the *comitatus* to the situation, and the maiden acquires a dimension previously unexamined—that of the peace-weaver.

In Anglo-Saxon society, woman frequently served as peace-weaver, often through marriage; in fact, that was probably the most well-known role for woman in that society. In hopes of alleviating tension between groups, a woman was often deliberately married by her father to the leader of another *dugæc*. Such efforts, like modern efforts at diplomacy, were often unsuccessful—witness the plight of Hildeburg, who not only failed to effect peace but who lost both son and brother in the attempt (*Beowulf* 1071-1158). Juliana tried to show Eleusius his duty to the true God, tried to mediate between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of earth; though she was undeniably heroic in her steadfastness, she failed to convert Eleusius. Jane Chance has explored all the facets of woman in Anglo-Saxon literature, including the many aspects of peace-weaving. She states,

> To be a woman for the Anglo-Saxon poet emblematized the tension between passivity and aggression, social and antisocial behavior, passion and reason . . . and ultimately, within more Christian contexts, between the values of this world and the next, peace in an earthly and an other-worldly sense.

In *Pearl*, the pearl-maiden serves as mediatrix between the dreamer and her "spouse," for she has become the bride of the Lamb. The maiden is never disrespectful or disobedient toward her Lord. She wants her former earthly lord to recognize his obligation and pledge his allegiance to his heavenly Lord, and her efforts in this regard mark her as a perfect female thegn. The pearl-maiden as peace-weaver does "act upon and even
change" the dreamer, turning his attention away from earthly loyalties and securing his fealty to his heavenly Lord.\(^2\)

Although criticism of the Pearl is abundant, critics have ignored the poem's affinities with Anglo-Saxon literature. Pearl's stanzic organization is the most precise of any of the four poems in the manuscript; although it does contain alliteration, it also features end-rhyme. Pearl contains 101 stanzas of twelve lines each, stanzas which contain a complicated rhyme scheme and concatenation. Although two-thirds of its lines do contain alliteration, Oakden does not consider alliteration the dominant structural principle in the poem—he calls it "ornament."\(^3\) Wrenn points out, however, that the blending of end-rhyme with alliterative rhythm was not new with the Pearl-poet, nor was it unknown in the Anglo-Saxon alliterative tradition.

It had been employed occasionally in Old English for special purposes as in the opening lines of the epilogue to Cynewulf's Elene, or merely sporadically, or in a complete poem in the Rhyming Poem of the Old English Exeter Book.\(^4\)

Since the rhyme scheme and concatenation are quite precise, critics have scrutinized carefully any irregularities and have argued whether irregularities are accidental or deliberate.\(^5\) Critics have also debated authorial intent regarding overall theme as well as poetic mechanics.\(^6\) Other critics have examined specialized portions of the poem.\(^7\) Even though the poem seems to have been studied exhaustively, no one has seen a significant Anglo-Saxon influence in the poem. Pearl is, as Kean has noted, "a tissue of biblical allusions."\(^8\) Those allusions, however, are themselves a tissue of references which call forth Anglo-Saxon concepts.
Although not as overtly as in *Cleanliness*, the poet does give evidence of his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon tradition. This knowledge is revealed in small ways, with word choice and diction, and in large ways with his choice of the young girl as wise guide to the older and, supposedly, more knowledgeable man.

The poet's use of one word and his use of a variant spelling for the maiden may be a subtle play on words designed to evoke connotations of the Anglo-Saxon legal system and to place the maiden as a member of the *dugue*. The poet uses several times a specific word for that loyal band, the word "hyne," a word frequently used in connection with religious houses. The word has been associated with Anglo-Saxon *higa*. However, the poet may have been creating another play on words along the order of "wone" and "to brede." The vineyard owner's household is referred to at the beginning of the parable as "pys hyne" (505). Vantuono translates this as "household," in keeping with its etymological predecessor, Anglo-Saxon *higa* or *hwa*, which meant "members of a family, household or religious house." Gordon glosses the word as "labourers." The word takes on a higher value, however, when the maiden assures the dreamer that innocent children can and do enter the kingdom of God, for they have done no wrong.

*Dat wrogt neuer wrang er þenne þay wente,*  
*De gentyle Lorde þenne paye ðys hyne.* (631-632)

In this passage the "hyne" is the household of the Lord, a select group of the saved. At the very end of the poem, after he has seen the vision of the New Jerusalem, the dreamer finally entrusts his future to "Godæ  ryȝt"
when he prays,

He gef vus to be his homly hyne,
Ande precious perle3 vnto his pay. (1211-1212)

Ultimately the dreamer wants to be one of that select group, a member of God's comitatus. One word in addition to hiwa could add a sense of word play to the passage, the Anglo-Saxon hynden. The word hynden does not appear in the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records because it is not a poetic term; it is a legal term. The hynden, mentioned in Thorpe's edition of Ancient Laws and Institutes of England, was a "legal association of one hundred men, an association of ten tithings."\(^{11}\) According to the Laws of Aethelstan:

\[\text{Dæet we tellan a } x. \text{ menn togaedere and se yldesta bewiste } ba \text{ nigene to aelcum } bara \text{ gelaste } bara \text{ be we ealle gecwaeodon and syppan } ba \text{ hyndena heora togaedere and aenne hynden-man } be \text{ } ba \text{ } x. \text{ mynige to ure } ealre \text{ gemaene } pearfe \text{ and hig } xi. \text{ healdan } paere \text{ hyndene feoh.}\]

[Resolved:] That we count always \(x.\) men together, and the chief should direct the nine in each of those duties which we have all ordained; and [count] afterwards their "hyndens" together, and one "hynden-man" who shall admonish the \(x.\) for our common benefit; and let these \(xi.\) hold the money of the "hynden."

In this early form of representative government, representatives of the hynden met regularly with their head man or hyndenmann. There seems to be some confusion as to whether the hyndenmann was one of the ten men, an eleventh man, having authority over ten, or (surely scribal error) even a twelfth man.

\[\text{Dæet we us gegaderian a emban aenne monae } gif \quad \text{ we magon and aemtan habban } ba \text{ hynden-menn and } ba \text{ } be \text{ } ba \text{ } teoelunge bewitan } \ldots \text{ and habban } ba \text{ } xii. \text{ } \text{menn heora}\]
metscype togaedere.

[Resolved:] That we gather to us once in every month, if we can and have leisure, the "hynden-men" and those who direct the tithings . . . and let these xii. [eleven?] men have their refecion together.

The poet was inordinately interested in numbers, as all the criticism on extra stanzas and the exact 1212 lines in the poem has shown. The concept of the hyndenna would lend the weight of the law to the associations of men. The Anglo-Saxon laws repeatedly refer to "the hundred"—it was the legal unit of the society. Witnesses must be appointed to every hundred (Thorpe, p. 116). Each man must attend the hundred when summoned (Thorpe, p. 213). An ealdorman must preside over each hundred (Thorpe, p. 223). A member of the hundred felt a measure of protection, because a lord must answer in the hundred for his accused man (Thorpe, p. 235). The concept of the hundred embodies the whole complex of rights and responsibilities between lord and thegn. Blanch and Wasserman have demonstrated the poet's intricate use of legal concepts and terms in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Given the poet's interest in numbers and his interest in the law, the Anglo-Saxon legal term adds to the passage an appropriate legal coloring. The dreamer wanted to be among the hynden, "the hundred," the chosen band of loyal thegns in God's comitatus.

Just as the poet's word choice seems to place the maiden as member of the dugue, his choice of imagery places her as a member of a very special dugue, the heavenly one. Pearl, like several other poems of the alliterative revival such as Wynnere and Wastoure, Parlement of the Thre Ages, and Piers Plowman, is a dream vision; in fact, like Wynnere and
Wastoure and Parlement of the Thre Ages, it combines the dream vision form with the debate form. The poem opens with the dreamer in a garden setting. Kean argues for the garden's derivation from "the tradition as it had been developed by devotional writers" rather than the Roman de la Rose and other secular allegories of love. Specifically, she sees allusions to the Song of Songs in the poem to Pearl. Spearing counters, "Pearl keeps up connections both with the secular allegories of love and with the religious texts that lie behind them." The garden in the poem of Pearl, however, bears resemblances to an Anglo-Saxon garden, one which is thematically apropos to the poet's purpose and which also blends the secular and the devotional. The garden in the poem, an earthly paradise, bears striking resemblance to another earthly paradise, that in the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix. The Anglo-Saxon Phoenix, although based upon a secular Latin poem attributed to Lactantius, De Ave Phoenice, acquires in Anglo-Saxon hands distinctly Christian tones and becomes a moving testament to the poet's belief in resurrection. The phoenix, creature of eternal life through continual death, lives in a garden, an earthly paradise which anticipates that of Pearl. The garden in Phoenix is filled with faegrestum foldan stencum, "earth's sweetest scents." This earthly paradise is blostmum geblowen (21), "abloom with flowers," wynnum geblowen (27), "blossoming in beauty." No mere center for earthly delight, this garden is perfumed with halga stenc (81), "sacred fragrance." In preparation for its fiery death, the bird builds a nest of the most aromatic woods, "aepel-stenca gehwone / wyrta wynsumra" (195-196), and it "in þam leaf-sceade lic and feþre / on
healfa gehware halgum stencum" (205-206), "surrounds its body and wings on every side with sacred odours."

The **Pearl**-poet fills his garden with "worteʒ" (42) just as the earlier one filled his with "wyrta." The fourteenth-century poet adds color to his flowers, "blomeʒ, blayke and blwe and rede" (27). The odour in his garden comes from "spyseʒ" (25), lending a pungency to the sensory imagery. He adds sound and touch to the sensory images of smell and sight, for sweet songs come to him in the garden: "ʒet poʒt me neuer so swete a sange / As stytle stounde let to me stele" (19-20); and at the scene's end, the reader is aware of the touch of the grass and flowers upon his skin as he "felle upon ʒat floury flaqʒt" (57). As usual with this poet, he individualizes the scene with the names of particular flowers, "gilofre, gyngure, and gromylyoun, / And pyons" (43-44) which fill the air with the pleasant fragrance, the "fayr reflayr" (46). The resemblance between the two poems goes deeper than flowers and scent, however. The issue of that life which comes from death is central in both poems. Most Middle English gardens are spring gardens, with May blossoms predominating. Chaucer's works are filled with gardens. For instance, in the Knight's Tale, Palamon and Arcite see Emelye in a garden; in the Merchant's Tale, Januarie constructs an elaborate garden, the "iconographic realization of the paradise on earth he hopes to achieve in marriage"; in the Franklin's Tale, Dorigen keeps her appointment with Aureliius in a garden.20 Robertson states:

... all of these gardens carry, with individual variations, the connotations of the garden described by Guillaume de Lorris [the garden of Deduit in the Roman de la Rose], and these connotations were made possible by a
combination of signs developed in scriptural exegesis and figurative devices borrowed from the classics.  

These Chaucerian gardens are "full of the atmosphere of May"; in Phoenix, however, as in Pearl, the garden is an autumn one, placing emphasis upon the death from which life will spring.  

In the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix, the image of harvest, of reaping-time, precipitates a reminder that from the seed of the dead plant comes life for the next season.

eorla eadwela of þam waestmum sceal
þurh cornes gecynzd eft alaedan
saed onsawen þe aer claene bid-
on Lentenne ðonne sumnan glaem
weceþ woruldgestreon lifes tacen
þurh agne gecynzd þæt þa waestmas beoc
foldan fraetwe (250–257) eft acende

From those fruits the wealth of men shall again spring forth by the nature of the grain, which is first sown merely as a seed; then the sun’s brightness, the symbol of life, in the spring brings forth worldly treasure, so that the fruits, the rich produce of the earth, are born again by their own nature. (Gordon)

Critics have noted that the garden in Pearl is not the usual medieval garden of spring. They have not noted its resemblance to the garden in the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix. Like the garden of The Phoenix, the garden in Pearl is an autumn garden. The narrator specifies that he enters the garden at harvest-time, in "Augoste . . . / Quen corne is coruen wyth crokeȝ kene" (39–40). He dwells upon the cycle of nature which must by its very cyclical nature include the harvest.

Flor and fryte may not be fede
Þer hit doun drof in moldeȝ dunne,
For vch gresse mot grow of grayne3 dede;
No whete were elle3 to wone3 wonne.
Of goud vche goudi is ay bygonne; (29-33)

The "molde3 dunne" into which the seeds fall recall the "clot" with which his precious pearl is covered, all three words deriving from Anglo-Saxon "molde," "dunn," and "clott," and connoting a dingy brown earthen lump or mass, cheerless and smothering.23 Yet by their very nature the grains harvested from the dead plants engender life, and each seed must bring forth life of its own kind. From good seed one gets good new plants and hence good fruit. Similarly, bad seed engenders bad fruit.

Here one must ponder a possible play on words. Gordon in his glossary states "wone3" is derived from Anglo-Saxon wunian, a verb meaning "to inhabit."24 Hence the word may easily mean "dwelling" or, as Vantuono translates it, "barns."25 The word is a common one in Middle English and seems to have a variety of possible meanings, although the OED declares, "The allocation of meaning in particular instances is often doubtful."26 The word has a homophone in Anglo-Saxon, however; wones is also one spelling for wohnes, or "wrong, error, wickedness."27 Anglo-Saxon woh was "perversity, iniquity, depravity."28 With his use of "wone3" the poet might well have been reinforcing the meaning of the passage and, in a sense, of the whole poem.29 Wheat is "good seed," the very staff of life. It by its very nature cannot produce evil, or wickedness, or perversity, for its every natural inclination is toward good, toward the production of more wheat; "no whete were elle3 to wone3 wonne" (32). Good seed must bring forth life of its own kind; it cannot bring forth the bad seed of "perversity, iniquity, depravity." Since this is true in nature,
the narrator draws what comfort he may from the thought that from his "precios perle wythouten spotte" (36) must spring forth something of equal beauty, equal worth, equal perfection. The accuracy of this logical extension of the laws of nature will be made manifest within his dream vision.

From her first speech, the maiden functions as peace-weaver between her former earthly lord and her new heavenly Lord. In this capacity she makes her position clear; she wishes to direct the narrator's thoughts away from "raysoun bre" (268), transient things, things of this earth, and toward more enduring values. She translates into heavenly terms the analogy used earlier in the poem, wherein the narrator commented, "Of goud vche goude is ay bygonne" (33). The earlier commentary upon the cycle of nature reminded the reader that flowers and fruit reproduce their own kind when dropped upon fertile ground; wheat reproduces wheat from the "grayne dede" (31). In heavenly terms, however, the analogy is extended so that what is produced in the transformation from death to life is not equal but better. The rose, that most fragile of flowers, must fade and die "as kynde hyt gef" (270); but the heavenly equation transforms it not into another rose, the equal of the earthly one, but into something better, the "perle of prys" (272) of eternal life, of salvation. We have seen that Spearing considers Cleanness a poem concerned with the reordering of a proper hierarchy; this poem also can be viewed as a problem of hierarchy. The maiden must convince the narrator that, in the proper hierarchy of things, a "perle of prys" is of higher value than a rose; salvation is of higher value than earthly, transient life. At least one
critic sees her role in this debate, however, as a violation of the natural hierarchy. I maintain that the maiden is not only within the bounds of her natural hierarchy but also in fact is fulfilling one of her duties within that hierarchy. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, one of the duties of woman was to serve as wise counselor and advisor to her male superior within the social structure. This the maiden consistently does throughout the poem.

The tradition of woman as wise counselor is an ancient and honored one within Germanic culture. As early as the first century, Tacitus, writing about the Germanic tribes, recognized the extreme respect paid to woman in the role of counselor in the society of the comitatus.

Inesse quin etiam sanctum aliquid et providum putant, nec aut consilia earum aspernantur aut responsa neglegunt.

Further, they conceive that in woman is a certain uncanny and prophetic sense; they neither scorn to consult them nor slight their answers.

Woman was clearly subordinate to her lord in Anglo-Saxon society, yet she could and did serve as wise counselor to him. In Beowulf, at the banquet following the defeat of Grendel, Wealhtheow quietly reminds Hrothgar of his duty to his blood kin, his sons. At the same time, she reminds Hrothulf, Hrothgar's nephew, of his duty to his lord in the
duged.
hwaet wit to willan ond to wæremyndyn
umborwesendum aer arna gefremedon.

It has been said to me that thou wouldst have this warrior as a son. The radiant ring-hall Heorot is cleansed. Dispense, while thou mayst, many gifts; and leave the people and the realm to thy descendants, when thou shalt pass away to meet thy appointed fate. I know my gracious Hrothulf, that he will honourably entreat our children, if thou, lord of the Scyldings, leavest the world sooner than he. I trust that he will faithfully requite our sons, if he is mindful of all the honour which in the past we both conferred on him for his pleasure and advancement while he was yet a child.

Wealhtheow, a woman of dignity and grace who would never violate her duty to her lord, considers it well within her realm of responsibility to utter a word of caution to her king who, in his enthusiasm for the hero Beowulf who has vanquished the monster, might compromise the inheritance of his own sons by adopting Beowulf as a son. Her words, spoken in public, also serve as a reminder to Hrothulf that he owes a great debt to his uncle, a debt for care given when Hrothulf was a child, which by the rules of the society would require similar loving care from him, should his young cousins need protection. The speech bears an ironic prophetic tone, for elsewhere in the text there is indication that Hrothulf will not honor his debt when the time comes. Hrothgar does not consider his queen's speech as inappropriate or forward, for he does not rebuke her, and she continues to serve as hostess at the banquet, dispensing mead and gifts. Since Beowulf does not succeed him when he dies, we must assume Hrothgar heeds the words of his wise counselor.

Like Wealhtheow, the pearl-maiden feels an obligation to utter words of warning. She might have been a docile, obedient child on earth, and she always speaks respectfully to the narrator, but she must say what she
can to warn him when she sees his salvation threatened because his priorities are in a state of disorder. In this passage, the poet uses terms which fleetingly remind one of the Anglo-Saxon heritage. The narrator complains that "wyrde" (249) has been unkind to him in sending his jewel to this far-off place. Compared to the loss of his pearl, no other loss is significant.

Now rech I neuer for to declyne,  
Ne how fer of folde pat man me fleme. (333-334)

"Fer of folde" is an allusion to exile, and exile was the worst fate a loyal thegn could suffer. The narrator does not care if he is exiled; the maiden, however, is not concerned with earthly exile. She redoubles her efforts to convince the narrator that exile from the heavenly Lord is the unthinkable exile, one to be avoided at all costs. The narrator continues to complain that his life is "hente ofte harme3 hate" (388). The idea of "hot sorrows" recalls another traditional Anglo-Saxon figure of speech. As Gordon notes, sorrows are "hot" in The Seafarer, in Christ (twice), and in Guthlac. Twice within this passage in Pearl, the maiden calls God "Drysten" (324, 349), a thoroughly Anglo-Saxon title for her heavenly Lord, derived from Anglo-Saxon dryhten, which could mean earthly leader in the comitatus, a ruler, king, lord, or prince, as well as heavenly Lord. We have already seen similarities between the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix and the dreamer's earthly garden. In this passage the dreamer refers to Mary, the instrument by which God introduced the hope of resurrection to a previously hopeless world, as "Fenyx of Arraby" (430). The maiden debates with all her considerable power in an effort to convince the
dreamer, "Dou moste abyde bat he schal deme" (348), but to no avail. She tries to tell him "maysterful mod and hyȝe pryde" (401) are unacceptable in the kingdom of this Lord. "Mod" is the Anglo-Saxon word for the most grievous of sins, the one for which Lucifer fell. The poet uses the poetic technique of variation here, for the two phrases "maysterful mod" and "hyȝe pryde" are variations upon the same sin, an arrogant, overbearing pride. Still the narrator will not heed. The maiden tries, like an Anglo-Saxon scop, to illustrate her lesson with a story, the parable of the vineyard.

The parable of the vineyard, termed by Vantuono the "structural heart" as well as the "thematic heart" of the poem, contains the core of the maiden's message to the dreamer. It also contains evidence for the poet's knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition. The poet uses a monetary term not found in the Vulgate. He was undoubtedly familiar with the Vulgate Bible; any educated person, lay or cleric, of the fourteenth century would be. He may also have been, however, familiar with the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Bible stories. In the Vulgate, the vineyard owner goes out to hire laborers for his vineyard.

Conventione autem facta cum operariis ex denario diurno inisit eos in vineam suam.

And having agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

The terminology remains consistent throughout the parable. When the last workers hired come forth for their payment, they receive singulos denarios (Mat. 20:9); the workers who had arrived early in the morning thought they would receive more, but they also receive only singulos denarios (Mat.
20:10). The owner's response to their complaints is to remind them that the original contract was *ex denario* (Mat. 20:13), "for a denarius." The Douai translation held to the Latin terminology for money. Note the Douai translation, which says the workers agreed to work for "a denarius a day." The Anglo-Saxons, however, did not retain the Latin monetary terminology, and neither did their successors in the Middle English Bible tradition. In the Anglo-Saxon Gospels, the workers contracted for *aene penig* a day (West Saxon dialect), or *of penning* (Northumbrian dialect). The Anglo-Saxon translators were as consistent as their predecessors in the use of monetary terminology. The last workers hired receive *suindrigo penningas* (Mat. 20:9); the workers who had arrived earlier also receive *syndrigo penningas* (Mat. 20:10). The vineyard owner reminds them of the terms of the contract—they agreed to work for *penning* (Mat. 20:13). Variations exist in the various Anglo-Saxon dialects; the early West Saxon Corpus MS spells it *anum peninge*, and the later West Saxon Hatton MS spells it *aenne panig*, while the Northumbrian Lindisfarne MS spells it *penning*. All of these spellings are closer to the monetary term used by the Pearl-poet than *denarius*. In *Pearl*, the vineyard owner hires his first laborers "for a pene on a day" (510). He orders his "reue" to "set hem alle vpon a rawe, / And gyf vch on inlyche a peny" (545-546). The poet elaborates considerably the complaints of the first workers, and the vineyard owner reminds them,

I hyred pe for a peny, agrete,
Quy bygynne pou now to prete?
Wat not a pene pyt couenaunt bore? (560-562)
Ackerman has pointed out, and no one would disagree with him, that the maiden uses the penny in the parable of the vineyard as symbolic of the gift of salvation. He uses, however, the term found in the Anglo-Saxon Bible tradition rather than that found in the Vulgate. The Pepysian Gospel Harmony does consistently use the word "penys" as monetary terminology, but it does not contain a complete version of the parable of the vineyard; it alludes to the parable briefly but does not mention specific monetary terms: "And he paied hem þat comen late raper, & als mykel þaf hem as hem þat comen furst." The Cursor Mundi also consistently utilizes the Anglo-Saxon monetary terminology rather than the Latin. When Joseph's brothers arrive in Egypt, they have with them "al redi penijs for to tell." The word is not an unusual one in the language of the fourteenth century; in fact, its references fill four pages of the Middle English Dictionary. Its use in Cleanness, however, does represent a continuation of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Bible stories as evidenced in the Anglo-Saxon Gospels and the Cursor Mundi rather than the Vulgate tradition as evidenced in the Douai translation.

The poet uses other words in this passage which indicate his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon tradition and his desire in the treatment of the poem to call forth his heritage. When the vineyard owner calls his steward to pay the workers, he calls not his pro-curatori but his "reue," a word derived from the Anglo-Saxon gerefan or girofæ (West Saxon and Northumbrian, respectively, Skeat pp. 160-161). The owner summons the reeve by calling, "Lede, pay þe meyny" (542). "Lede" is a word which connotes the days of the comitatus; the word derives from Anglo-Saxon
lead, a "fellow-countryman, compatriot," one who honors the laws of the
duJust. 49 He refers repeatedly not to regnum caelorum, "kingdom of
heaven," but to "Godes ryche" (601), the kingdom of God almost exactly as
it is spelled throughout the Anglo-Saxon Gospels. 50 The maiden is a
"wyge" (493), and an innocent person is a "harmleJ habel" (676), terms
scarcely changed from the Anglo-Saxon wiht and aepel. 51 The entire
debate is, in a sense, an effort to define "Godde3 ry3t" (591). This word,
also, is almost unchanged from the Anglo-Saxon. Riht meant for the
Anglo-Saxons as it does for the Pearl-poet "equity, justice, law,
correctness." Horgan examines the words "trawbe, ry3t," and "cortaye" in
conjunction with their Hebrew counterparts, sedeq, 'emet, and hesed. 52 The
key to meaning, however, is closer to the poet's own time and country.
The Anglo-Saxon Gospels contain terms which connote the comitatus as
metaphor for the relationship between God and man. Angels, for instance,
are begnas, obedient members of God's comitatus. Pearl also contains
terms reminiscent of the comitatus. The dreamer in Pearl debates what is
necessary to enter "Gode3 ryche" (601), and the maiden argues that
duration of membership is not the deciding factor. A person must submit
to "Gode3 ry3t" (591) and become a loyal member of the band of the
faithful. Whether old or young at death,

The ry3twys man also sertayn
Aproche he schal pat proper pyle— (685-686)

The corresponding passage in the Vulgate calls him justi; the Anglo-Saxon
Gospels call him rihtwisian (Mat. 25:46). Only the righteous, regardless of
age, shall see "Gode3 ryche."
Following her recounting of the parable of the vineyard, the maiden continues her exhortation to the dreamer to renounce his concern with earthly jewels, to "forsake þe worlde wode / And porchace þy perle maskelles" (743-744), the pearl of salvation. She uses graphic imagery to remind the dreamer that Christ purchased salvation for all mankind, and he paid a much higher price than is demanded of ordinary mortals. He was "rent on rode wyth boye bolde" (806). Earlier she spoke of blood running down the cross: "Ryche blod ran on rode so roghe" (646). The image becomes that of a river of gore.

Innoghe þer wax out of þat welle,
Blod and water of brode wounde,
Þe blod vus boȝt fro bale of helle,
And delyuered vus of þe deth secounde. (649-652)

The effect is not unlike that of another dream vision, *Dream of the Rood*, in which as the dreamer watches the cross, he sees "þaet hit aerest organ / swaetan on þa swidran healfe," "that it had straightway begun to bleed on the right side." Later in this Anglo-Saxon poem, the cross speaks:
"Eall ic waes mid blode bestemde, / begoten of þaes guman sidan" (48-49), "I was all suffused with blood, covered with this from the Man's side."

The pearl-maiden is not content with evoking the image of blood; she continues with reminders of the degradation as well as torture of his death. "Wyth boffeteȝ watȝ hys face flayn" (809). He allowed himself to be "flyȝe and folde, / And brede vpon a bostwys bem" (813-814). It is the concentration upon Christ's sacrifice that finally sways the dreamer and effects a psychological turning point.

This psychological turning point comes in lines 901-912, the stanza
labeled by some as accidental, a mistake. In this stanza which Moorman declared "spurious" and Gordon "otiose," the dreamer begins to leave behind him arrogance and defiance. He begins to "appose" (902) or inquire. He no longer questions a child's right to enter the circle of the blessed, but acknowledges the maiden's "wyf so wlonk" (903). Most important, he turns his attention away from earthly values and toward higher ones. He admits he is "bot mokke and mul among" (905), two terms derived from Anglo-Saxon. "Mokke" derives from Anglo-Saxon moc, a word meaning "filth" and associated with hlose, a pigsty; "mul" derives from myl, or "dust."54 The dreamer has previously referred to "clot" or clay in a derogatory manner as that which covers his precious pearl. The pearl that he had lost was "clad in clot" (22). The earthly jewel was of higher value to him then, and the clay was an enemy. Now his own earthly body is merely dust, because he begins to perceive the kingdom of God, the life after this life, as of higher value. He begins to value not the earthly pearl, but the "perle of prys" of salvation. The clay of his body, the "mokke and mul," is an impediment, but not one that hinders his earthly pleasure; it is now a barrier between him and eternal joy. The poet uses another image he has used before, but with a similar alteration in meaning from earthly to heavenly. Earlier the maiden remonstrated the dreamer, "For pat pou lestë3 wat3 bot a rose" (269), and the rose was obviously a symbol for a transient thing, something which has a brief life of beauty but which must fade quickly and die. In this crucial stanza, the dreamer calls the maiden "so rych e a rek en rose" (906). In this instance the rose, as Vantuono has noted, is "the immortal flower of heaven," a
thing of eternal beauty, symbolic of Mary. The dreamer's body is now the transient thing, the "mokke and mul," and the rose is not transient but is the prized, valued beauty of eternity. In this stanza the dreamer calls the maiden "hynde" (909), which Vantuono translates as "gracious damsel" and Gordon glosses "gracious one." The dreamer may be suggesting, however, the "hyndenna" discussed previously. He no longer challenges her right, as an infant who had not had time to amass a long list of good works, to be where she is. He acknowledges in this stanza her membership in God's comitatus, her place among the blessed in "Godeȝ rych." At last he is ready to put aside his anger, his arrogance, his pride, his disbelief, and adopt a tone of humility. It is here, at the end of stanza 76, that the dreamer reaches the climactic psychological moment when he asks for help. He is no longer making demands, challenging, arguing—he admits his human frailty and makes a request.

And þag I be bustwys, as a blose,
Let my bone vayl, neuerpelese. (911-912)

In succeeding stanzas, the poet will reinforce the dreamer's change of heart by once more using images from the earthly garden, but this time with heavenly connotations. It is significant that the poet returns to garden imagery at this point, for the pearl-maiden's message is remarkably similar to that in the garden of the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix. The dreamer refers to the maiden as "þat specyal spyce" (938); aromatic spices, we remember, perfumed that earthly garden at the beginning of the poem. The maiden has become not an object for his earthly enjoyment but a "lufully flor" (962) in the garden of Christ, a "specyal spyce." In the
Anglo-Saxon poem, the phoenix perishes in its fiery nest of aromatic woods.

Hwaépre eft cymed-wundrum to life.  
Forþon he drusende dæa– ne bisorgæþ,  
sare swyltcwale, þe him symle wat  
aefter ligbraece lif edniwe,  
fœorh æfter fylle, þonne fromlice  
þurh briddes had gebreadad wæorðed  
eft of ascan, edgeong wesed–  
under swegles hleo. (366-374)

Yet, strangely stirred, it returns wondrously to life. Wherefore, it reeks not of languishing death, the sore torment of dying, for it knows that after the stress of the fire new life, existence after death, is always its portion, when quickly it is transformed in shape of a bird, grows young again once more from the ashes under the sheltering sky. (Gordon)

The Anglo-Saxon poet makes his message clear.

Swa þæt ece lif eadigra gehwylc  
aefter sarwraece sylf geceoseð  
þurh deorcne dæð; þæt he dryhtnes mot  
aefter geardagum geofona neotan  
on sindreamum ond sibþan a  
wunian in wuldre weorcæ to leane. (381-386)

Thus each of the blessed makes choice for himself through dark death of eternal life after tribulation, so that after his lifetime he may enjoy God's grace in lasting joys; and ever afterwards as reward for his deeds dwell in that world. (Gordon)

The pearl-maiden has demonstrated that "þæt innocent is ay saf by ryt" (720), but the person who does not enter "Godeþ ryche" as a child has a choice to make, and she has finally brought the dreamer to a point where he is ready to make that choice. Throughout the poem the maiden has tried to convince the dreamer of his error in clinging to his own
self-will. Early, she remonstrated, "Delou moste abyde þat he schal deme" (348). He must submit to the will of God if he is to be granted salvation. He has reached a mental turning point, and she rewards him with a view of the New Jerusalem.

Just as rank was important in Cleanness when the guests were seated at the wedding feast, rank is important in the New Jerusalem, and the poet uses an Anglo-Saxon term to denote the members of God's comitatus. The maiden has made it clear that all are queens in Christ's kingdom, yet in the processional of this vision, rank is evident. Some are more equal than others. As Fisher, Gordon, and Vantuono, have pointed out, "there are ranks in heaven." Clearly, Christ is King; in the procession of the blessed, "pe Lombe byfore con proudly passe" (1110). Christ is the leader of the heavenly comitatus, and his trusted older retainers are nearby: "pise aldermen, quen he aproched, / Grouelyng to his fete þay felle" (1119-1120). Christ is first in rank, and his "aldermen," a good Anglo-Saxon term, gather around to pay him homage.

The dreamer has changed. His vision of the New Jerusalem completes his metamorphosis from earth-centered doubter to one who acknowledges vulnerability to God's will. This transformation is evident not just in what he says but in the way the poet, using animal imagery, describes him. The dreamer is no longer the predatory hawk that he was when he first saw the maiden; he stands "as styyle as dased quayle" (1085), evoking an image of a frightened, wounded bird, one who is not attacking and taking the initiative but is lying still, waiting upon the will of a superior power to decide its fate. The dreamer's paralysis is short-lived,
however; in his eagerness to join the celestial band, he attempts to ford the stream, violating the maiden's express command not to. Before she would grant him a vision of the New Jerusalem, she cautioned him:

Vtywyth to se þat clene cloystor
þou may, bot inwyth, not a fote. (969-970)

The penalty for disobedience of the lord in the comitatus is exile. In Pearl the dreamer, upon disobeying, is exiled from the New Jerusalem and from the sight of his pearl-maiden by a very rude awakening. He is transformed, however, by his vision, and in his newly awakened state, awakened both physically and morally, he vows fealty to the Lord. He is ready to submit his will to that of God, to accept his pearl-maiden's spouse as "A God, a Lorde, a Frende ful fyin" (1204). Each noun denotes a slightly different aspect of the relationship. "A God" is a being he can worship. "A Lorde" in the sense of the comitatus is the authority figure who is in control, the one to whom the dreamer vows unquestioning obedience and loyalty. "A Frende ful fyin" sounds more like what a modern man would call an equal, but the term is not incompatible with the lord/thegn relationship in the comitatus, nor is it incompatible with the Christ/man relationship.58 In the Anglo-Saxon poem, The Wanderer, the narrator grieves for the lost days of camaraderie in the mead hall.

Þinceþ him on mode þæt he his mon-dryhten
clyppe and cyssë and on cneo lecgë
honda and heafod swa he hwilum æg
in geardagum gieftoles breac.59

It seems to him in his mind that he clasps and kisses his lord and lays hands and head on his knee, as when erstwhile in past days he was near the gift-throne. (Gordon)
Although he was gold-friend and treasure-giver and supreme authority within the group, the lord of the comitatus was neither unapproachable nor untouchable. Similarly, in the Anglo-Saxon Gospels, Christ says, "Ic tealde eow to freonden forpan ic kydde eow ealle þa þing þe ic gehyrde aet minen faeder," "But I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (Douai-Challonier).60

The pearl-maiden has been successful in her role as peace-weaver; the dreamer has elected to honor and serve his Lord. The concept of peace-weaver was a multi-faceted one in Anglo-Saxon literature, but it is the Christian context which concerns the Pearl-poet. The maiden upon her death became a bride of the Lamb, and she must serve as peace-weaver between her former earthly lord and her new heavenly Lord. She preaches submission to the will of God. "Þou moste abyde þat he schal deme" (348). Unlike Hildeburh and Juliana, the pearl-maiden succeeds in her efforts at reconciliation, bringing to her former earthly lord peace in an other-worldly sense.
Notes to Chapter 4

1 Jane Chance, *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature*, p. 24 in manuscript of a book to be published by Syracuse University Press in fall of 1985. I am indebted to Dr. Chance for allowing me access to this work prior to publication.


5 Medary considers the *Pearl*-poet a pioneer in setting forth systematic rules for "linking by word-echo, linking by repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive stanzas, and the omission of linking when a stanza begins with a proper name." See Margaret P. Medary, "Stanza-Linking in Middle English Prose," *Romanic Review*, 7 (1916), 270. Arthur C.L. Brown, however, finds him not an innovator so much as a follower of Irish and Welsh models. See Arthur C.L. Brown, "On the Origin of Stanza-Linking in English Alliterative Verse," *Romanic*
Review, 7 (1916), 271-283. Cosling and Scattergood go even further than Medary, declaring the poem's only break in linking (at line 721) not only permissible by the rules of concatenation but "deliberate." They see the break in linking not as "textual corruption" or scribal error but as "intended to function as a pointer to a shift in the argument of the poem." See Dennis Cosling and V.J. Scattergood, "One Aspect of Stanza Linking," Neophilologische Mittelungen, 75 (1974), 79-91. Quotations are from pp. 88-89. They do not, however, investigate the nature of the shift, as I shall in this chapter. Since the poem is so highly regular, critics have argued whether the number of stanzas is deliberate or accidental. Osgood was quite sure the poet intended one hundred stanzas, and a "cancelled stanza has been accidentally included." See Charles G. Osgood, ed., The Pearl: A Middle English Poem (Boston: Heath, 1906), p. xlvi. Oakden suggests the poet "probably intended" only one hundred stanzas rather than the 101 which remain to us. See Oakden, vol. I, p. 236.

Gardner, like Oakden, believes "ten times ten is the number probably intended." See John Gardner, trans. The Complete Works of the Gawain-Poet in a Modern English Version (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 21. The number of stanzas, 101, occurs because the fifteenth group of stanzas contains six stanzas, rather than the usual five, using the same linking word. Moorman declares one stanza within this group, either 72 or 76, "is either spurious or was not canceled by the poet." See Charles Moorman, The Pearl-Poet (New York: Twayne, 1968), p. 50. In his definitive edition of the poem, Gordon declares stanza 76 "more likely to be the otiose one," advancing neither the narrative nor the
argument. See E.V. Gordon, ed., *Pearl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 88. Adam, on the other hand, following a close examination of stanza 76, finds that it is "at least as carefully crafted" as other stanzas in the poem; in fact, it "very nearly approaches the prosodic ideal." See Katherine L. Adam, *The Anomalous Stanza of "Pearl": Does it Disclose a Six-hundred-year-old Secret?*, Medieval series, 1 (Fayetteville, Arkansas: Monograph Publishers, 1976), p. 6. Fleming also argues for the poet's deliberate inclusion of the "extra" stanza; he sees the total number of stanzas, 101, as a number of "religious consolation." See John V. Fleming, "The Centuple Structure of the Pearl," in *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1981), pp. 81-98. I have argued elsewhere that the so-called "extra" stanza is deliberately placed at the point where the narrator undergoes a psychological turning from arrogance to humility, from defiance to acceptance: Barbara Huval, "Linking Words as Layers in *The Pearl*," paper delivered March, 1982, at Mid-America Medieval Association, Little Rock, Arkansas.

finds it, in part at least, like Patience and Cleanness, a "verse
paraphrase." See P.M. Kean, "The Pearl": An Interpretation (London:
Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 6. Davenport sees the maiden as "the
Dreamer's alter ego, combining a number of different aspects of the
of the dream proper as based upon the division of the soul into three
faculties: memory, intelligence, and will. See Louis Blenkner, O.S.B., "The
Theological Structure of Pearl," in The Middle English Pearl: Critical
Essays, ed. John Conley (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,
1970), pp. 220-271. Robertson uses the four-level approach to
interpretation. According to this approach, literally the pearl is a gem.
Allegorically, as the maiden, the pearl represents those members of the
Church who will be among the "hundred" in the celestial procession, the
perfectly innocent. Tropologically, the pearl is a symbol of the soul that
attains innocence through penance. Anagogically, the pearl represents the
life of innocence in the Celestial City. See D.W. Robertson, Jr., "The
Pearl as a Symbol," in The Middle English Pearl: Critical Essays, ed. John

7 Blanch and Stern explore gemological imagery. See Robert J.
Blanch, "Precious Metal and Gem Symbolism in Pearl," in "Sir Gawain" and
"Pearl": Critical Essays, ed. Robert J. Blanch (Bloomington, Indiana:
Approach to The Pearl," in The Middle English Pearl: Critical Essays, ed.
John Conley (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970),
pp. 73-85. Johnson examines three major sets of images, those involving
vegetation, the city, and water. See Wendell Stacy Johnson, "Imagery and
Diction of The Pearl," in Middle English Survey: Critical Essays, ed.
Edward Vasta (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1965),
pp. 93-116. Other specialized approaches have involved identifying the
author or identifying the person in honor of whom the poem was written.
One early theory, now refuted, involved the Scottish poet Huchown. See
H.N. MacCracken, "Concerning Huchown," PMLA, 25 (1910), 507-534 for a
complete review of the controversy and his refutation. Gullancz in 1891
argued for Ralph Strode, but admitted in 1921 that this theory was "mere
conjecture." See introduction to Israel Gollancz, ed., Pearl: An English
Poem of the Fourteenth Century, with a modern rendering (London: Nutt,
1891), and 1921 edition (London: Chatto and Windus), p. xlix. Adam, based
upon an acrostic in stanza 76, concludes, "John (de) Massi has himself
signed his masterpiece." See Adam, p. 13. Vantuono, aware that several
John de Mascies lived in England in the late fourteenth century, opts for
John de Macey of Sale, rector of Ashton-on-Mersey in Cheshire between
1364 and 1401, as author of the poems. See William Vantuono, ed., The
York: Garland, 1984), p. xxiii. Because the poet sometimes used the word
"margarita" for pearl, Oakden, placing the poems near Clitheroe Castle,
surmised that the poem may have been written following the death of
Margaret Hastings, niece of John of Gaunt, who owned Clitheroe for a
time. See Oakden, vol. I, p. 258. Gordon, however, disagrees with this
theory. See Gordon, p. xliii.
8 Kean, p. 7.

9 Middle English Dictionary, volume H, page 790. See also Vantuono, volume 1, page 248; and Gordon, page 64, note to line 505.

10 Clark-Hall, Dictionary, p. 184.


15 Kean, p. 35.

16 Spearing, The Gawain-Poet, p. 121.

17 Medieval literature is, of course, rich in garden iconography. For other comparisons to other paradises, see Vantuono, volume 1, page 223, note to line 67.

London: Dent, 1954). This passage is from p. 240. Subsequent translations from this edition will be acknowledged within the text.

19 E.V. Gordon, ed., _Pearl_ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 2, l. 42. Subsequent references to _Pearl_ will be from this edition, by line number within the text. See also Gordon's note to lines 43-44, page 48, for discussion of the spices in the garden. Gollancz has compared parts of the garden in _Pearl_ to the garden in the _Roman de la Rose_.


21 Robertson, p. 388. Robertson discusses Chaucer's gardens on pages 386-388.

22 Quotation is from Robertson, p. 387.


25 Vantuono, volume 1, page 11. See note on page 219 for remarks concerning parallel passage in _Piers Plowman_ C-text. Both poets, as Gordon and Vantuono both point out, are paraphrasing John 12:24-25. Vantuono also notes a relevant passage in _Corinthians_.


28 Clark-Hall, _Dictionary_, p. 417. The Anglo-Saxon sequence _hn_ simplified to _n_ (Anglo-Saxon _hnutu_ became Middle English _nute_), and the
long o sound remained, so the sound changes involved in wohnes would be within the range of those accepted as normal. See Thomas Pyles and John Algeo, The Origins and Development of the English Language, third edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1982), pages 146-147.

29 See Vantuono note, page 242, for a comment on a similar possible double-entendre regarding line 415 to brede, derived from Anglo-Saxon bredan or Anglo-Saxon braedan. Vantuono does not mention that, if the poet knew he was creating a double-entendre, he must have known Anglo-Saxon or must have had available to him in the vernacular words of similar double meaning which have not come down to us in manuscript.

30 The maiden is, of course, a multi-dimensional figure and should not be simplified. She can be compared to Philosophy serving as wise guide to Boethius; more obviously in view of the death-and-resurrection theme and the later vision of the New Jerusalem, she can be compared to Mary, a liaison between the earthly and heavenly world. The dreamer's description of her is precise and physical, and it contains many of the conventions associated with the courtly love heroine. See Gordon, page 56, for discussion of her dress; also Vantuono, volume 1, page 230 ff.

31 Kean notes Aelfric's use of the rose as symbolic of "transitory beauty" and "even for 'the lust of the world (voluptas mundi)"' in his Homily on the Assumption of St. John. See Kean, p. 62.


33 See Edward Wilson, The Gawain-Poet, Medieval and Renaissance Authors Series (Leiden: Brill, 1976), p. 4 ff. Wilson sees the medieval play,
Abraham and Isaac, as an analogue to Pearl. Isaac is the ideal son, obedient literally to the death if necessary. Pearl, in contrast, lectures her father (if indeed she is his daughter, which critics have debated), thereby refusing to be passive and obedient and, unlike Isaac, reversing the authority hierarchy. She gives spiritual referends to his earthly words, thus turning his thoughts toward spiritual matters. Wilson states, "The father must be obedient to his child, now his superior in spiritual wisdom" (page 6).


36 John R. Clark Hall, trans., Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment: A Translation into Modern English Prose (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1950), pp. 79-80. Subsequent references to this translation will be within the text.

37 Vantuono notes, voii. 1, p. 237, this allusion, as do Andrew and Waldron before him.

38 See Gordon, p. 60.

39 Clark-Hall, Dictionary, p. 89.

40 Vantuono, volume 1, p. 243.

41 Vantuono, volume 1, p. xxxvii.

42 All Biblical quotations in Latin will be from Biblia Sacra: Vulgatae
Editionis, 2nd edition (Marietti: S. Sedis Apostolicae Typographi Ac Editores, 1965). This quotation is from Matthew 20:2. Subsequent citations will appear within the text.

43 The Holy Bible, Douay-Challoner translation (Chicago: Catholic Press, Inc., 1950). Translations from the Vulgate will be from this translation. Subsequent citations will appear within the text.


The Anglo-Saxon Gospels remain to us in several manuscripts exhibiting several dialects. Most Anglo-Saxon literature extant survives in the West Saxon dialect, but the gospels provide reliable information on some of the other dialects; the Rushworth gloss is in Old Mercian, and the Lindisfarne gloss is in Northumbrian. The Northwest Midland dialect of the Pearl-poet derived from the Northumbrian dialect, so the Lindisfarne gloss would have borne an especially close resemblance to the poet's native tongue.


46 The Pepysian Gospel Harmony, ed. Margery Goates, EETS OS 157
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 62. This Middle English Gospel was written around 1400; a note on page 370 of the volume indicates it was written "when k henry the. 4. had busines agayst the welshmen."

See page xii.


50 See Skeat, Anglo-Saxon Gospels, p. 44 et passim.

51 Gordon, pp. 162, 135.


53 George Philip Krapp, The Vercelli Book, volume II of the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 61, ll. 19-20. Subsequent references to this volume will be by line number within the text.


55 See Vantuono, volume 1, pp. 271, 273. Jung explores the archetypal associations of the rose. "Certain of the ecclesiastical symbols prove to be acutely dualistic, and this is also true of the rose. Above all it is an allegory of Mary and of various virtues. Its perfume is the odour of sanctity, as in the case of St. Elizabeth and St. Teresa." See C.G. Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis volume 14 in The Collected Works of C.G.


57 Chapman calls this simile a "Virgilian mannerism" (p. 20) and finds thirty-two similes in Pearl. See C.O. Chapman, "Virgil and the Gawain-Poet," PMLA, 60 (1945), 16-23.

58 For God as friend in the Bible, see Vantuono, volume 1, page 285, note to line 1204.

59 The Exeter Book, p. 135, ll. 41-44.

Chapter 5

Lexical Reflections of Beowulf in

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

The lord/thane motif present in the first three poems of Cotton Nero Ax is even more pervasive in the fourth, but Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is not quite like any of the other three poems in the manuscript. It contains none of the overtly biblical material of Patience and Cleaness, and its biblical allusions are more subtle than those of Pearl; it is a romance, done in stanzas of varying length, with Gawain as an earthly knight and Arthur as an earthly lord. In spite of its romance form and its surface connections with the courtly ethos, however, affinities with Anglo-Saxon literature do exist, specifically affinities with Beowulf, whose hero is the supreme thane within the world of the comitatus. Like Beowulf, Gawain encounters and vanquishes "minor" adversaries before facing his supreme challenge, thereby proving to the reader (and to himself, perhaps) that he is equal to any task. The two heroes are different in that Gawain's ultimate test is to submit passively to a return blow, whereas Beowulf's task is always an active one, to slay a monster. Like Beowulf, Gawain is devoted in the extreme to his uncle, and the emphasis upon the avuncular relationship lends epic overtones to the poem. Gawain, like Beowulf, is a good thane, journeying to a place where the water boils, journeying into what seems to be certain death, in order to keep his word and uphold the honor of his lord. The poet uses words
from the traditional alliterative "word-hoard," like "douth," to evoke an aura of the past; but he also uses new words, sometimes unique words, to achieve his effect. Specifically, "barlay" is unique to this poet, and "fage" appears here for the first time in Middle English. Both words acquire new connotations when examined in an Anglo-Saxon light, and both passages thereby acquire new shades of meaning. "Craþayn" and "strakande" also enhance the passages in which they appear when their Anglo-Saxon associations are considered.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight has received more critical attention than any of the other three poems in the manuscript.¹ Bloomfield reflects the prevailing view when he calls the poem "an aristocratic romance," but various interpretations have been applied to the romance.² A great deal of critical energy has gone into a search for sources.³ Gawain has been characterized as blameless and as culpable.⁴ At least one critic interprets Morgan le Fay, instigator of the plot, as having a dual personality similar to that of Bercilak/Green Knight.⁵ The identity and nature of the Green Knight have been debated.⁶ Critics have explored several aspects of the intricacies of form within the poem.⁷

In most cases implicit similarities to Anglo-Saxon literature in relation to Sir Gawain and the Green Knight go unremarked. Sidney Wade remarks that the Gawain-poet uses the device of simile "only twenty-two times in all of his 2530 lines," a paucity at odds with the Greek and Latin tradition.⁸ This sparing use of simile is entirely in keeping, I might add, with Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition. Green notes that Gawain is "somewhat less perfect than the ideal."⁹ Although Green does not specifically mention
Beowulf, the implicit comparison suggests that Gawain is far more justified in his feelings of guilt than was Beowulf, who faced the dragon after a long life of exemplary kingship.

A few critics, but only a very few, have even mentioned Anglo-Saxon literature in conjunction with Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Spearing sees no relationship to the "epic ethos of Old English poetry." Regarding the alliterative revival in general, Moorman speaks of its "emphasis on the close brotherhood of leader and thane," but he finds Sir Gawain and the Green Knight "a product of the chivalric, as opposed to the heroic, society." These are, however, merely brief comments in critical efforts bearing a different thrust. Benson has paid the most attention thus far to the poem as it relates to Anglo-Saxon literature, exploring the poet's use of variation in synonyms, syntax, and narrative structure. Cable examines meter in Sir Gawain as it relates to the Anglo-Saxon; after extensive metrical analysis, he concludes that the poem uses a contour meter similar to that of Beowulf; "in Middle English the essential firmness is in the assignment of stress according to grammatical category."

One critic, Thomas Jambeck, explores Anglo-Saxon manners as reflected in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, a feature he considers as a general literary heritage. He examines closely the scene in which Beowulf asks Hrothgar for permission to fight Grendel and the scene in which Gawain asks King Arthur for permission to accept the Green Knight's challenge. Jambeck states, "Beowulf's petition anticipates with striking similarity the contextual as well as structural features of Gawain's corresponding request to Arthur." Jambeck concludes that the
Gawain-poet has constructed a "highly effective adaptation of a literary principle which may have been defined as early as the final transcription of Beowulf."\(^{15}\)

Gawain resembles Beowulf in ways other than manners, however. The poet fashioned his hero Gawain in the epic tradition; Gawain bears striking resemblance to the best of all possible Anglo-Saxon thegns, Beowulf. The Gawain-poet, like the poet of Beowulf, emphasizes the special bonding of the avuncular relationship between young warrior and lord. In the beginning of the poem, Beowulf is a young warrior and a stranger to Hrothgar. Beowulf recounts his earlier vanquishing of sea monsters and thereby proves to Hrothgar that he is a worthy foe to Grendel. In the beginning of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Gawain is a young warrior. He is no stranger to Arthur, but he must prove his worth to himself and to the reader. Gawain's foe, like that of Beowulf, is sinister; although the Green Knight appears outwardly to be a jolly soul, he proposes a "gomen" which is a deadly challenge. Gawain's beheading of the Green Knight, although spectacular, proves only that he is capable of striking an unarmed and unresisting foe. Gawain proves to himself (and to the reader) that he is equal to the Green Knight's challenge when he journeys through the forest, encountering and vanquishing every conceivable natural and supernatural foe.

The Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon was the source dialect for the language of the Gawain-poet. The Northwest Midlands were far removed from the Old French influence of the court of William the Conqueror, so the fourteenth-century dialect of the Gawain-poet was much
nearer the Anglo-Saxon than was the fourteenth-century language of London. Probably the most complete etymological study of the poem was done in 1902 by Max Kullnick. He found and classified words originating in Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, Germanic, Old French (and ultimately in many cases Latin), and Celtic, all of which were used in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* but which were obsolete by the late nineteenth century. Of the words examined, 820 in all, Kullnick found 398 words, or 49 percent, to be derived from Anglo-Saxon; 149 words, or 17.8 percent, from Old Norse; 230 words, or 28 percent, from Old French; 38 words, or 4.6 percent, from other Germanic sources; and only 1 word positively, 5 possibly, from Celtish.\(^\text{16}\)

The poet sets up associations with an archaic past immediately, using words still nearly identical with their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, words from the world of the *comitatus*. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Troy is a "*borg*" (2), a word derived from Anglo-Saxon *burg*.\(^\text{17}\) Ennias is "*pe athel*" (5), from Anglo-Saxon *acebele*, meaning "noble, aristocratic, excellent, famous, glorious."\(^\text{18}\) Brutus is a "*burn rych*" (20), from Anglo-Saxon *rice* meaning "strong, powerful, great, mighty, of high rank," and *bearn* meaning "noble, hero, chief, prince, warrior."\(^\text{19}\)

This strong Anglo-Saxon base at first glance seems to be at odds with the subject matter of the tale, which opens in the festive atmosphere of Arthur's court at play. A closer look, however, reveals the poet's efforts to characterize Arthur's band in terms not far removed from the band of Hrothgar. Arthur's men are "*ledez of *pe best*" (38), from Anglo-Saxon *leod*, a fellow-countryman, compatriot, a term strongly
associated with the comitatus. In fact, Arthur's men are specifically called a "douth" (61), from duguet, the body of noble retainers, the unit which epitomized the reciprocal obligations of lord and thegn under the code of comitatus. We have seen how in Cleaness the poet seated the wedding guests in a special order at the wedding feast. Here, also, rank at table becomes important. Traditionally in Arthurian legend, the round table was symbolic of the unity of the brotherhood, both denoting and connoting an absence of rank among the members. In this fourteenth-century Arthurian poem, however, the members of the "douth," Arthur's noble retainers, are seated not in equality around a round table but are seated according to rank, with "pe best burne ay abof" (73). One is reminded of Hrothgar's banquet, with its head table for king, queen, and noble older retainers and its separate table for the younger warriors. In the case of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the whole court is "in her first age" (54), so distinctions are not based upon age.

From the Green Knight's first appearance, he resembles an Anglo-Saxon monster. In the midst of the festivities, "Der hales in at pe halle dor an aghlich mayster" (136). We see the Green Knight through the eyes of the poet, for he uses the first person no fewer than three times in the first stanza in which the Green Knight appears (lines 130, 140, 141). The Green Knight is "half etayn in erde I hope" (140), "half a giant on earth I believe," and the descriptive Middle English word "etayn" reminds the reader of the Anglo-Saxon word from which it derives, eoten, giant, ogre. Grendel, we recall, was eoten. The Green Knight is "on pe most on pe molde on mesure hyghe" (137). We recall that Grendel "waes mara
bonne aenig man oder" (1353), "was greater [in size] than any other man.25 Before he leaves, the Green Knight promises to Gawain a blow "as þou deles me to-day before þis douþe ryche" (397), reinforcing with the word "douþe" the image of the comitatus, the society of Hrothgar and of Beowulf. Like Grendel, in the confrontation the Green Knight is separated from a crucial part of the anatomy. In Grendel’s battle with Beowulf,

Licsar gebad
atol aeglaeca; him on eaxle weard-
syndoih sweotol, seonowe onsprungon,
burston banlocan. (815-818)

The horrible monster suffered deadly hurt, on his shoulder gaped a mighty wound, the sinews sprang asunder—the tendons burst. (Clark-Hall)

An equally gory scene occurs when Gawain meets the Green Knight’s challenge and "smoþely hatz smyten" (407) the Green Knight.

Dat þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones,
And schrank þur þe schyire grece, and schade hit in twynne,
Dat þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde.
 þe fayre hede fro þe halce hit to þe erþe,
Dat fele hit foyned wyth her fete, þere hit forth roled;
 þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe grene;
(424-429)

Although Grendel and the Green Knight are each separated from a crucial portion of the anatomy (Grendel loses an arm, and the Green Knight literally loses his head), there is a big difference in the nature of what is left behind. Grendel fled the scene leaving behind an arm, and blood gushed from his gaping wound. The Green Knight, just as he "halles in," now "halled out at þe hal dor, his hed in his hande" (458). He departs with his head in his hands, and "þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe
grene" (429). Beowulf took the severed arm and displayed it as trophy in Hrothgar's hall.

\[ \text{ňæt waes tacen sweotol,} \\
\text{sysdæn hildedæor} \quad \text{hond alegde,} \\
\text{earm ond eaxle} \quad \text{þær waes eal geador} \\
\text{Grendles grape—} \quad \text{under geapne hr(ow).} \quad (833-836) \]

That was clear evidence, when the brave warrior placed under the spacious roof the hand, the arm and shoulder—there was all of Grendel's grasp complete. (Clark-Hall)

Gawain does not have the severed head as trophy—the Green Knight picked it up and carried it with him. He does, however, have the axe given him as part of the "gomen." Arthur instructs his nephew in proper court etiquette following this grisly scene. "'Now sir, heng vp þyn ax, þat hatz innogh hewen!'" (477). Just as Hrothgar's warriors gazed in wonder at Grendel's arm, trophy of Beowulf's victorious battle, dripping blood upon the floor of the hall, now Arthur's knights gaze in wonder at the battle-axe, hanging above the scene, still dripping with the Green Knight's blood; and the laughter, feasting, and merriment resume as if uninterrupted.

The poet uses one word specifically associated with the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf, but his use of this word lends a note of irony to the situation. When the Green Knight taunts Arthur's knights and calls them "berdlez chyllder" (280), he demands to know where their fierceness has gone, their "gryndellayk" (312). At the climax of the tale, when Gawain loses his temper while waiting for the blow he knows must come, he shouts "gryndelly" (2299), with a ferocity suitable for the arch monster of Old English poetry, Grendel. A few moments later, the Green Knight
soothes Gawain with "Bolde burne, on pis bent be not so gryndel" (2338). No other poet of the fourteenth century so clearly equated extreme wrath with the wrath of the Anglo-Saxon monster Grendel. The Green Knight portrays Arthur's court as "gryndellayk." It is the Green Knight who uses the word two of the three times it is used, but he uses it about Arthur's court and about Gawain, perhaps in an attempt to associate them with a "monstrous" anger. Under the stress of waiting for the return blow, Gawain does exhibit extreme anger, shouting "gryndelly" to the Green Knight to get on with his task.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight contains several words of dubious origin, and one of those words, "barlay," occurs in the early confrontation scene at Arthur's court. The word may indicate one more condition in the list of conditions which the Green Knight attaches to his "gomen." When the Green Knight first offers his challenge to Arthur's court, he offers as a gift his axe, but only upon specific conditions.

I schal gif hym of my gyft pys giserne ryche,
Dis ax, pat is heue innogh, to hondele as hym lykes,
And I schal bide pe fyrst bur as bare as I sitte.
If any freke be so felle to fonde pat I telle,
Lepe lyghtly me to, and lach pis wepper,
I quit-clayme hit for euer, kepe hit as his auen,
And I schal stonde hym a strok, stif on pis flet,
Ellez pou wyl digt me pe dom to dele hym an ope
barlay, (288-296)

Davis admits confusion regarding the word "barlay" (296). He is uncertain as to definition, glossing it as "adv. (?) in my turn," with etymology "not known." The Middle English Dictionary is similarly silent as to etymology. It defines the word as an interjection "used to confirm a
pledge" and lists line 296 in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as the only example of usage.28 The word occurs in the stanza in which the Green Knight spells out clearly the terms of the exchange of blows, indicating that the Green Knight intended this word as a definite condition of his "gomen," one of the stipulations of reciprocity which compose the very substance of his challenge. Anglo-Saxon *baer*, a word still with us today almost unchanged in spelling and meaning, meant "bare, naked, open."29 The consonants *b* and *r* remained relatively stable as the language progressed from Anglo-Saxon to Middle English, and the Anglo-Saxon *æ* became *a*; Anglo-Saxon *glaed*, for example, became Middle English *glad*.30 The word *baer* implies a defenseless condition, a total vulnerability. The word appears in the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*, where Adam is concerned after his and Eve's expulsion from paradise because they are unclothed and extremely vulnerable to the forces of nature. They are at the mercy of the winds, hail, cold, and burning sun, "and wit her baru standæ, / unwered waedo," "and we two stand here naked and unclothed."31 In Middle English also, the word makes sense with a similar meaning, suggesting that the poet may have been making a play on words, with one sense of the word "barlay" as "bare, naked," implying the same total vulnerability. The Green Knight has just made a point of stating that he will himself accept the first blow with naked neck, "as bare as I sitte" (290). What more logical condition would we expect from him, given his insistence upon strict reciprocity, than a promise from the challenger that he would accept the return blow with an equally naked neck; the challenger must accept the return blow "barlay," vulnerable, with neck
unprotected. In this crucial stanza, the word in this sense could become part of the language of the legal contract which Gawain accepts.\[^{32}\]

Another in the list of problematical words is "fage" (531). Editors have read the word as "sage" and as "fage."\[^{33}\] The Anglo-Saxon concept of shifting colors, of variance, especially the second sense of quibbling, using words with a double meaning, would be completely in keeping with the Middle English sense of "no fage" used by the Gawain-poet and might aid in interpreting this troublesome passage. The word "fage" occurs, like "barlay," as the "bob" of a stanza, the short line which introduces the four-line "wheel" which concludes the stanza. The poet has just concluded his dramatic passage on the turning of the seasons during the year of Gawain's anxious wait for his return blow. The poet has taken the reader through "crabbed lentoun" (502), spring "schowrez" (506), the "sesoun of somer wyth pe soft wyndez" (516), the "hyses heruest" (521), and back again to winter.

\[
\text{And bus } \text{3}irnez pe } \text{3ere in } \text{3isterdayez mony,}
\text{And wynter wyndez agayn, as pe worlde askez,}
\text{no fage, (529-531)}
\]

Davis glosses "fage" as "deceit" and the phrase "no fage" as meaning "in truth," but of the etymology he says only, "Origin obscure."\[^{34}\] The Middle English Dictionary defines the word "fage" as "trickery or deceit through flattery," but offers no etymology.\[^{35}\] A parallel may exist in Anglo-Saxon \text{fagettan}, which meant "to change color; to quibble, use with double meaning."\[^{36}\] A form of the word \text{fag} appears eleven times in \text{Beowulf} in the sense of "variegated, decorated, shining" (lines 1038, 2671, 1459, 2701,
725, 716, 927, 1615, 2217, 305, 586). The word describes the shifting colors of a jewel-encrusted saddle, gift from Hrothgar to Beowulf in gratitude for slaying Grendel (1038). One time the word describes the colors of the treasures in the lair of Grendel's dam, "since fæge" (1615), variegated treasures. In Anglo-Saxon, "mid wordum fægettan" meant to speak evasively. 37 The entire plot of the fourteenth-century poem is predicated upon the shifting colors and shifting shape of the Green Knight. The poet has just described the variegated colors of nature with the passing of the seasons, but the cold winter of truth will come to every man, "no fæge," in truth, with no variance, no deceit, no quibbling. The agreed-upon year has passed, and Gawain must keep his word.

One word used within the hunt scenes and considered of obscure origin, "strakande," lends to the poem hints of epic valor. After the hinds have been tracked and slain, and after the extremely detailed scene in which the poet describes step by step the butchering process, the hunters depart for home.

Strakande ful stoutly mony stif motez.
Bi þat þe daylyʒt watz done þe douthe watz al wonen
Into þe comly castel, þer þe knyʒt bidez
(1364-1366)

Note the poet refers here to the band of hunters as a "douthe," lending to the scene overtones of the comitatus. Early in the poem, Arthur's men were portrayed as a "douthe"; the band of men in this passage, however, swears allegiance to Borcilak as lord, sharing his values and vowing commitment to obey his wishes. Davis glosses "strakande" as meaning "sounding call (on horn)," but declares the origin "obscure." 38 The OED
also declares the origin of strakande "obscure," defining "strake" as "to sound (a particular call) on the horn." The OED associates the whole complex of words related to "strake" with the Anglo-Saxon "streccan," meaning "to stretch." The word appears again, more obviously associated with a horn, following the fox hunt.

And þonne þay helden to home, for hit watz nieþ nyȝt, Strakande ful stoutly in hor store hornez. (1922-1923)

"Strakande" acquires epic connotations from Anglo-Saxon streccan and a related form, straec. The Anglo-Saxon adjective straec means "strict, severe, rigorous, stern, hard." It implies a "stretching" of capacities to their full limit. The word appears in Wright's Vocabularies as meaning "districtio, rigor," and "rigor" in Latin means "stiffness, hardness, firmness." If one associates this kind of extreme firmness with a horn blast, the word acquires an almost epic connotation, evoking images of Roland sounding his final, firm blast upon his horn in warning to Charlemagne and bursting his eardrums in the rigor of his effort. Roland's blast was a warning to Charlemagne that his rear guard was under attack. If Gawain could but hear the warning blast following the fox hunt, perhaps he would be warned that his integrity is under attack. Gawain, of course, does not hear.

The word "crapayn" (1773) appears not in a hunt scene but in one of the companion seduction scenes. The OED tentatively connects the word with "cradden," which seems to be associated with a Scotch term, "craw down," meaning a cock who will not fight. Silverstein calls this "popular
If there was a folk tradition connecting the word with roosters, this connection changes slightly the reader’s perception of Gawain's situation. When Bercilak's lady comes into Gawain's room on the morning of the third hunt, Gawain's dilemma reaches agonizing proportions. He cannot accept her offer of lovemaking without violating his honor as a guest, and he cannot refuse her without appearing to be oblivious to her obviously enticing charms.

For þat prynces of pris depresed hym so þikke,  
Nurned hym so neȝe þe þred, þat nede hym bihoued  
Oper lach þer hir luf, oper lodly refuse.  
He cared for his cortaysye, lest crapayn he were.  
(1770-1773)

Gawain fears the shame of becoming a "crapayn." Davis glosses this word as meaning "churl, boor," but declares the origin "obscure." The Middle English Dictionary defines the word as "a worthless person, a slob," and suggests it derives from Old French "cracheron," meaning "spittle." The Oxford English Dictionary lists the word as a variant spelling of "crathon" and declares it "of uncertain form and obscure etymology." The connection with a rooster, however, receives reinforcement from the context of the stanza. Within this stanza the lady is testing Gawain's resolve with all her might. She offers him only one honorable way out of his dilemma. If he is already pledged to another, she would understand his refusal.

Bot if þe haf a leman, a leuer, þat yow lykez better,  
And folden fayth to þat fre, festned so harde  
þat yow lausen ne lyst— (1782-1784)
Gawain arrived at Bercilak's castle with a reputation for knowing of "luf-talkynge" (927), but there is no evidence in the poem that he has "folden fayth," made an enduring commitment, to any woman. If he lies and claims a commitment he has not indeed made, he deflects the lady's advances, but he becomes "crapayn," guilty of "crowing like a cock" when he has no right to. Gawain opts for an honorable answer rather than an expedient one: "Be sayn Jon, ... In fayth I welde rīght non, / Ne non wil welde pe quile" (1788-1791). Gawain's situation at this point has more to do with "crowing" than with "spittle." The poet may have known of the animal imagery associated with this word and may have used it deliberately to add another dimension of playfulness to an already playful scene.

When Gawain journeys through the wilderness seeking the Green Castle, he risks more than the hazards of human outlaws, and herein lies another similarity with Beowulf. Gawain, like Beowulf, must prove himself through daring preliminary exploits before he faces his ultimate test. When Gawain honors his bargain and begins his journey in search of the Green Castle, the poet is fairly specific in his geography. Gawain rides through Logres, near northern Wales. Gone now are the feasts, the "foysoun of pe fresche" (122), the abundance of fresh "mete" (45, 71) Gawain had enjoyed in Arthur's hall. In Logres "he fonde no rīght hym before pe fare pat he lyked" (694); on his journey, Gawain endures hunger. Keeping "alle pe iices of Anglesay on lyft half" (698), he rides past the forelands at Holy Head, and into the wilderness of Wyrale. The poet acknowledges the lawless nature of the region when he declares,
Much critical attention has centered upon the symbolism of the animals killed in the hunt scenes; however, the animals Gawain encounters upon his journey, especially "etaynez," may well be of equal significance, and they may link him with his Anglo-Saxon past. Within this poem Gawain has been portrayed as a young and relatively untried knight. He has severed the head of an unarmed foe who offered no defense, hardly a valiant deed. The poet must demonstrate that Gawain is equal to the task ahead, that he is second to none in bravery against every sort of foe. Like the sea monsters battled by Beowulf, the creatures of the wilderness battled by Gawain serve to test his prowess in preparation for his final great conflict. Beowulf was a stranger to Hrothgar, and he had to prove his worth in order to be accepted at Heorot and be allowed an opportunity to fight Grendel. He recounts adventures of his youth to support his claim to strength, and among his youthful adventures are battles against sea monsters. Beowulf had aroused the wrath of merefixa (549), "sea fishes." These sea creatures are fan feondscaea (554), "hostile deadly brutes," mihtig meredeor (558) and aglaecan (556). In recounting his vanquishing of these sea-mons ters, Beowulf validates his claim to be worthy of the supreme challenge of Grendel. In a like manner, the Gawain-poet uses Gawain's journey through the forest to validate for the reader Gawain's martial prowess, in order to demonstrate his right and his ability to face the supreme challenge of the Green Knight.

Gawain proves himself in the forest against foes both natural and
supernatural. He encounters and vanquishes wolves, bulls, bears, and boars, and he also encounters and vanquishes supernatural beings—wood-satyrs, giants, and dragons.

Sumwhyle wyth wormez he werrez, and with wolues als,
Sumwhyle wyth wodwos, þat woned in þe knarrez,
Boþe wyth bullez and berez, and borez oberquyle,
And etaynez, þat hym anelede of þe heȝe felle;
(720-723)

The poet has already mentioned that Gawain encountered foes at every turn in the forest.

At vche warþe ober water þer þe wyȝe passed
He fonde a foo hym byfore... (715-716)

The poet was obviously interested in shapeshifters, for the entire story hinges upon the Green Knight's dual role as Bercilak and upon Gawain's failure to recognize them as one. Gawain's victory over bear and wolf symbolizes his victory in single combat (the bear) and against multiple foes (the wolf pack), his victory over foes who fight with senseless fury. The animals of the forest symbolize the shapeshifting which permeates the whole poem. Gawain's genial host Bercilak has another identity, that of Green Knight. The games which seem so cordial have an ulterior aspect, for the wife's visits are an extension of Gawain's ultimate test. Gawain's victory in the forest becomes a foreshadowing of his final victory. In his final confrontation with the arch shapeshifter, the Green Knight, Gawain is tempted to deceit, but he does honor his bargain like a man. He does not run but bares his neck to the sharpened axe, keeping his pride and dignity intact.
Among Gawain's foes in the forest are the "etaynez" with which he "werrez" (723, 720). The word "etaynez" gives Gawain's foes similarities with those of Beowulf; in this case the word is evidence of the strong lexical heritage of Anglo-Saxon in the language of the Gawain-poet. The distribution of the word "etayn" in its variant spellings in Middle English indicates that the language of Beowulf had permeated all of England by the fourteenth century.

The etymology of the word "etayn" does not seem to be in doubt: it derives from the Anglo-Saxon eoten, which means "a giant, monster, Grendel." A form of the word eoten appears twelve times in the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, but not distributed among the four surviving manuscripts. All twelve instances occur in Beowulf. Beowulf recounts his youthful exploits in order to prove his prowess to Hrothgar, and we learn that he has already "yde eotena cyn" (421), "laid low a brood of giants" (Clark-Hall). Reassured of Beowulf's sincerity and ability, Hrothgar departs from the mead hall, leaving Beowulf and his men, who "eotonweard abead" (668), "kept watch against monsters" (Clark-Hall). When Grendel realizes that he is outmatched in confrontation with Beowulf, he tries to flee the scene and return to his swampland home; "eoten waes utweard" (761), "the monster was moving out" (Clark-Hall). Early in the poem Grendel was depicted as one of the race of Cain, born in the swamps to which Cain was exiled, the place where "eotenas ond ylfe ond orcneas, / swylce gigantas" (112-113) were born, "ogres and elves and evil spirits—the giants also" (Clark-Hall). In Beowulf's fierce struggle with Grendel's dam, he realizes that his only hope for survival is to seize and use "ealdsweord
eotenisc" (1558), "an ancient giant-made sword" (Clark-Hall). Giant-made swords, of course, have special powers. In a similarly desperate situation in a digression late in the poem, Eofor slays the Swedish King Ongentheow with "ealdsweord eotenisc" (2979). In one of the digressions, Sigemund and Fitela "haefdon ealfela eotena cynnes / sweordum gesaeged" (883-884), "had felled with their swords many of the race of monsters" (Clark-Hall). In another digression in Beowulf, that of the tragic Hildeburh who lost both son and brother in a battle between her kinsmen and her husband, the word occurs four times in the distinctly nationalistic sense, the second sense in Bosworth-Toller's definition: "The Jutes, Jutlanders, the ancient inhabitants of Jutland in the north of Denmark." Used in this second sense in two digressions of Beowulf, the Jutes as a tribe are called Eoten. "Ne huru Hildeburh herian þorft / Eotena þeowe" (1071-1072), "Hildeburh, truly, had no cause to praise the good faith of the Jutes" (Clark-Hall). In the same digression, and in the same sense of enemy and of member of this specific band of warriors, the word appears again in lines 1088, 1141, and 1145. Perhaps the Beowulf-poet saw the Jutes as evil, for in the digression concerning Sigemund and Fitela he carries on at great length about the evil of Heremod the Jute, who "mid Eotenum wearþ / on feonda geweald forþ forlacen" (902-903), "among the Jutes was delivered into the power of devils" (Clark-Hall).

Thus we have a word, eoten, which is found frequently in Anglo-Saxon, but only in the unique manuscript of Beowulf. If the word "etayn" derived from it and became a commonly used one in Middle English, we would expect it to be found often in Middle English
manuscripts. But Chaucer did not use the word, and it does not occur in the Middle English shorter poems. The word is defined in the Middle English Dictionary as "a supernatural being of great size and strength, an ogre, a giant; also, a human being with these attributes."\(^{53}\)

The word appears only four times in Middle English poetry, in isolated instances fifty years apart and separated by considerable geographical distance, prior to its use in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. It also appears twice in The Alliterative Morte Arthure, a poem contemporary with Sir Gawain. The word "eotendes" appears in Layamon's Brut around 1205: "Da comen þære twenti ... eotendes, longe muchele & stronge" (1832). Layamon lived in Worcestershire, considerably south of the Gawain-poet. It appears again around 1250 in the Middle English Genesis and Exodus, written in Norfolk, considerably east of the Gawain-poet: "Of hem worsen þe getenes boren, Migti men, and figti" (545). It appears around 1300 in Sir Tristrem: "Yhold he was so a neten in ich afigt" (950).

Bertram Vogel declares the dialect of the Auchinleck text to be that of London or the southeast Midland, again geographically removed from the Gawain-poet.\(^{54}\) It appears as descriptive of Goliath in Cursor Mundi in a northern dialect around 1325: "Goli, þat eten, in fule hordom þan was he geten" (7443). Thus the word, found in Anglo-Saxon only in our unique manuscript of Beowulf, appears in the east, south, southeast, and north of England—evidence that either Beowulf once existed in multiple manuscripts or that the language of Beowulf had permeated all of England. The word may be indicative of the solid grounding in the Anglo-Saxon of the vernacular of the day.
Both instances of use in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* utilize the second sense of Bosworth-Toller's definition, a distinctly nationalistic sense, although referring to Irish heathens rather than to Jutes. Once the poem refers to the "ethyns of Argayle and Irische kynges" (4123); the sense is not only nationalistic but derogatory, for two lines further the same foes are called "Picts and pagans" (4125).55 Only forty lines later in the poem, Sir Ewayne and Sir Errake battle with "the ethenys of Orkkenaye and Irische kynges" (4163), once more connecting the word with Irishmen who are enemies and who are considered heathen barbarians.

Since the word *eoten* appears in manuscript only in *Beowulf*, we must consider the possibility that the Gawain-poet himself drew his associations from his own acquaintance with the story of the supreme Anglo-Saxon hero (either in manuscript or in oral form) or from one of the above-mentioned earlier uses. Since Layamon's *Brut* is an Arthurian tale, it must be examined as a possible source. Layamon, however, devotes considerable energy to describing the origin of the Round Table, a device to eliminate dissension caused by disputes as to rank. The Gawain-poet makes specific the table arrangement in Arthur's court. It is not round as in Layamon's *Brut* but the traditional mead-hall style, with "be best burne ay aboif" (73). In the first description of the Green Knight, the "aghlich mayster," he is described as "half etayn in erde" (140), half a giant (or heathen) on earth. Later in the poem he will be called "an aluisch mon" (681), an elvish man, a description that links him with Grendel, heathen creature of the race of Cain who dwelt in a land of "eotenas ond ylfe ond orceas" (112). On his wilderness journey, Gawain encounters every conceivable monster, and he
vanquishes them all. Among those monsters with whom he "werrez" are "etaynez" (723), and they appear in the wilderness with the boars, bears, wolves, satyrs, and dragons. The word "etayn" conjures up images of Grendel and the ungodly creatures of his swampland home, of the sea-monsters Beowulf slew as a youth, of bizarre animalistic creatures spawned in evil and bent upon the destruction of the virtuous; but Gawain, like Beowulf, triumphs.

At the same time that Gawain triumphs over foes both natural and supernatural, he triumphs over the elements of nature at its most ferocious. Among the most striking aspects of the wilderness passage is the poet's depiction of nature. When a Middle English poet mentions nature at all, it is almost always spring, probably April, and the descriptions are those of blossoming nature. In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, as Roger Sherman Loomis points out, "weather becomes poetry to a degree which the conventional medieval poems of spring do not attain."56 Margaret Schlauch notes the poet's unusual treatment of nature imagery.

Before him, the medieval poets had limited themselves, almost exclusively, to the conventional and monotonous celebrations of spring. . . . The Gawain-poet, unlike them, responded deeply and with fine perception to all the seasons of the year.57

Laura Hibbard Loomis concurs, stating, "Almost alone among poets before 1400, he told of winter with all its harsh rigors, its freezing rain and snows, its howling winds."58 Gawain ventures forth not into a pleasant spring but into a setting which conjures up visions of a prehistoric ice age. On Gawain's journey, nature is at least as hostile a foe as the
creatures of the forest.

For werre wrathed hym not so much, pat wynter nas wors,
When be colde cler water fro be cloudez schadde,
And fres er hit falle myʒt to be fale erpe;
Ner slayn wyth be slete he sleped in his ymes
Mo nyʒtez pen innoghe in naked rokkez,
-Θερ as claterande fro be crest be colde borne rennez,
And henged heʒe ouer his hede in hard iise-Ikkles.
(726-732)

In what seems to be one of the Gawain-poet's most innovative techniques, his treatment of nature imagery, he reaches back to his ancestors and shares with them awe in the face of nature's ability to tax the strength of even the most vigorous of men. The Gawain-poet certainly portrays vividly the hardships of travel in an English winter. But is he alone in his awareness of winter? If we count those poets before 1400 who wrote in Anglo-Saxon, Laura Hibbard Loomis' statement is not altogether true; in fact, in Anglo-Saxon poetry we find that treatment of the harsh winters is a well-established poetic tradition. Gawain does ride "Θurʒ mony misy and myre, mon al hym one" (749), and his journey takes him into a perilous land of strange cliffs and mountains as well as quagmires and bogs. The wilderness through which Gawain journeys, however, is not unlike that through which Beowulf journeyed in search of Grendel's dam. Here also was a land of quagmires and bogs.

Hie dygel lond
warigeaſ wulfhleoþu, windige naessas,
frecne fengelad. (1357-1359)

They dwell in a land unknown, wolf-haunted slopes, wind-swept headlands, perilous marsh-paths. (Clark-Hall)
Gawain does ride, alone and friendless, through a winter landscape of cold and ice, and he is "Ner slayn wyth þe slete" (729). His is a solitary journey. "Oft leudlez alone he lengez on nyȝtez" (693). Whether Gawain's journey through the wilderness is viewed as a simple "aventure," as an initiation rite, or as his own personal journey through the dark night of the soul, he must undergo it alone, "fer floten fro his frendez" (714). The poet could have found analogues for this solitary journey in more than one Anglo-Saxon poem; another man, an-haga or solitary one, The Wanderer, was also alone and friendless, wandering "hean þonan / wod winter-cearig ofer waþemæ gebind" (23-24), wandering "abject thence with wintry care over the frozen waves," through a frozen winter landscape of frost and snow falling mingled with hail. The Seafarer also speaks of being afflicted with cold.

Calde geþrungen
waeron mine fet forste gebunden
caldum clomnum (8-10)

My feet were nipped with cold, frost-bound in chill fetters.

In his world also, hail fell on the ground, corma cealdost or "coldest of grain" (33). Bitter winters are a part of England as old as the island itself. In a chronicle primarily devoted to the lineage of kings and to Danish invasions, the sole entry for the year 763 reads, "In this year occurred the great winter." 61

When Gawain does arrive at the castle of Bercilak, he enters a world of warmth, of gaiety, and of games, and once again rank at table becomes
important in the work of the Gawain-poet. In Arthurian legend, Morgan Le Fay was involved in a feud of long standing with Arthur, the ruler of Britain. In this poem, our poet distinctly tells us at the climax of the poem that the whole plot was instigated by Morgan Le Fay. She is in control at all times, a situation subtly alluded to by the seating arrangement at the banquet table when Gawain enters Bercilak's hall; "pe olde auncian wyf heȝest ho syttez" (1001). At Arthur's court, Guenevere, the reigning queen, the female of highest rank, sat in the seat of highest honor. In the castle of Hautdesert, however, Bercilak's stunningly beautiful wife must sit second in rank to the "auncian wyf," the female in charge. This seating arrangement should have been a clue to Gawain, perhaps, that an inversion of the natural hierarchy rules in this castle. Morgan, the "auncian wyf," is in control here; Morgan, not Bercilak, is the real leader of this "douthe." Morgan hated Arthur and his queen Guenevere, and Arthurian legend and literature are filled with Morgan's many and various attempts to shame the court. In Bercilak's own words, this entire episode was designed by Morgan "for to haf greued Gaynour and gart hir to dyȝe" (2460).

In spite of his honorable response to the seduction efforts of Bercilak's lady, Gawain is destined to commit one breach of his code, and the poet uses an Anglo-Saxon word to emphasize the importance of that breach. Early in the poem, the poet designated Arthur's band of loyal knights as "douthe," a word clearly evoking images of the comitatus and of the reciprocal bonds of lord and thegn which served as foundation of the Anglo-Saxon society. Later in the poem, the poet again uses the word
"douthe," this time in a cluster of passages denoting the band which follows Bercilak. Following the first hunt, it was members of the "douthe" (1365) who "strakande ful stoutly mony stif motez" (1364). On the next morning, "Be douthe dressed to be wod, er any day sprenged" (1415). Gawain is not a part of this "douthe"; he is by kinship and by oath bound to the "douthe" of Arthur, and he is physically removed from this "douthe" because he does not participate in the hunt. Following the third hunt, however, Gawain's situation and the poet's use of the word both change.

Gawayn and be godemon so glad were bay bope—
Bot if be douthe had doted, oþer dronken ben oþer.
(1955-1956)

The scene is one of "merpe and mynstrelsye" (1952), indeed of such revelry as to resemble drunkenness or a loss of wits, and the poet at this point portrays Gawain as a fully accepted member of the "douthe" of the "godemon," Bercilak. The Anglo-Saxon duguþ was composed of lord and thegns who swore mutual loyalty and who adopted ethical values in common. On the morning of this scene, Gawain had accepted the green girdle offered by Bercilak's lady, and upon Bercilak's return Gawain had concealed that gift. Gawain, therefore, has morally joined the "douthe" of Bercilak; he has, for this brief time at least, adopted the values of Bercilak's "douthe." There is no mention in this poem of romantic intrigue, deceit, or treachery in Arthur's court. The court was in its prime, "for al watz þis fayre folk in her first age" (54). Whereas Arthur's "douthe" at Camelot (in this poem, at least) adhered to truth and honor, Bercilak's "douthe" rests upon a foundation of deceit and trickery.
When Gawain leaves the castle of Hautdesert, he leaves warmth and cheer and returns to a brutally natural world, a world of icy winter like that of The Wanderer and The Seafarer. When he first entered Bercilak's castle, he explained that he must journey "to mete þat mon at þat mere, if I myȝt last" (1061). The world that he re-enters when he leaves the castle might be merely the poet's realistic rendition of the icy world of the Northwest Midlands, but it contains one feature of warmth, a grim feature reminiscent of Beowulf and the "mere" in which Grendel's dam lived. Davis glosses "mere" as "appointed place," but the Anglo-Saxon word is associated with water. In the midst of the bleak, wintry landscape, Gawain finds the object of his search, and the Green Chapel turns out to be a mound of earth not unlike the traditional Anglo-Saxon barrow, and it is indeed associated with water.

Hit hade a hole on þe ende and on ayþer syde,
And ouergrown with gresse in glodes aywhere,
And al watz holȝ inwith, nobot an olde caue,
Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, (2180-2183)

The stream nearby bears strong resemblance to the habitat of Grendel's dam, for in the midst of the cold winter the water of the stream near the Green Chapel is hot. "Þe borne blubred þerinne as hit boyled hade" (2174). The boiling water near the habitat of a monster is analogous to the lake home of Grendel's dam. When Grendel realized he had met his match, he fled to his lake home. "Þaer waes on blode brim weallende" (847), "then the water was boiling with blood" (Clark-Hall). When Beowulf pursues Grendel's dam, "aglaecwif," to the lake, still there "flod blode weol ... hatan heolfre" (1422-3), "the water surged with blood, with hot gore"
(Clark-Hall). In this Anglo-Saxon lair of sea-monsters, the water boiled—except that the lake that was home to Grendel and his dam boiled with blood. When Gawain does confront the Green Knight beside the boiling stream, it is significant that the Green Knight meets him not with the sword of a courtly chevalier, but with a distinctly Germanic weapon, a new "denez ax" or Danish axe (2223).

Gawain's relationship as nephew to Arthur must be examined in relation to the medieval epic tradition and in relation to the lord/thegn metaphor. Spearing has commented that Gawain "is Arthur's nephew (indeed, that is his only title to consideration)."° Being nephew to Arthur is, however, a more than adequate title to consideration. Claude Levi-Strauss calls the avuncular relationship the "atom of kinship"; he believes there is a special bonding between uncle and nephew, particularly when the uncle in question is brother to the child's mother.°° He points out that during the Middle Ages, the brother's authority over his sister wanes, and the husband's authority increases. Simultaneously, the bond between the father and son is weakened, and the bond between maternal uncle and nephew is reinforced.°°° Gawain's relationship to Arthur bears special significance in the light of these anthropological findings. Arthur is uncle to Gawain, half-brother of Gawain's mother, so this special bonding adds emphasis to Gawain's willingness to lay down his life for his uncle, who is also his liege lord. Gawain is caught in the middle of a kinship triangle; Spearing has pointed out that Morgan is "not merely the legendary enchantress who wished to terrify Guinevere—... she is also Gawain's aunt."°°° Bercilak reminds Gawain of his (Gawain's) kinship with
Morgan at the culmination of Gawain's trial.

Ho is eue[n] pyn aunt, Artruez half-suster,
be duches do[st]er of Tyntagelle, bat dere Vter after
Hade Artrue vpon, bat apel is nowpe. (2464-2466)

The only intentional malice in the tale is Morgan's malice toward Guenevere; the original target of the "gomen" was Guenevere—the spectacle of the beheading was a plot "for to haf greued Gaynour and gart hir to dy3e" (2460). Yet once Morgan has set the challenge in motion, she will not cancel it. Gawain must volunteer for this mission, and Arthur must allow it, precisely because their relationship is closer than that of father/son; Gawain is the favored nephew, the sister's son. Gawain's actions make of him an ideal thegn willing to lay down his life for his uncle/lord, but simultaneously Arthur's actions make of Arthur, as Tolkien has noted, a failed lord.68

The archetypal importance of the uncle/nephew relationship, particularly through the maternal line, is reflected in the epic tradition in general, and in Anglo-Saxon epic tradition specifically, so the avuncular relationship between Gawain and Arthur lends faint epic overtones to the poem. Roland was nephew to Charlemagne. Roland died protecting the rear guard, and his uncle was desolate with grief. In Anglo-Saxon poetry, Hrothwulf was nephew to Hrothgar, and according to Widsith

Hrothwulf ond Hrothgar
sibbe aetsomne
sippan hy forwraecan
ond Ingeldes
forheowan aet Heorote

heoldon lengest
suhtorfaedran
wicinga cynn
ord forbigdan
Headbeardna pryman (45-49)

For a very long time Hrothwulf and Hrothgar, nephew
and uncle, kept peace together, after they had driven off the tribe of the Vikings and vanquished Ingeld's array, cut down at Heorot the host of the Heathobards. (Mackie)

Beowulf contains hints that Hrothulf will later betray his sacred trust, seizing his uncle's throne in violation of his obligation to the uncle who raised him. The Beowulf-poet makes clear, however, that this seizure is a heinous offense. In Beowulf, Sigemund (eam) and Fitela (nefa) were close companions, nydgesteallan, "comrades in battle" (882). Fitela accompanied his uncle Sigemund on his adventures, and together they slew many monsters. Beowulf was nephew to Hygelac, and his behavior toward this uncle goes far beyond mere courtesy. He gives precious gifts to Hygelac and his queen after his adventures among the Spear-Danes; this generosity, however, could be considered the just due of the Anglo-Saxon code. Yet years later, when Hygelac is killed in battle and Beowulf is asked to rule, he refuses in favor of Hygelac's son. The special love he felt for Hygelac will not allow him to take the throne when Hygelac's blood kin is alive.

Anglo-Saxon kinship terms, though they do not always specify generation, do specify maternal or paternal lineage. The Anglo-Saxon word nefa can mean nephew, but it can also mean grandnephew or grandson, in other words, younger male blood relation. In Beowulf, Hygelac is nefa Swertinges (1203), grandson of Swerting, and Eomaer is nefa Garmundes (1962), grandson of Garmund; yet Heardred is nefan Hererices (2206), nephew of Hereric. Hereric was brother to Heardred's mother, the benevolent Hygd. Beowulf is nefa, nephew, to Hygelac, and the line in which this word is used speaks of the extraordinary love they had for each other.

Hygelace waes
Hise nephew was most true to Hygelac, the brave in battle, and each was mindful of the other's good. (Clark-Hall)

Hygelac is, in fact, maternal uncle, _eam_, to Beowulf, which at least partially explains the special bonding between them; Hygelac was brother to Beowulf's mother.

When speaking of a man's older male relative, the Anglo-Saxon terminology is quite specific. An uncle was not just an uncle, he was a _faedera_, a paternal uncle, a father's brother, or he was an _eám_, a maternal uncle, a mother's brother. Note that the Middle English term for uncle, "em," derives from the closer bond of the maternal uncle. _Eam_ appears once in Riddle 46, where _eam_ ond _nefa_ (6) form part of a family group. _Eam_ also appears twice in Beowulf: once, as already mentioned, in the tale of the battle companions, Sigemund and Fitela, and once in one of the most poignant episodes in the story—in the Finnsburg digression. Hildeburh the peace-weaver, whose marriage was supposed to cement the bond between the two factions, has lost all that she holds dear in the battle, both son and brother. The poem is silent as to whether her son died attacking or defending his mother's kin. The grief-stricken Hildeburh orders her son's remains to be placed on her brother Hnaef's funeral pyre so that the son will be in death _eame on eaxle_, "at his uncle's side." (1117). For Hildeburh, quite clearly, her son's eternal bond to _eam_ was more important than the bond to the son's father.

This special bonding, whether of obligation or of love, operates between Gawain and Arthur also. Although these are the knights of the
"Rounde Table" (39), and the Round Table was designed to eliminate rank, some knights are more equal than others, and Gawain is more equal than most. After they have washed, the knights come to table and arrange themselves according to a rank of sorts, "he best burne ay abof, as hit best semed" (73). Since Arthur has not yet seated himself, Guenevere is the person of highest rank at table, so the person nearest her would be, with Guenevere, "abof."

There gode Gawan watz grayped Gwenore bisyde,  
And Agrauayn a la dure mayn on þat ober syde sittes,  
Bope þe kynges sistersunes and ful sikre knytes;  
(109-111)

Gawain and Agravain are both nephews to Arthur, sons to Arthur's half-sister, and the poet feels the relationship is important enough to bear mention. Since Gawain in this poem is a relatively young and untried knight, his seat next to the reigning queen must be due to his blood relationship with the king rather than to his later reputation for prowess in battle.

By putting the honor of the court in the hands of the sister's son, Arthur's nephew Gawain, the poet adds archetypal significance to his story and at the same time allies it with its epic forebearers. The poem is not an epic, but it acquires epic overtones through the strategy of making Gawain, not Ywan or Errik or Sir Doddinaual de Sauage or any of the other "mony luflych lorde" (38) in attendance that day, the hero of the tale. The room is filled with knights at the Christmas celebration at Arthur's court, but only one knight steps forward and asks permission to accept the Green Knight's challenge—Arthur's nephew, Gawain. He reminds
Arthur of their kinship when he modestly declares he is only praiseworthy because "ȝe ar myn em" (356). One year later, when Gawain must set out on his journey, a journey which he thinks must surely end in death, he bids goodbye not to his king or his liege lord—"aftter mete with mournyng he melez to his eme" (543). Once more the poet reminds the reader that this is no ordinary knightly mission; Gawain is willing to sacrifice his life if need be for his maternal uncle, Arthur.

In summary, then, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight contains strong evidence that the poet may have been acquainted directly or indirectly with traditions and materials based in Anglo-Saxon, especially Beowulf. He was not constructing an Anglo-Saxon epic tale; he was composing a courtly romance. One cannot imagine the prolonged and playful seduction scenes as part of Beowulf. Arthur's band and Bercilak's band, however, are very definitely called "douthe," a word which must conjure images of the Anglo-Saxon *dugue*, the social unit of the *comitatus*. The Green Knight is "etayn," a word which allies him with Grendel, a word whose Anglo-Saxon precursor is found only in the unique extant manuscript of Beowulf. The poet lends his work touches of archetypal significance as well as epic dignity with his emphasis upon the avuncular relationship between Gawain and Arthur. A hint of epic valor survives in the word "strakande," a horn-blast which implies unusual strength and vigor. The poet's use of "barlay," "fage," "strakande," and "crapayn" may point toward a sophisticated word-play to enhance the meaning of the passages involved; or the words may point toward a stronger vernacular grounding in the Anglo-Saxon than has been heretofore recognized. Used in an Anglo-Saxon
sense, "barlay" becomes almost legal terminology, for it becomes one of the terms of the contract the Green Knight is proposing. 71 "Fage" viewed in an Anglo-Saxon sense evokes all the variegated elements of the story—variegated scenery in the passage of the seasons, the variegated appearance of the Green Knight/Bercilak, and the shifting, variegated nature of his words as he leads Gawain through Morgan's little "gomen." Viewed in the Anglo-Saxon sense of "crowing," which survived in the Scotch dialect form "craw down," the poet's use of "crapayn" adds one more level of sexual word-play to a scene already filled with it.

The poet fills his work with allusions which ally his hero with an archaic and Anglo-Saxon past. Gawain, like Beowulf, proves his worth by slaying monsters before his ultimate challenge. Gawain, like Beowulf, is a dutiful nephew; he is physically strong and morally pure. Concerned with a realism that did not concern the earlier poet, the Gawain-poet allows one flaw in the moral armor of his hero, the acceptance of the green girdle. Nevertheless, Gawain does meet his foe, and he does bend his neck "barlay." When he does return to Arthur's court, he makes no attempt to hide his shameful acceptance of the girdle but wears it as a mark of his penance. Gawain, like Beowulf, must journey to a "mere," and like that of Grendel's dam, the "mere" boils in an unnatural manner. Beowulf's ultimate test is a test of action, the slaying of a monster, but Gawain's ultimate test is a test of resignation, the passive acceptance of the return blow. Again concerned with realism, the Gawain-poet allows his hero to flinch once from the return blow; but ultimately Gawain, like Beowulf, acquits himself nobly, for he is loyal to his code.
Notes to Chapter 5

1 Malcolm Andrew lists 595 separate items of criticism devoted solely to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and only 220 for the next-most-analyzed poem in the manuscript, *Pearl*. *Patience* ranks third in popularity with 58 items, and *Cleanse* fourth with only 37. Of course, these figures do not include articles and books dealing with more than one poem or with the manuscript as a whole. See Malcolm Andrew, *The Gawain-Poet: An Annotated Bibliography 1839-1977* (New York: Garland, 1979).

Arthur.


Carson sees Morgan and Bercilak's lady as two sides of the same personality, "malevolent old woman" and "seductress." See Mother Angela Carson, "Morgain la Fee as the Principle of Unity in Gawain and the Green Knight," Modern Language Quarterly, 23 (1962), 5. Fries sees Bercilak's lady as a reversal of the courtly stereotype—instead of prodding the knight into virtuous action, she impedes him. See Maureen Fries, "The Characterization of Women in the Alliterative Tradition," in The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century, Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach, eds. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1981), pp. 25-46. Much of the criticism regarding these two women also involves one of the most intricate structures within the poem, the interlacing of
the hunt scenes with the temptation scenes. David Mills examines the progression within the temptation scenes from the "comedy" of the first day to the "debate on chivalry" of the second day to the "overt challenge to morality" of the third day. See David Mills, "An Analysis of the Temptation Scenes in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 67 (1968), 612-630. Gallant explores the symbolism of the animals hunted. He sees the deer as youthful passion, the boar as lust and malice, and the fox as fraudulence; he notes that the lady, in scene three, is dressed like a fox. See Gerald Gallant, "The Three Beasts: Symbols of Temptation in 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'" *Annuale Medievale*, 11 (1970), 35-50. Burrow sees the three kisses in the third scene as "confused suggestions of the betrayal of Christ"; Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss, and Peter betrayed him three times before cock-crow. See J.A. Burrow, "The Third Fitt," in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Denton Fox (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 43.

6 The following are just a few of the interpretations of the Green Knight's identity and nature. Nitze declares that he "represents a vegetation ritual or myth." See William A. Nitze, "Is the Green Knight Story a Vegetation Myth?" *Modern Philology*, 33 (1936), 366. A.H. Krappe sees him as Gilla Dacker, "none other than the Lord of Hades." See A.H. Krappe, "Who Was the Green Knight?" *Speculum*, 13 (1938), 215. Speirs sees him as "the Green Man—the Jack in the Green or the Wild Man of the village festivals of England and Europe." See John Speirs, "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Sir Gawain*

Some critics adopt a more positive note and examine the Green Knight in his other guise, that of Bercilak the merry lord. Roney sees the hunting scenes as crucial to his characterization, demonstrating that he is intelligent, a good manager, valorous, and in control. See Lois Y. Roney, "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," The Explicator, 37:1 (Fall, 1978), 33-34. Thiebaux calls him a devilish/holy hunter, "a very hunting devil for enticing this man to temptation, and then a holy hunter of men to teach and shrive him." See Marcelle Thiebaux, The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 88.

7 Metcalf notes that Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is as cleverly patterned as Pearl, but in this case the operative number is five rather


Cable takes issue with Borroff's conclusion that the four-stress pattern is the norm and that the Gawain-poet has more three-stress first half-lines than other Middle English poets. Her statement was based upon Oakden's data, which showed extended first half-lines in 15.3% of the lines in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 15.8% in *Purity*, and 13.7% in *Patience*. Other poets, according to Oakden's data, had lower percentages. Cable's scansion shows higher percentages across the board, for instance 35% in *Cleanness*, but even higher percentages in other poets (55% in *William of Palerne* and 38.2% in *Wars of Alexander*). He concludes that
Boroff's statement was based upon fallacious data. The Gawain-poet does not have a higher percentage of extended first half-lines than other Middle English poets. Thomas Cable, "The Gawain-Poet, Chaucer, and the Count of Stresses," The English Alliterative Tradition, an unpublished study. I am indebted to Dr. Cable for making this manuscript available to me prior to its publication.

15 Jambeck, p. 27.
16 Max Kullnick, Studien über den Wortschatz in "Sir Gawayne and the grene knyght" (Berlin: Mayer und Muller, 1902), p. 28.
21 Davis, p. 177.
22 See notes to lines 39, 73 in Davis, pp. 73, 74.
Subsequent references to Beowulf will be to this edition and will be acknowledged by line number within the text. Translations will be from John R. Clark Hall, trans., Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment, second edition, revised by C.L. Wrenn (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1950), and will also be acknowledged within the text.

25 Spearing, The Gawain-Poet, p. 186. See also the groom's description of the Green Knight, "And more he is þen any mon upon myddelerde, / And his body bigger þen þe best fowre" (2100-2101), and Beowulf, "Naefne he waes mara þonne aenig man oðer" (1353). Spearing notes the comparison in a brief parenthetical remark but sees no special significance in the correspondence.


27 Davis, p. 164. Davis connects the word with the cry "barley" of modern English dialects, which is a cry of truce, but he acknowledges, "The sense 'truce' does not fit the situation here" (see note, page 84). Onions mentions "barlay" as a possible precursor of "barlaufumill," a term which developed by the sixteenth century and which may have given rise to "barley" as a cry of truce. See Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, ed. C.T. Onions (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), p. 75. "Barla-fumble," first usage listed as sixteenth century, appears in the OED


32 Robert J. Blanch and Julian N. Wasserman examine the legal language of this stanza and of the whole poem, calling the Green Knight's offer "a bizarre use of the quid pro quo doctrine," page 601 in "Medieval Contracts and Covenants: The Legal Coloring of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Neophilologus, 68 (1984), 598-610.

33 Davis and, more recently, Silverstein read the word as "fage." Vantuono, however, reads it as "sage," a "wise manipulator." The
emendation to "fage" was first proposed by C.T. Onions in 1923. See Davis
note, page 88, and Vantuono note, volume 2, page 265, for discussion of
the editorial history of the word.

34 Davis, p. 179.

35 Middle English Dictionary, volume E, p. 364. The MED lists the
word's occurrence in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight as the first usage
in Middle English, but the OED (volume F, page 19) lists three other
occurrences, all as verbs, in the fourteenth century. As a verb the word
seems to mean "to coax, to flatter," a meaning in keeping with a sense of
variegated, shifting utterances.

36 Bosworth-Toller, p. 204.

37 Clark-Hall, Dictionary, p. 111. A comparison of "fage" with
Anglo-Saxon "fægettan" is not beyond the limits of feasibility. The word
had noun and adjective forms in Anglo-Saxon. The adjective form "fæg,"
meaning variegated, with its long a, would normally have become in Middle
English o or oo; in the Northern dialects, however, it remained a. In
Northern dialects, Anglo-Saxon stan became Middle English stane; ham
became hame; rap became rape. The same words in the South became
stone, home, and rope. See Thomas Pyles and John Algeo, The Origins and
Development of the English Language, third edition (New York: Harcourt

38 Davis, p. 216.


40 Oxford English Dictionary, volume S, page 1074. See also note on
"strakande" in Silverstein edition of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, page
151.

41 Bosworth-Toller, p. 925. Bosworth-Toller notes (page 45) that "anstraec" (literally "of one stretch") meaning "constant, resolute, determined," comes from "streccan." The Anglo-Saxon consonant sounds s, t, r, and c remained unchanged in Middle English, and Anglo-Saxon short ae became Middle English a (OE glêd became ME glad), so the phonological development of straec to strak is plausible. See Pyles and Algeo, pages 145, 148.


45 Davis, p. 174.

46 Middle English Dictionary, volume C, p. 698.


48 See Vantuono, volume 2, pages 280-281, for detailed note regarding critical interpretations of Gawain's journey.

49 The forests of Wyrale were definitely hazardous, even in the poet's own day; they were a hiding place for thieves and marauders who
menaced the surrounding area with impunity, since local law officials were not allowed to follow them into the king's forest. Finally the people of Chester appealed to the Black Prince to have the area disafforested. In 1376, Edward III granted a charter confirming disafforestation, but bands of armed men continued to terrorize the region until late in the fourteenth century. Savage first brought to the attention of modern literary critics the legal situation in Wyrala during the days of the Gawain-poet, and Hilton devotes a detailed chapter to lawlessness in the king's forest in the West Midlands in the early fourteenth century. See Henry Lyttleton Savage, "A Note on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Modern Language Notes, 46 (1931), 455-457, and R.H. Hilton, A Medieval Society: The West Midlands at the End of the Thirteenth Century (New York: Wiley, 1966), pp. 217-61. The Gawain-poet would have been well aware of the dangers to travelers in the region, as would his readers.

50 The bear and the wolf appear equally often as symbols of valor in Germanic tradition. Especially fierce fighters, followers of Odin, are known as berserkr or "bear-shirt." This name or its alternate, ulfheðnar, or "wolf-coat," may come from the Germanic warriors' practice of donning bearskins or wolf hides for battle (a form of shapeshifting). See Davidson in Porter and Russell, p. 140. This donning of animal hides or masks on the part of the Germanic warrior carried over into the language of Anglo-Saxon and acquired renegade connotations, for in the Laws of King Edward the Confessor, the term wulfgheafod, "head of a wolf," refers to outlaws. In Riddle 55, wulfheafedtrea (12), "wolf-head tree," is a gallows, the tree of outlaws. See Paull F. Baum, trans., Anglo-Saxon Riddles of

51 Bosworth-Toller, p. 256.

52 Bosworth-Toller, p. 256.

53 Middle English Dictionary, volume E, p. 271.


59 Vantuono, volume 2, page 282, notes several critical interpretations of the poet's nature imagery. Berry considered this an example of the poet surpassing the Old English tradition. See note to lines 726-732.

60 W.S. Mackie, ed. and trans., The Exeter Book Part II: Poems IX-XXXII, EETS OS 194 (1934; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 3. Subsequent translations from this volume will be identified within the text.

61 Dorothy Whitelock, ed., The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (New
62 D.W. Robertson examines the mere of Grendel's dam as an example of a hellish garden. Surely Gawain, as he ventured toward what seemed certain death, must have felt he was riding into hell. See D.W. Robertson, Jr., "The Doctrine of Charity in Mediaeval Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach Through Symbolism and Allegory," in An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), pp. 165-188.

63 Davis, p. 198.

64 A.C. Spearing, "Gawain's Speeches and the Poetry of 'Cortaysye,'" in Howard and Zacher, p. 176.


66 Other anthropologists agree that this relationship is especially significant; Firth also finds an extreme closeness between mother's brother/sister's son avuncular pairs. In some societies this favored nephew is known as "sacred child." See Raymond Firth, We, the Tikopia (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1936), p. 214. Firth calls the special relationship between mother's brother and sister's son "one of the cardinal elements of the social structure." See Raymond Firth, Elements of Social Organization (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), p. 32. According to Leach, "An individual is thought to be subject to certain kinds of mystical influence because of the structural position in which he finds himself and not because of the intentional malice or favour of any other individual."


68 Tolkien would argue that Arthur's compulsion to allow Gawain to risk the Green Knight's challenge makes of him a failed lord in the lord/thegn relationship. He notes that Hygelac, a good lord, tried to dissuade Beowulf from venturing to meet Grendel. Beowulf as an old king becomes a failed lord; he risks his own life unnecessarily when he faces the dragon alone, thus bringing about his own death and the probable fall of his kingdom. Beorhtnoth, a failed lord, risks the lives of his men unnecessarily, and they all die as a result. Arthur, by allowing Gawain to accept the challenge, risks Gawain's life unnecessarily; thus Arthur becomes a failed lord. "It is no accident that in this poem [Sir Gawain and the Green Knight], as in Maldon and in Beowulf, we have criticism of the lord, of the owner of the allegiance." See J.R.R. Tolkien, "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son," *Essays and Studies of the English Association*, NS 6 (1953), 1-18. Quotation is from page 17.

69 Ellen Spolsky, "Old English Kinship Terms and Beowulf,"
Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 78, No. 3 (1977), 233-238.

70 Faedera does not appear in Beowulf at all and appears elsewhere only three times in all Anglo-Saxon poetry, twice in Genesis and once in Exodus. In Genesis, Abraham is faedera, paternal uncle, to Lot (1900, 2080). In Exodus, the people of Moses are faedera cyn (29), the "race of our fathers" or "kin on the father's side." See The Junius Manuscript, volume I in The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records.

71 Robert J. Blanch and Julian N. Wasserman have thoroughly investigated legal terms used in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. See "Medieval Contracts and Covenants: The Legal Coloring of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Neophilologus, 68 (1984), 598-610.
Chapter 6

The Anglo-Saxon Dimension in the Works as a Whole

Lexical evidence indicates that the Gawain-poet may well have been familiar with Anglo-Saxon traditions, and possibly even with specific Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. That evidence comes in small pieces, a word here and there, but all the pieces together constitute a pattern of indebtedness not just to the parent language, but to customs and concerns of the parent culture.

In Cleaniness, one obvious source is the Vulgate Bible; yet the poet uses individual words which indicate a familiarity with the Bible as it exists in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Concepts appear in Cleaniness which do not appear in the Vulgate but which do appear in the Anglo-Saxon version of the Bible stories in question. For example, in the Vulgate, the creatures who impregnate the daughters of men are "filii Dei" who engender "potentes a saeculo viri famosi," or "mighty men of old, men of renown," and the positive connotations are such that God's anger is baffling to the reader.\(^1\) In Cleanness, however, those who "fallen in falegischyp" (271) with the daughters of men are "fende" (269), evil creatures with definitely negative connotations, creatures who arouse God's wrath much as the "waerlogan," the faithless ones of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis, aroused God's wrath.\(^2\) Moreover, those women who are defiled by the "fende" are "destrer of the doufe" (270); the word "doufe" conjures images of the comitatus, the band of noble retainers who offered unquestioning obedience to their lord. In another example, when God
decides to eradicate sin by flooding the earth, he specifically tells Noah to caulk his vessel with "clay" (312, 346), to make his ark water-tight by making it "clay-daubed" (492). The earthen caulking compound of Cleanliness is much closer to the "eorden lime" (1322) of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis than to the "bitumine" of the Vulgate. God takes a very personal and physical role in saving Noah, serving as "lodezmon" (424) to the ark in Cleanliness, much as, in the Anglo-Saxon version, he physically locked Noah in the ark "mundum sinum" (1364), "with his hands." Although in the Vulgate the raven is pure messenger, in Cleanliness he is both messenger and scavenger, feasting upon the carrion of the drowned in a manner reminiscent of the raven who perched upon the floating bodies of the dead in the Anglo-Saxon Genesis. In fact, the fourteenth-century poet emphasizes the bird as scavenger, depicting him as one who "Fallez on pe foule flesch and fyllez his wombe" (462). Later in the poem, when God's angels are guests in Lot's home, the angry crowd storms the gates, demanding that Lot hand over his guests so the crowd may "lere hym of lof" (843); this phrase is explicit in its sexual meaning, as direct as the "haeman" (2460) used in the Anglo-Saxon, whereas the Vulgate uses an ambiguous "cognoscamus." In Cleanliness, following the destruction of Sodom, the fruit trees bear fruits filled with ashes; the Vulgate does not mention fruit trees, but the Anglo-Saxon Genesis does. The idea of ash-filled fruit did not originate with Mandeville's Travels, which was probably one of the poet's sources. Ash-filled fruit, a feature within the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Bible stories, is found in the Middle English Genesis and Exodus and in Cursor Mundi.

The Bible stories of Cleanliness bear a striking resemblance to those
of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis and the subsequent Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition. The poet's depiction of Lucifer as proud, willful, and heroically defiant in his unrepentence can be seen as an analogue to the depiction of Lucifer in Genesis B and the later Cursor Mundi. The "fende" who impregnate the "dexterity of the doupe," the "clay" caulking of the ark, and the scavenger raven all evoke concepts found in Anglo-Saxon literature as early as the Anglo-Saxon Genesis. These correspondences seem more than coincidental and suggest that the poet was working from more than just the Vulgate as source.

An examination of the language of Patience indicates similarities to the parent language of Anglo-Saxon. The reward in the first Beatitude and in the eighth is "heuen-ryche" (14), closely allied to the "heofena riche" of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels. The poet's use of "tres," derived from Anglo-Saxon "trēow," could be a play on words. Jonah does tread upon the boards of the deck when he "tron on þo tres" (101), but he also treads upon his fidelity, his pledge, his agreement to be faithful unto God. The poet's use of "fale" (92) could be another play on words, this one designed to evoke a double sense of "unconcern" and of "hostility." The word "fale" as this poet uses it does not appear anywhere else in Middle English; it is possible, of course, that it existed in oral culture with connotations of hostility and enmity. At any rate, this meaning gives a new intensity to Jonah's discomfort at this point where God is "fale of his hele" (92). In addition, the word "lepe" (160) may evoke images of "pain, harm, injury, misfortune." The sailors bail frantically and throw their gear overboard "if lepe wolde schape" (160), in case misfortune should occur. A word which
may reflect a northern variant of its Anglo-Saxon predecessor is "wamel" (300). The whale becomes sick at his stomach, "wamel at his hert" (300), and prepares to vomit Jonah forth at the bidding of God. The poet's indebtedness to his parent language is greater than has been heretofore examined. The words "fale," "lepe," and "wamel" may indicate either the poet's knowledge of Anglo-Saxon or a stronger Anglo-Saxon base to his language than previously acknowledged, a base perhaps present within the vernacular of the poet's day. His Northwest Midland vernacular dialect had evolved, after all, from the Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon. "Fale" used as an adjective in this sense is unique to this poet; viewed in the light of possible word play with Anglo-Saxon "fælæcan," the word adds a new dimension of hostility to Jonah's perception of his God's actions.

In *Pearl*, lexical similarities to the Anglo-Saxon occur often. The poet's word choice would seem to indicate either his direct acquaintance with the manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon or his acquaintance with an oral tradition directly descended from the Anglo-Saxon source. The poet fills his garden with "worte" (42), a common Middle English word that is a direct descendent of the "wyrtæ" or herbs which appear in the garden of the Anglo-Saxon *Phoenix*. As with "tres," the poet may have intended a double meaning with his use of "wone" (32). The Anglo-Saxon homophone, "wohnes," could refer to the verb "to inhabit," but it could also refer to "wrong, error, wickedness." Viewed in this light, the passage in *Pearl* acquires new complexity, for "No whete were elle to wone wonne" (32) can on a surface level refer to wheat being stored in a barn. The passage also acquires a double meaning, however, in view of this homophone; wheat
(good seed) cannot bring forth wrong, error, wickedness (bad seed). In addition, in the parable of the vineyard, the poet uses the monetary term routinely used in the vernacular rather than that used in the Vulgate. The Vulgate declares that the workers in the vineyard received "singulos denarios" each per day. The Latin monetary terminology remained not only in the Vulgate but also into the modern English translation of the Bible. The Douai translation still lists the recompense as a "denarius" per worker. In the Anglo-Saxon Gospels, however, we find the monetary terminology changed; there the workers receive a "penning" per day. That translation to the vernacular monetary term continues in the Anglo-Saxon biblical tradition and is reflected in the Pepysian Gospel Harmony and in the Cursor Mundi. In Pearl, the vineyard owner hires his workers "for a pene on a day" (510). Four times the poet reiterates that the workers received a "pene" each (510, 546, 560, 562). Furthermore, the poet's reference to the maiden as "hynde" (909) may be another play on words, designed to emphasize her membership in the "hynden," the faithful band of one hundred. In Pearl the garden, an autumn garden, can be viewed as an analogue to the autumn garden in the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix, both of which symbolize the eternal cycle of life from death. The graphic imagery used by the maiden in describing for the dreamer Christ's death on the cross is reminiscent of the graphic imagery used in Dream of the Rood.

In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight as in Patience, one finds words not previously used in Middle English. "Barlay" (296), a word unique to the Gawain-poet, may be a play on words suggesting "bare, naked, open."
Viewed in this light, the word "barlay" becomes one more condition of the Green Knight’s "gomen"—Gawain must accept the return blow "barlay," with his neck bare, open, vulnerable. In addition, "fage" (531) is another word which is first used in Middle English by the Gawain-poet. Its accepted meaning of "trickery or deceit through flattery" is enhanced by consideration of the Anglo-Saxon homophone "fæg," which meant "variegated." The entire poem is a tissue of variegation and of double meanings, of appearances which deceive, even of a lord, Bercilak, who changes color to become the Green Knight. Furthermore, "strakande" (1364) lends to the poem connotations of stretching beyond one’s normal limits in a manner "stræc," meaning "rigorous, stern, hard." The poem acquires epic tones when the hunters blow upon their horns, "Strakande ful stoutly mony stif motez" (1363), in a manner reminiscent of Roland and his fateful blast upon his horn.

The language of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, like that of Patience, indicates a stronger base in the Anglo-Saxon than has been heretofore acknowledged. "Fage" appears for the first time in this fourteenth-century manuscript. The word, however, along with others in the manuscript—"strakande" and "barlay"—may indicate Anglo-Saxon word play on the part of the poet or may indicate the presence in his oral culture of words deeply rooted in the Anglo-Saxon but not always preserved in manuscript. These words indicate a familiarity with Anglo-Saxon epic tradition and lend to Gawain a heroic stature not unlike that of Beowulf.

All these lexical similarities to Anglo-Saxon cannot be dismissed as
simply examples of the "word-hoard" of the alliterative revival. The poet
does use words which were used by his alliterative forebears—"doupe"
appears in the early thirteenth-century Layamon's Erut seventeen times.\textsuperscript{7}
The Gawain-poet also chooses, however, words which are unique to him
and words which are not used by any previous poet in Middle English.
Three words can be called unique to this poet. "Barlay" is found nowhere
else in Middle English, before or after the Gawain-poet. Only in Patience
is "fale" found used as an adjective in the sense that it appears here; it
appears in one other manuscript, roughly contemporaneous with the poet of
Patience, but obviously used as a noun meaning nothing more than
"fellow."\textsuperscript{8} There are plenty of "grindelstons" in Middle English, but only in
the works of the Gawain-poet is the word "gryndel" associated with
extreme wrath. In addition to these unique usages, one other word,
"fage," although found later in the fifteenth century, is found for the first
time in Middle English in the works of the Gawain-poet. The poet
obviously did not confine himself to a formulaic "word-hoard"; he chose in
an innovative manner, whether from knowledge of manuscripts or
knowledge of oral tradition, words which evoke an aura of times past.

With all the lexical evidence pointing toward a strong grounding in
Anglo-Saxon language, one must consider whether the poet was perhaps
familiar with Anglo-Saxon customs and traditions, familiar enough with
them to incorporate them as metaphor within his works. The Anglo-Saxon
heritage in Cleaness is a heritage of concepts—the concept of evil
creatures, "fende," who impregnated the daughters of the "doupe"; the
concept of clay caulking compound in the ark; the concept of the raven as
scavenger. These Anglo-Saxon concepts may have been intended to call forth another Anglo-Saxon concept, that of the *comitatus*, the reciprocal bonding between lord and thegn which formed the basis for the Anglo-Saxon culture. Within this lord/thegn metaphor Noah, Abraham, and Lot function as ideal thegns, willing to offer unquestioning obedience to their Lord even unto death if need be. The metaphor gains credence from the poet's use of the word "doupe" for the band of the faithful. Note that it is God's anger at the adulteration of his "doupe" which precipitates the flood. Noah is God's "lede," a faithful retainer, and God is "Dry3ten" no fewer than seventeen times in *Cleanness*; both "lede" and "Dry3ten" are words strongly associated with the concept of *comitatus*.

If Noah, Abraham, and Lot in *Cleanness* emblematize the ideal thegn, then Jonah in *Patience* emblematizes the failed thegn, the thegn who questions his lord, who considers his own personal judgment superior to that of his lord. The poet does give examples of good thegns in this poem, but the good thegns are the forces of nature, the wind and waves that work at God's bidding, serving either as foe or friend to man and acting instantly at the command of their lord. One finds analogues for the nature as thegn concept in *Andreas* and in the Anglo-Saxon *Riddles*, both of which contain storm scenes which bear striking resemblance to the storm scene in *Patience*. In each case, the winds blow at God's bidding, and the waves rise and fall instantly and unquestioningly at His command. In *Patience*, God is "wy3e," "lede," "Dry3ten," and "renk"—all terms strongly associated with the Anglo-Saxon.

The *Pearl*-maiden embodies all that is proper for the female role in
the lord/thegn metaphor. She helps the dreamer to realize that exile from his heavenly Lord is the unthinkable exile, to be avoided at all costs, and he begins to reorder his values and turn his attention from earthly and egocentric concerns toward the heavenly concerns of his Lord. In the maiden's parable of the vineyard, the precious gift from God, the reward of eternal life, is symbolized by a decidedly Anglo-Saxon "pene," and in the procession of the just, Christ's trusted retainers are "aldermen." The Pearl-maiden serves as both peace-weaver and wise counselor to her former earthly lord, mediating between him and his heavenly Lord.

In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the social unit is clearly the "douthe." The poet speaks of the "douthe" (61, 397) of Arthur and, later, of the "douthe" (1365, 1415) of Bercilak. The etymology of the word is not in doubt; it comes from "dugua," the word used for the basic unit of Anglo-Saxon society, the band of noble retainers who swore unquestioning obedience to a lord. The poet seems to use the word, however, in a manner which carefully places Gawain, with the last use of the word in the poem, in the "douthe" (1956) of Bercilak, a band of retainers whose bond is a bond of deceit, an inversion of the ideal both of Arthur's court and of the Anglo-Saxon ideal. At this point in the poem, Gawain has concealed from his host the green girdle, thus (for a brief time, at least) subscribing to a code of deceit. Gawain begins as a member of Arthur's "douthe"; although he briefly adopts the code of Bercilak's "douthe," the code of deceit, he returns to Arthur's court and tells of his shame, once more adopting the code of honor and truth which governs the knights of the Round Table. Arthur's table, however, is not round in this tale—his
queen sits on a "dece" with his nephews beside her, and this table arrangement and this emphasis upon kinship betoken a familiarity with the Anglo-Saxon epic tradition. The table arrangement evokes memories of Beowulf and Hrothgar's triumphal banquet; the emphasis upon the avuncular relationship suggests familiarity with the many avuncular relationships in Beowulf and in the epic tradition in general. Three times in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight the poet uses a form of the word "gryndel" (312, 2299, 2338) to indicate extreme wrath, a usage unique to this poet. The reader instinctively associates this kind of wrath with the uncontrolled fury of the godless monster in Beowulf.

There could be several plausible reasons for a poet of the fourteenth century in the Northwest Midlands to want to evoke concepts of the past, a world of the comitatus and of peace-weavers. The times were politically turbulent, and the poet may have longed for the "good old days," a time when society seemed to be more orderly, more predictable. Of course, the "good old days" often seem so only when dimmed by time. Surely to the Anglo-Saxons as a nation the raids of the heathen Danes must have seemed turbulent indeed, and The Wanderer speaks of his own personal "good old days," when his lord was alive and there was joy in the mead hall. Nevertheless, a poet of the fourteenth century could have looked back upon this time as one of extraordinary stability, and he could have longed for its return. The poet might simply have been a "medievalist" of his own day, a man keenly interested in the language and the customs of a distant time. Such people have always been a small percentage of any given population, but they do consistently exist in any
population.

All that we have is the manuscript; that manuscript, however, contains lexical and thematic resemblances to Anglo-Saxon which seem more than coincidental. It is impossible from this distance in time to prove authorial intent, or to prove exactly which manuscripts the poet had at his disposal. Lexical correspondences may reflect the poet's knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language, or they may reflect a wider oral Anglo-Saxon heritage than has been preserved in manuscripts. Similarly, thematic resemblances may reflect the poet's knowledge of specific Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, or they may reflect a lively interest in a cultural heritage preserved in the oral tradition. An Anglo-Saxon dimension is just one more of the many dimensions to be examined in this extremely complex poetry. The poet's Northwest Midland dialect, relatively unadulterated by contact with the court of William the Conqueror, is closer to its Northumbrian ancestor dialect than other regions which had been heavily influenced by the French, so this Anglo-Saxon dimension should not be ignored.
Notes to Chapter 6


3 Translation is from Benjamin Thorpe, ed. and trans., Caedmon's Metrical Paraphrase of Parts of the Holy Scriptures, in Anglo-Saxon, with translation (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1832), p. 82.

4 This reference and all subsequent line references to Patience will refer to the edition by J.J. Anderson, ed., Patience (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969). References to the Anglo-Saxon Gospels refer to Walter W. Skeat, ed., The Gospel According to Saint Matthew and According to Saint Mark: In Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian, and Old Mercian Versions (orig. Cambridge, 1887 (Matthew), and Cambridge, 1871 (Mark);


7 "Doupe" appears in Layamon’s Brut in lines 1819, 2835, 3005, 3401, 4945, 6075, 7994, 10166, 10438, 14066, 15185, 17509, 19754, 20851, 25536, 25956, and 31188. See Middle English Dictionary, volume D, page 1266.

8 According to the Middle English Dictionary, "fale" appears twice in a manuscript of around 1380, Firumbras, in lines 1845 and 1891, but both times it is a noun and obviously means simply "fellow." See Middle English Dictionary, volume F, page 379.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Moorman, Charles, ed. The Works of the "Gawain"-Poet. Jackson:


Secondary Sources


Cable, Thomas. The English Alliterative Tradition, an unpublished study.


Carson, Mother Angela, O.S.U. "Morgain la Fee as the Principle of Unity in Gawain and the Green Knight." Modern Language Quarterly, 23 (1962), 3-16.


Cosling, Dennis, and V.J. Scattergood. "One Aspect of Stanza Linking."


Emerson, Oliver Farrar. "A Parallel Between the Middle English Poem Patience and an Early Latin Poem Attributed to Tertullian." PMLA, 10 (1895), 242-248.


———. We, the Tikopia. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1936.


Krappe, A.H. "Who Was the Green Knight?" *Speculum*, 13 (1938), 206-215.


Sievers, E. Der Heliand und die angelsachsische Genesis. Halle, 1875.


Steiner, Arpad. "The Date of Composition of Mandeville's Travels." Speculum, 9 (1934), 144-147.


