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DISSERTATION

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By

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Chapter I: Introduction

When Robert Creed suggested in a recent article that "We have only begun to learn how to read Beowulf,"¹ he might well have substituted the title of any other Old English poem for the most famous extant Old English epic. In effect, Creed is saying that it is no longer sufficient to point at alliteration, kennings, variation, repetition, and formulas as the chief poetic devices available to the Anglo-Saxon poet, for "Telling poetic techniques were at hand for the poet who wished to use them."² Professor A. C. Bartlett³ has been instrumental in helping us to recognize some of the larger rhetorical patterns employed by the poets in the works which have survived, and Professors Magoun, Bonjour, Creed, and others, following the lead established on the evidence of Yugoslav folksingers by Parry and Lord, have redirected our eyes to the formulas which animate so much Anglo-Saxon poetry.

In the five chapters which follow, I hope to contribute to our understanding of the way in which one reads an Anglo-Saxon poem by examining very closely the language of certain poems to reveal the remarkable similarity in much of that language and to show how the structural principle governing the language of a particular poem reflects in small the structure of the poem as a whole.

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More particularly, I find that much Anglo-Saxon poetry is built upon the principle of contrast, that this contrast works constantly in the language of the poem, and that the whole can often best be understood in terms of this contrast. Thus, on the one hand, by arguing that the Anglo-Saxon scop consciously and all but methodically employed contrast to shift the focus and direction of his poem, develop an idea or argument, and add a certain excitement to his language, I want to suggest that contrast is the second most useful rhetorical tool of the poet—second only to variation. And on the other hand, by arguing that Anglo-Saxon poems can best be understood in terms of an essential contrast or sequence of contrasts, I want to suggest contrast as a basic structural principle. Indeed, I must admit that when I first approached Anglo-Saxon poetry, it occurred to me that in the principle of significant contrast might well lie the germs of an unarticulated but understood Anglo-Saxon theory of aesthetics. But since that is beyond the scope of the present study, I plan to approach that problem in a subsequent book.

The major mode of poetic expression in Anglo-Saxon relies upon a known and expected sequence of words. Surely the existence of formulas, kennings, repetition, and variation contribute to this generalization since they all help to create the expectation in an audience of a known sequence
of words. Alliteration enforces such an expectation: "alliteration becomes a regular mode of endorsing the linguistic connexion... between collocated words." Indeed, it is Randolph Quirk's opinion that "an expectation of the congruous and complementary, expressed through recurrent collocations, is built into the poetic system of Old English..." But I shall show that the poet consciously exploits this expectation by denying it, by using a contrast where one might well expect a known "sequence of words." The principle operates on several levels, but perhaps most startlingly in a single line. By the contrastive collocation of the word which ends the a-half line with that which begins the b-half line, the poet can create significant thematic tensions which reflect the major concerns of the poem. And by using the technique of contrast on small, large, and larger blocks of lines, the poet contributes to the dramatic effectiveness of the poem. As I understand Anglo-Saxon poetry, style and structure are intimately related.

The significant concentration of contrasting words, assertions, and situations, which I find to permeate much Old English poetry, may easily be exemplified by Beowulf. Even the most cursory look at the first 150 lines of the poem reveals a series of startling contrasts. Perhaps the most noticeable and least noticed of these are the contrastive collocations which occur in a single line.
singale saece; sibbe ne wolde?

[Grendel waged] continual war; peace he did not want

ða waes aefter wiste wop up ahafen

then after feasting was lamentation raised up

Fand ða ðaer inne aeðelinga gedriht
swefan after symble; sorge ne cuðon
wonsceaff wera.

(11. 118-120a)
He found within (in there) the troop of aeðelings asleep after the feast; sorrow they did not know, the misery of men.

ðone God sende
folce to frofre; fyrenðearfe ongeat

God sent him [Beow] as a consolation to the people; he [God] perceived the dire distress [lit. fiery need].

And there are other lines where the contrast is not so obvious but nonetheless present. Grendel's first attack carefully contrasts the violence of the attacker with the tranquility of those attacked.

reoc ond reðe, ond on raeste genam
øritig ðegna

[11. 122-123a]

[Grendel was] fierce and furious, and seized thirty thanes from sleep.

In a similar manner somewhat larger sections of three or four lines begin by pointing the audience's expectations in one direction (toward hope, for example) and then neatly undercut that expectation before it is fulfilled by pointing the audience in another direction (toward despair, for example). But the important thing is the way in which the poet consciously will turn a sentence
in such a way that it embraces a contrast. The prowess and glory of Scyld Scefing, for example, the fact that he tore away the mead benches (meadosetla ofteah, 1. 5) and terrified the warriors (egsode eorl[as], 1. 6) of his enemies is set against the fact that he was found destitute (feasceaf funden, 1. 7). A sentence which begins with Scyld's death (Him ða Scyld gewat to gescaephwie, 1. 26) ends with pleasure in his long rule (leof landfruma lange ahte, 1. 31). The gifts (lacum, 1. 43) with which Scyld's people provide him at his ship burial are compared to those with which Scyld was first sent out (aet frumsceafte, 1. 45) when he was a child (umborwesende, 1. 46). I know of no other way, other than insisting upon this principle of conscious contrast, to justify the somewhat strange intrusion of the line

---faeder ellor hwearf,

[Beow's] father [i.e., Scyld] turned elsewhere, the old man from the earth (a periphrasis for dying)

between the statements that Beow ruled the Scyldings for a long time and that him eft onwoc / heah Healfdane (to him later royal Healfdane was born, 11. 56b-57a)—both of which contrast with the intruding comment on Scyld's death. (Klaeber is forced to set off the intruding comment with dashes.) Perhaps the most famous contrast, the one most noted and commented upon because of its significant contribution to an underlying theme in the poem, is
contained in the single sentence that follows the description of the building of Heorot.

Sele hlifade
heah ond horngeap; heaðowylma bad,
lāðon liges . . . .

(11. 81b-83a)
The hall towered high and horn-gabled; [it] awaited the hostile flames, hateful fires . . . .

(My reading of the poem would replace Klaeber's semi-colon with a comma and understand the two verbs, "towered" and "awaited," as parallel, in tandem, a construction which recognizes and accepts the poet's obvious intention, and not as the verbs of two closely related independent clauses. 8) And finally, the poet introduces Grendel in terms of a significant contrast: that bold demon endured distress sorrowfully (ellengaest earfoðlice / ðrage geðolode, 11. 86-87a) because he heard the joy of each day sung loud in the hall by the scop (þaet he dogora gehwam dream gehyrde / hludne in healle, 11. 88-89a).

Of course, the most notable and most noted of the contrasts are those between somewhat larger blocks of poetry, groups of ten or fifteen lines set against each other and often linking in a particular pattern. Hroðgar's success in war (heresped, l. 64b) leads him to the building of Heorot (11. 67b-82). But for a poet working consciously with contrast, Heorot in glory implies Heorot destroyed by war (ecghete, l. 84a) and hostility (waelniðe, l. 85a). The introduction of these ideas permits the poet to introduce Grendel: the hostility of those who did
destroy Heorot links to that of Grendel who tried to destroy Heorot. The comparison is implicit. The poet then contrasts such destruction and hostility with the glories of creation (ll. 90b-98), setting the darkness (systrum, l. 87b) in which Grendel remains against the beautiful fields (wlicebeorhtne wæng, l. 93a), the illumination of sun and moon (ll. 94-95), and the adornments of the earth (ll. 96-97a). The beginning of the next sentence reflects the joy in creation, but the sentence ends with the return to Grendel.

Swa ða drihtguman dreamum lifdon, 
ediglice, oð ðaet an ongan 
fyrene fre[m]man feond on helle . . . .
(ll. 99-101)

So the retainers lived in joy, happily, until a certain one began to do wicked deeds, the enemy from hell . . . .

There are other sections of the poem which are constructed in a manner similar to this. The combination of these and other contrasts, somewhat larger in scope, led J. R. R. Tolkien, in the first effective defense of the structure of the poem as a whole, to define the structure of Beowulf in terms of a contrast.

It [Beowulf] is essentially a balance, an opposition between ends and beginnings. In its simplest terms it is a contrasted description of two moments in a great life, rising and setting; an elaboration of the ancient and intensely moving contrast between youth and age, first achievement and final death. It is divided in consequence into two opposed portions, different in matter, manner, and length . . . .

The use of the principle of contrast in such a way has a peculiar effect upon the texture and theme of
Anglo-Saxon poetry as well as upon the audience listening to the singing of the scop. Most obviously, the shifting from weal to woe, for example, from light to darkness helps the poet create a world in which nothing is stable or permanent. Thus, the poet's emphasis upon contrast often helps him establish his theme—reflects it, indeed, is part of it: nothing endures long. The pervading sadness which many students find characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry is the product not only of what the poet says but also of the way in which he says it. And that sadness, that emphasis upon the transitoriness of the world is articulated in the language of the poetry by the use of contrast.

Equally important from the point of view of dramatic presentation is the way the poet's use of contrast must affect the audience. There is a certain excitement in the language, a suspense. A listener can rarely know how a particular sentence will end, can scarcely suspect what the next half-line will bring. To be sure, the context may tell him that a sentence beginning Maere ðeoden, / æðeling aer god (The glorious king, the good prince, Beowulf, 11. 129b-130a) will continue unbliðe saet (sat joyless, l. 130b--and the alliteration emphasizes the unbliðe), but the context more often will not prepare him for the contrast (e.g., the building and destruction of Heorot, quoted above). The excitement which stems from this
action in the very language of the poem differs in kind from the excitement that stems from the action in the narrated episodes of a poem. I suspect that the hall or the cloister was incredibly free from interrupting noises while the scop was singing, so that the audience could catch the precise moment of shift, of contrast in the poet's song.\textsuperscript{10}

Thus, to my mind, the dominant constructive principle of much Anglo-Saxon poetry is one of contrast punctuated at key moments by the contrastive collocation of thematically important words, phrases, or ideas. To illustrate this assertion, I have chosen (perhaps not entirely with wisdom) five of the great poems in Anglo-Saxon for no reason other than that they are among the highest expressions of the Anglo-Saxon poet's art. I find The Wanderer to be composed of four sections, each of which discusses the same material (hall, lord, and kinsmen) from increasingly more inclusive points of view. Each successive point of view (characteristic of a particular section of the poem) contrasts with a previous point of view and implicitly denies it. As the poem progresses, the audience as well as the wanderer is led toward a new understanding of the facts of his existence, and the poem as a whole is didactic.

In the seafaring section of The Seafarer (ll. 1-57), the speaker establishes himself as a man of experience
and knowledge by contrasting life on sea with life on land. In doing so, he calls into question the protective potential of an earthly lord and describes the state of life in this world. Through a series of contrasts in the second half of the poem, the speaker argues that neither fame nor flesh nor gold endure in any sense beyond the grave, and in the final exhortation, the poet-seafarer-wiseman enjoins his audience to strive for heaven, the permanence and bliss of which is set in contrast to the hardships of earthly life.

In choosing to read the poem called *The Wife's Lament* as *The Exile's Lament*, one discovers that the point and focus of the poem is the relationship between a thane and his lord. The poem concentrates on the response of one man, the thane alienated from two different lords, and shows his growth, through increasing awareness, to knowledge of the way a man must behave *vis-à-vis* the often conflicting ethical demands of Anglo-Saxon society. The poet carefully develops his theme by contrasting the response of the thane and his second lord to their enforced separation, and, through a series of important contrasts, provides the structural underpinnings of the poem and contributes to its power and poignancy.

*Deor*, like the other poems considered in this study, is designed to teach. The individual exempla, which occupy the first half of the poem, represent particular
kinds of adversity in which one may see his own misfortune reflected. And through the exempla the poet also establishes a context for the Christian truth which is the point and purpose of the poem. These exempla may well be contrasted to each other (the Wolund exemplum, for example, is set against the Beadohild exemplum, and Peodric is contrasted with Eormanric), and it is well understood that the refrain is fundamentally contrastive.

The Dream of the Rood does more than narrate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and deliver a homily. Rather, the poem defines the path for man's salvation and provides an exemplum in the history of the cross. By emphasizing the contrastive actions of falling and rising, shared by Christ and the cross, both in the crucifixion scene and in the homily, the poet points the way and establishes the pattern for the salvation of the dreamer.

In all these poems, the principle of contrast operating on many levels reveals both the theme and the structure of the poem. Whether or not it achieves the importance of a consciously applied structural principle implicit in an Anglo-Saxon theory of aesthetics remains to be seen. But what is perfectly clear, as I shall show in the following chapters, is that contrast exists and performs a crucial role in the thematic development and structure of several important Anglo-Saxon poems.
Chapter I: Footnotes


2. Jackson Campbell and James Rosier, eds., Poems in Old English (New York, 1962), p. 13. Campbell and Rosier go on to say that "The method of significant contrast was well known to the Beowulf poet . . . " (p. 13).


4. Randolph Quirk, "Poetic Language and Old English Metre," in Early English and Norse Studies, ed. Arthur Brown and Peter Foote (London, 1963), p. 152. Quirk's essay is excellent, and upon occasion he anticipates a few of my points. But he is more concerned with the connotations established by the collocation of words than he is by the structural implications of contrastive collocations which is my primary concern.


7. Quotations from Beowulf are from the edition of F. Klaeber, Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg, 3rd. ed. (Boston, 1950). Throughout I have replaced the thorn (ƿ) by the "crossed d" (ð) and used "P" as the capital both for the ð and the ƿ.

8. Normally, throughout the book, I argue for a change in the punctuation of the text I use either in the footnotes or in my text itself. Upon rare occasion, where a shift in punctuation is not crucial to the interpretation, I have emended the punctuation silently.


10. This is also Creed's attitude: "This audience must
respond, and respond immediately, to what it hears; its members will not only be unable to see a text, they will also be unable to hear the same text repeated exactly" (op. cit., p. 100; the italics are his).
Chapter II: The Wanderer

Anyone who suggests a new reading of The Wanderer does more than neglect the shoulders of the giants upon which he ought to stand; he implicitly denies that giants exist at all. Yet since giants tend to be both obtrusive and formidable (and angry when their existence is denied), it will be to our advantage to define and establish quite briefly their major camps and thus remark the present state of Wanderer criticism. To do so is not as fatuous as it may seem, for The Wanderer is not so tidy as Robert D. Stevick implies when he says, in quite another context, that the poem "is now free from scholarly doubts about unity, completeness, and general intention." Ever since W. W. Lawrence attacked the interpolation theories of Boer and Imelmann, argued that the poem was preserved in its essentially original form, and registered his belief that the poem is a fusion of Christian and pagan elements, students of The Wanderer have established themselves behind four not always clearly distinguished but stoutly defended barricades: (1) the poem lacks coherence; (2) it is a very Christian poem; (3) it is a consolatio; (4) it is a peregrinatio with eschatological overtones. Each provides a different reading of the poem, and since that
is the point at issue here, let us examine the various positions more closely.

Norah Kershaw Chadwick sees *The Wanderer* as a poem in two main sections: one focuses on a homeless man of the upper class, and the second is composed of reflections on a ruin. "The connection between the two parts—and indeed the sequence of thought throughout the poem—is not very clear."³ Although the poem "shows a curious confusion of Christian and heathen ideas"⁴ one can still discover the main theme: "The transitoriness of prosperity, tempered by reflection... that relief from misery may be expected from God's mercy."⁵ George K. Anderson, on the other hand, cannot imagine "a poem more non-Christian than *The Wanderer*."⁶ Yet, since he cannot come to terms with the poem's structure, he explains that "the continuity of the poem is not based upon logic, but upon the inconsecutiveness of a dream, either waking or sleeping."⁷ T. C. Rumble⁸ uses the same structural principle to argue that the poem expresses a Christian theme: "the settings and actions of the poem are to be regarded not necessarily as actual ones, but rather as the imagined experiences of the speaker" who "projects himself into the uppermost reaches of his fancy in an attempt to discover the way of God toward all mankind."⁹ And I. L. Gordon, unwilling to accept *The Wanderer* as a Christian poem, argues for the acceptance of incongruity which is a result of the
tradition from which it derives: "the limited range of ideas" and "sequence of thought" shows dependence "on the older world of gnomic wisdom."\textsuperscript{10} None of these views is satisfactory, for they each imply in different ways that \textit{The Wanderer} lacks the form and coherence of a good poem.

Of those who consider \textit{The Wanderer} a very Christian poem, Bernard F. Huppe is the most convincing.\textsuperscript{11} Although he resurrects the antique two-speaker theory\textsuperscript{12} ("the wanderer and the wiseman are contrasted too sharply not to appear purposefully distinguished": the wiseman "calls to mind far-off troubles . . . and ponders apart" while the wanderer "stands in the midst of grief with his mind darkened and oppressed"\textsuperscript{13}), he provides the most cogent reading of the poem up to 1943 when his article appeared. \textit{The Wanderer} is not only "unified by a single Christian theme,"\textsuperscript{14} but "the structure of the poem must be built around a thematic contrast between earthly insecurity and heavenly security: a contrast stated in the beginning, developed in the body and summarized at the end of the poem."\textsuperscript{15} For Huppe, then, "the actual subject of the poem is the philosophical contrast between temporal mutability and the ineluctable grace of God."\textsuperscript{16}

Stanley B. Greenfield,\textsuperscript{17} in a detailed study of the poem, argues that Huppe's "conclusions are unsubstantiated by the facts"\textsuperscript{18} and that he misreads the text and interpolates ideas not in the poem.\textsuperscript{19} To Greenfield, the poem
is a monologue—"the snottor of l. 111 must be the eard-stapa of l. 6"—the structure of which he summarizes as follows:

The introduction states a Christian truth: God is superior to Wyrd; he can, and often does, show mercy to those who suffer long in the inexorable grip of Fate. The body of the poem illustrates Fate's relentless way: in the form of a wanderer's monologue it tells of the inevitable destruction of man and nature which Wyrd occasions; and it describes the limits to which man's unaided intelligence and courage can bring him in withstanding Fate—an awareness of the universality of change and decay. The conclusion develops the only logical response from a Christian point of view: in the form of gnomic verse it exhorts man to become aware of and to act according to the best of his human capabilities; but since this is insufficient for real security, man must also actively seek the mercy of God to facilitate the intervention of that mercy on his behalf. Although this unity is perhaps not one which suits modern taste, it is nonetheless a palpable unity.

In a later reading of the poem, Greenfield believes "The Wanderer presents a consolatory Christian answer to the misfortunes of individual fate and to the degeneration of the world; . . . it is certainly in the tradition of the Classical and Christian literary genre of the consolatio." "It incorporates Christian attitudes and values in its use of the exile theme, the ruin theme, and the ubi sunt motif. These three topoi occupy in succession the major segments of the body of the poem." In reading the poem as a consolatio, perhaps the most widely accepted modern understanding of the poem, Greenfield accepts the findings of J. E. Cross who considers "the relationship of the O.E. poem to a genre . . . the Latin consolatio." For Cross, "the progress of the poem is best explained in terms of a
consolatio where topics of the genre are used first to intensify the lament, then to attempt some measure of secular consolation by generalization which is yet unsatisfactory, in order to emphasize the supreme consolation of security in the next life."^{27}

One more position needs to be defined briefly, that occupied by the mature Robertsonianism (as opposed to the early Robertsonianism of B. F. Huppé described above) of the British scholar G. V. Smithers. Taking his cue from Dorothy Whitelock's comments on The Seafarer,^{28} Smithers, in a series of erudite articles,^{29} argues that both The Seafarer and The Wanderer combine ideas of (1) exile with (2) the decay of the world and of individual men and (3) Last Things. "The conclusion clamouring to be drawn from all this is that the 'exile' and the 'wanderer, or peregrinus (over the sea)' symbolize man as an exile from Paradise, and the process of these wanderings stand for his peregrinatio on earth (with reference to his ancestral home in Heaven)."^{30} Thus, Smithers reads "the subject [of The Wanderer as] 'the life of man on earth as an alien or exile, and the coming end of the world'."^{31} It might be worth noting that while Smithers tries to attach a genre-label to the poem, his reading does little to explain the great problems of the poem's structure.^{32}

These, then, are the major positions taken by the critics of the poem. Each is unsatisfying—even that of
Stanley B. Greenfield, who presents the most sensible reading. The problem, I think, is that each reader of the poem tends to take a large section of the poem (usually from between 1. 29b and 1. 110), to characterize it as consolatory or eschatological or incoherent, and then to base his understanding of the whole upon that. This procedure makes several assumptions that may not be at all valid. First, it assumes that the major emphasis, hence the "meaning," of the poem lies within the large section. This is not necessarily true. Secondly, it assumes that other parts of the poem can be understood in terms of the emphasis within the large section. Huppé does precisely this when he argues that the last five lines of the poem reflect the first five lines, both of which he understands in terms of ll. 62b-87); Greenfield argues that "there is no exact sense parallel" between the two; and Anderson believes the last lines don't even belong in the poem.

No one, so far as I have been able to determine, has taken an integrated, coherent, whole view of the poem, a view that does not understand certain lines in terms of the emphasis in others far removed, but rather a positive view that shows the relation between large sections of the poem, between the various discrete and identifiable parts within those sections, between individual lines within those parts, and even between certain key half-lines. This is the view I propose.
I am making the assumption that the poem does not leap from point to point illogically and irrationally, like a jackrabbit in flight, touching a clump of idea here and a tuft of idea there. What follows is the conviction that there is a clear logical connection between and among lines and half-lines, that the poem does not omit these connections. And the twentieth-century critic must find them. As I have suggested in my Introduction, the dominant constructive principle is one of simple contrast punctuated at key moments in the poem by the contrastive collocation of key words or phrases or ideas. The analysis of *The Wanderer* below will point at these.

But more important to an understanding of the poem as a whole is the relation between the several large sections. I find *The Wanderer* can be read coherently as a sequence of four sections, no one of which carries the key to the whole poem, but all four of which discuss essentially the same material from four easily distinguishable and quite different points of view. To the extent that they all deal with the same material—hall, lord, kinsmen—they are closely bound, and the poem is unified in terms of matter. Moreover, as the poem progresses through the four sections, the points of view become increasingly expansive, each subsuming the previous view and, by implication, each presenting a (contrastive) modification of the earlier view. Thus, I think the poem teaches.
The poet through his fiction—the wanderer who speaks the whole poem, as I shall show—carefully allows us as audience to understand the same thing from four different points of view. And since each view is more inclusive than the last, the effect of the poem is cumulative; the point that the poet wishes to teach is at the end.

I

In the first section of the poem, which I take to include ll. 1-57 because of the consistent point of view, we are asked to understand the incidents related and the view expressed from the "pole of consciousness" of one man: the anhaga (solitary being, l. 1), who is also the eardstapa (wanderer, "earth-stepper," l. 6) and the earme anhogan (poor solitary one, l. 40) as well as the ic variously throughout the passage (ll. 8, 10, 11, 23, 26). What is not so clear is whether the first five lines of the poem are spoken by the wanderer or not. But whether these lines are a general speculation spoken by the wanderer before describing his own miseries or whether they are the words of the poet delivering a formal introduction in propria persona is not so crucial to an understanding of the poem as recognizing the purpose and effect of these lines—what they are intended to do whether spoken by wanderer or poet. And here scholars agree that the lines are introductory to the poem.
Oft him anhaga are gebideð,
metudes miltse, ðeah ðe he modcearig
geong lagulade  longe sceolde
hrær mid hondum  hrimcealde sae,
wadan wraeclastas. Wyrd bið ful araed! 38

(11. 1-5)

Often the solitary one awaits honor, God's mercy,
while he, sorrowful of heart, must [go] for a long
time across the sea, move the icy-cold sea with his
hands, tread the paths of exile. Fate is fully
determined (resolute, inexorable)! 39

These lines are most commonly recognized as a contrast
that articulates the theme of the poem. 40 But the contrast
here is more than the mercy of God set against the remorse­
lessness of Fate and the wanderer's lot. Rather, the poet
collocates words contrastively to establish tensions which
he expands upon and intensifies in this section and re­
solves only as the poem progresses into the more inclusive
points of view. Most obvious is the contrastive collo­
cation of miltse (mercy, kindness) and modcearig (sorrow­
ful of heart) in 1. 2. Miltse is not only tied to the
wanderer's search later in this section for a dispenser
of treasure (sinces bryttan, l. 25b) who would comfort
his friendlessness and treat him with kindness (freond­
leasne  frefran wolde, / weman mid wynnum, ll. 28-29a),
but it is also expanded more particularly in the dream
passages where it is clearly associated with hall, lord,
and kinsmen. Similarly, modcearig most obviously defines
the present condition of the wanderer in this section.
The functioning contrast here, then, is a temporal one, between the wanderer's situation in present time (mod-cearig) and his desired situation in future time (metudes miltse).

Perhaps less easy to see is the contrast between anhaga and are in l. 1. If anhaga implies a man alone, without hall, lord, and the fellow members of a comitatus, a man outside the established pattern of society,\(^4\) are, in contrast, connotes and implies precisely those things which are social, public, and within the established pattern of society: honor, glory, rank, dignity, property, possessions, as well as favor and mercy (the word is an object of the verb gebideð; it stands in apposition with miltse). Since this is precisely the implicit and explicit object of the wanderer's search described below, the contrast in the opening line of the poem is purposeful and artistically functional.

Even less obvious, but nonetheless important in the total scheme of the poem, is the contrast in l. 5 between that which is, metaphorically, in flux (wraeclastas, the paths of exile) and that which is utterly and irrevocably fixed, Fate. The words Wyrd bið ful araed apply not only to the wanderer's situation: if a man must wander, then he must wander—such is fate. They also function as a reversal, a contrast to the wanderer's situation. The wanderer must wander, but Fate is fixed, inexorable.\(^4\)}
This contrast, while perhaps difficult to accept here, gains strength when one sees that two of the wanderer's joyful dreams end with the same syntactic pattern that presents a contrast to the dreams (cf. 1. 36b, and 1. 53b or 55b). And this contrast is also important to the poem as a whole, for as the wanderer passes through the subsequent, more inclusive points of view, he discovers that nothing in this world is fixed except Fate. So, to my mind, the contrastive collocations in the first five lines of The Wanderer establish the major themes (public-private, sorrow-relief from sorrow, and transient-fixed) in this first section of the poem and later in the poem as a whole.

The next few lines do more than provide what may be the formal opening of the wanderer's monologue. They begin to detail and concretize what it means to be an anhaga, and in so doing they establish the reasons for the wanderer's monologue, the impetus and stimulus for what follows. Implicitly they reveal what an anhaga lacks to remedy his present situation in the world and therefore what he seeks (hall, lord, kinsmen; cf. 11. 25-29a).

Swa cwæð eardstapa, earfeða gemyndig,
wraðra waelsleahta, winemaega hryre;
"Oft ic sceolde ana uhtna gehwylce
mine ceare cwiðan. Nis nu cwicra nan
ðe ic him modsefan minne durre
sweetule asecgan. Ic to soðe wat
ðaet bið in eorle indryhten ðeaw,
So spoke the wanderer, mindful of hardships, of bitter battle-slaughter, of the fall of dear kinsmen. "Often I must bewail my sorrow alone at the break of each day. I know now no man alive to whom I would dare tell clearly (openly, publicly\(^4\)) my mind. I know as a truth that it is [considered] noble conduct in a man that he bind fast his soul-locker, hold [fast] his treasure-coffer, think what he will. A miserable mind cannot withstand fate, nor the troubled mind achieve help.

As I understand these lines, the wanderer first explains why he is a wanderer: we are told he is mindful of hardships, battle, and the fall of kinsmen, all of which implies that he no longer has a solid social milieu, is no longer part of a *comitatus*. This is the cause of his wandering. Thus, the statement in 1. 5, *Wyrd bið full araed* (Fate is inexorable) not only looks back to 11. 2b-5a but also points ahead to these lines. Since all of his kinsmen-companions have fallen, the wanderer, if he is to speak at all, must bewail his sorrow alone (*ana*, 1. 8a). That sorrow is not only the hardships of which the wanderer is mindful (*gemyndig*, 1. 6b) but also the result of those hardships—the fact that he now knows no one alive to whom he dare tell his heart openly. Yet the very desire to tell his heart openly conflicts with
what is normally considered noble conduct (indryhten ðeaw, l. 12b). The poet, therefore, hints at the extent of the wanderer's sorrow by contrasting his implicit desire to speak ("if I knew someone alive, I would tell my heart to him") with what he knows is noble conduct—a point to which the poet will return later (ll. 65a-71 and ll. 112-114a) and examine from significantly different points of view.

The logic of the poem so far is straightforward: the wanderer is a wanderer because (such is fate) all his kinsmen-companions have fallen in battle; their fall has deprived him of people to whom he would express his sorrow, consciously disregarding what he knows to be noble conduct. He summarizes his attitude, from the point of view characteristic of the first section, in ll. 15-16 which functions as a contrastive argument to noble conduct: a weary mind cannot (by itself) withstand fate, nor can a troubled mind (by itself) achieve help in withstanding fate. The argument is predicated upon the assumption that a man needs someone to talk to, and since the wanderer is a man alone, he will go in search of just those things in the past that contributed to his well-being and allowed him to speak his mind openly—lord and companions.

The next sentence harks back to indryhten ðeaw (l. 12b) and expands upon it, first by showing how those who are ambitious abide by it and second by showing how the
wanderer, by necessity and not inclination, abides by it. But although the sentence begins in this way, it also expands, in a series of brilliantly articulated contrasts, the *miltse-modcearig* theme, by detailing that which constitutes each. In doing so, it prepares for the dreams of hall, lord, and kinsmen which follow.

Therefore [i.e., because it is noble conduct] those eager for glory often bind dreary [thoughts] fast in their breast-enclosures; just as I, often full of sorrow, deprived of home, far from free-kinsmen, must bind my mind with shackles, since in days of yore [one] covered my gold-giver with earth in darkness, and I, abject, sad, [went] thence with winter-care over the frozen waves, sought in the hall a dispenser of treasure, where I far or near might find in the mead hall one who knew my own dear lord or [who] would comfort me, the friendless one, treat me with kindness.
This passage does more than continue the public-private contrast by setting the **domgeorne** (ambitious ones, those eager for honor, glory, apparently within the system) against the wanderer (who are **gebideð**, l. 1, apparently outside the system), both of whom must bind fast their thoughts. It introduces and explicitly defines what the wanderer lacks—hall (**eōle bidaeled**, deprived of home, l. 20b), kinsmen (**freomaegum feor**, far from free kinsmen [because they all have fallen], l. 21a), and lord (**goldwine minne** / **hrusan heolstre biwrah**, my gold-friend, covered by earth in darkness, ll. 22b-23a)—and it also introduces and explicitly defines what the wanderer searches for: a treasure-giver (**sinces bryttan**, l. 25b) and the things that derive from him, namely a hall and friends in a **comitatus**. The wanderer not only contrasts his own lord (**goldwine**) with another lord who would treat him with kindness, he also contrasts states of being: his present deprived state with a future fulfilled state in search of which he wanders over frozen waves. To that extent he reveals his desire to create or re-establish in future time what he has known in past time (hall, lord, companions). Both past and projected future contrast with his condition in the present. In another sense, however, he is searching for security, something solid and permanent—the opposite of the paths of exile (**wraeclastas**, l. 5a). Thus the emphasis upon hall (**sohte sele**, sought
in the hall, l. 25a; and meoduhealle, mead hall, l. 27a). He wanders hean (abject, l. 23b), wod wintercearig (with bitter sorrow; literally, with winter-care, l. 24a), and dreorig (sad, l. 25a) in search of one who not only remembers his lord, and therefore him, but also for one who would comfort him and treat him with kindness. The situation is epitomized in the contrastive collocation of freondleasne (the friendless one) and frefran (comfort) in l. 28. Thus the wanderer, implicitly and from the limited perspective of the first section of the poem, puts all his hopes for earthly joy in the security provided for him by hall, lord, and kinsmen-companions. Although the rest of this section fortifies the wanderer's hope, sections two and three will argue that from another point of view these hopes are vain.

At l. 29b the poem shifts perceptibly but not significantly, for although the poet shifts from first to third person, the point of view from which we are asked to understand remains that of the wanderer. Perhaps, if it is possible, the point of view becomes even more personal, more intimately associated with the wanderer; for whereas earlier we looked upon the world through the eyes of an "I" (ic) known as the wanderer, now, in the remainder of section one, we look into the mind and dreams of a "he" still very much the wanderer. At l. 29b the speaker appeals to the understanding of the audience in a passage
that both prepares for the sequence of memory-dreams that follows and summarizes the condition of the wanderer developed in the contrasts earlier.

Wat se ðe cunnað,
uu sliðen bið sorg to geferan,
ðam ðe him lyt hafað leofra geholena.
Waræ hine wraeclast, nales wunden gold,
ferðloca freorig, nalaes foldan blaed.

(11. 29b-33)
He knows who is able (or who suffers) how cruel is sorrow as a companion to him who has few dear protectors. The path of exile remains to him, not at all the wound gold; a body chilled, not at all earth's bounty.

This passage, of course, follows logically and directly from the previous lines, the contrast so carefully established between the wanderer friendless (11. 19-24) and the object of the wanderer's search (11. 25-29a), for the basic contrast here is between sorrow as a companion and dear protectors as companions. The first two and a half lines are doubly effective since they "mean" in two complementary ways, but with different emphases: (1) to him who has few dear protectors, sorrow is cruel (more cruel, say, than it would be if he had companions to whom he could speak his sorrow), and (2) he who has few dear protectors must have sorrow as a companion. To have dear protectors is to have a dispenser of treasure (sinces bryttan, 1. 25b), security and a fixed place in the hall (sele, 1. 25a), and to be treated with kindness (weman
mid wynnum, 1. 29a). To be without a protective lord and all that pertains to him is not only to have sorrow as a companion, but it also means one must tread the path of exile (warad hine wraeclast, 1. 32a) with a chilled body (ferôloca freorig, 1. 33a). The poet carefully sets these against their opposites which are connected with dear protectors (1. 31b): that is, the opposite of the path of exile would be whatever is stable, or, as it appears here, wunden gold (wound gold, 1. 32b) which Cross correctly identifies as a "metonomy for the protective generosity of a lord"54 and all that that implies. Similarly, however one understands foldan blaed (earth's bounty, 1. 33b)—perhaps the warmth of fire, food, friends, and mead—it clearly stands in opposition and contrast to a body chilled. Indeed, the nalaes emphasizes that one (the on-verse) is not at all the other (the off-verse).

With 1. 34 begins the first of three famous passages that we might well call memory or dream passages since two partake of the characteristics of dream. All three passages employ the basic contrast between time past and time present, between what the wanderer once had and what he now lacks. The memories are differentiated by subject—hall, lord, and kinsmen. The first memory emphasizes the joys of the hall.

Gemon he selesecgas ond sincêge,
hu hine on geoguðe his goldwine
wenede to wiste. — Wyn eal gedreas!

(11. 34-36)

He remembers the hall-men and gift-receiving, how in his youth his gold friend entertained him at feast. Pleasure all disappears!

Whether the direct and immediate stimulus for this memory is the foldan blaed (earth's bounty) and the wunden gold (wound gold) of the previous two lines or some more general consideration (e.g., the sorrow of the previous 33 lines) cannot be determined. What is clear, however, is that the objects and events he remembers in this passage are all related to the hall. More than that, they evoke precisely what he lacked and sought earlier in the poem: the hall-men evoke his friends, dear protectors (1. 31b), the cwicra of 1. 9b; gift-receiving connotes the wound gold (1. 32b) and the dispenser of treasure (sinces bryttan, 1. 25b); and the feasting with his lord evokes the earth's bounty (1. 33b) and comfort (frefran, 1. 28b) and being treated with kindness (weman mid wynnum, 1. 29a). These, with their added connotations of solidity and stability, of sele (1. 25a) and meoduhealle (1. 27a), of the appropriate social order of things, are bound up in the word that begins the off-verse of 1. 36: Wyn (joy, delight, pleasure). But Wyn eal gedreas (Pleasure all disappears).

The statement emphatically closes the memory. It jars the wanderer out of the memory of time past and implicitly contrasts that memory with his present situation: instead
of hall-men and friends, he is alone (\textit{anhaga}, l. 1, \textit{ana}, l. 8), abject (\textit{hean}, l. 23), and friendless (\textit{freondleasne}, l. 28) with only sorrow as a companion (l. 30); instead of gift-receiving and the feasts of his gold-friend, he has a chilled body (\textit{feróloca} \textit{freorig}, l. 33) and the paths of exile (\textit{wraeclastas}, ll. 5, 32); instead of a hall, he is deprived of home (\textit{eôle} \textit{bidaeled}, l. 20).

The MS at this point must be repunctuated. The problem lies with \textit{forôon} (l. 37a). W. W. Lawrence\textsuperscript{55} argues that the word has only a loose connective force and means little more than "verily." But Dorothy Whitelock,\textsuperscript{56} followed by Stanley Greenfield,\textsuperscript{57} believes that \textit{forôon} can look backward as well as forward and that it does have a strong connective force. The passage, with Krapp and Dobbie's punctuation, appears as follows:

\begin{verbatim}
Wyn eal gedreas!
Forôon wat se ðe sceal his winedryhtnes
leofes larcwidum longe forôolian,
ðonne sorg ond slaep somod aetgaedre
earme anhogan oft gebindað.
Pinceð him on mode ðaet he his mondryhten
clyppe ond cysse, . . . .
\end{verbatim}

(l. 36b-42a)
Pleasure all disappears! Therefore he knows [this] who must go without the precepts of his dear friend and lord for a long time, when sorrow and sleep together at the same time often\textsuperscript{58} bind the poor solitary one. It seems to him in his mind that he clasps and kisses his lord . . . .
But the understood object of *wat* is *Wyn eal gedreas* in the previous line.\(^{59}\) And the sense of the passage is not that a man who lacks the precepts of his lord knows, when sleep and sorrow bind him, that pleasure disappears. Rather, the sense of the passage is this: "A man who lacks the precepts of his lord (i.e., whose lord is dead) knows that pleasure disappears. When sleep and sorrow bind him, he thinks that he clasps and kisses his lord." That is, the punctuation should indicate that *Wyn eal gedreas* is the object of *wat* (an indication which *forðon* allows) and also that the wanderer's dream of clasping and kissing his lord most sensibly is connected to and occurs when sleep and sorrow bind him.

*Wyn eal gedreas—*

*forðon wat se ðe sceal his winedryhtnes*

*leofes larcwidum longe forðolian.*

*Ponne sorg ond slaep somod aetgaedre*

*earme anhogan oft gebindað,*

*ðinceð him on mode ðæet he his mondryhten*

*clyppe ond cysse . . . .*

Pleasure all disappears—indeed (or therefore) a man knows [this] who must long forego the precepts of his dear friend and lord. When sorrow and sleep together at the same time often bind the poor solitary one, it seems to him in his mind that he clasps and kisses his lord . . . .

This punctuation recognizes the logical progression of the poem by allowing the memory of his *winedryhtnes* (friend and lord, l. 37b) to serve as the immediate impetus
for the wanderer's dream of his lord (mondryhten, l. 41b) which follows. But the point of all this shifting of commas and periods is not the better to validate my assertions about the way in which this particular Anglo-Saxon poem is put together; it is to clarify what is most sensibly the poet's intent.

It is important to recognize how Wyn eal gedreas looks both backward to gemon (l. 34a) and forward to ūncestō (l. 41a)—a recognition made easy by understanding the proper function of forðon (l. 37a). Any man who must live without the precepts of his lord, who is friendless (l. 28a) and a poor solitary being (earmē anhogan, l. 40a) cannot find frefran (comfort, l. 28b) either in remembering (gemon, l. 34a) his companions, gift-giving, and his lord's feasts or in seeming (ūncestō, l. 41a) to clasp and kiss his lord in days gone by. For a man who is without a still point in a chaotic and dangerous world, who lacks hall, lord, and kinsmen, there is no comfort even in the imagination.

One more point should be made about Wyn eal gedreas—concerning the part it plays in the pattern of contrast upon which the poem is built and by which the poem progresses. Return for a moment to l. 30 where the wanderer complains about the cruelty of sorrow as a companion to him who has few dear protectors. What remains to him are the paths of exile—not at all the wound gold. Nonetheless,
he remembers the wound gold and the hall-retainers and the feasts with pleasure. But pleasure all disappears and leaves him sorrowful in the knowledge that he is without the precepts of his lord, that his lord is dead, and this sorrow, bound with sleep, leads him to think he lays his hand on the knee of his lord in days gone by. Within twelve lines the poet has moved from sorrow to joy to sorrow to joy—each springing logically and convincingly from the other in a contrastive flux that may well reveal the Anglo-Saxon definition of this world as well as the constructive principle of the poem.

The implication in ll. 37-38 that his lord is dead quite naturally leads the wanderer into the dream of his lord. The dream sequence in ll. 39-51a and the following equally famous passage (ll. 51b-57) employ the most obvious of contrasts—that between the conditions that a man dreams about and the conditions in which he actually finds himself. It is the difference between seeming to see things in his mind (ðinceð him on mode, l. 42a) and awakening again (onwaecnæ eft, l. 45a) to the reality of his position. Within the dream sequence the emphasis falls primarily upon the lord (mondryhten, l. 41b) and the wanderer's relation to him, the relation of an honored member of a comitatus (because of his place at the foot of the gift-throne⁶¹) to the lord of that comitatus.

Ðonne sorg ond slaep somod aetgaedre earme anhogan oft gebindanô.
When sorrow and sleep together at the same time often bind the poor solitary one, it seems to him in his mind that he clasps and kisses his lord, and lays hands and head on his knee, as he sometime formerly enjoyed the gift-throne in days gone by.

Although the dream concentrates on the lord (only the lord himself is explicitly mentioned), the entire search of the wanderer is implicit here. In the relation of thane to lord is implicit the relation of selesecgas (hall-men, 1. 34a) both to lord and to each other. The reference to the giefstolas evokes the entire sequence of hall-joys that the wanderer seeks, the still-point, the security. And the contrastive section emphasizes the absence of hall, friends, and lord.

Donne onwaecneð eft wineleas guma,
gesihð him biforan fealwe wesgas,
baðian brimfuglas, braedan feðra,
hreosan hrim ond snaw, hagle gemenged.

(11. 45-48)

Then the friendless man awakes again, sees before him the dusky waves, sea-gulls bathing, spreading feathers, frost and snow falling, mixed with hail.

He is once again the earme anhogan (1. 40a), the wineleas guma (friendless man), a description which includes the absence both of lord and hall-friends. He is without
companions other than his sorrow (1. 30b) and the sea­
birds. And he is deprived of hall; he sees before him
dusky waves and a freezing storm. As a result both of his
seeing the hrim ond snaw and of his dream of his dead lord,
the wanderer's sorrow becomes the heavier for the loss
of his lord who alone can provide hall and seleseccgas and
sincôege and friends.

Ponne beoô òy hefrigan heortan benne,
sare aefter swaesne. Sorg biô geniwad . . . .  
(ll. 49-50)

Then are the heart-wounds heavier (more serious) to
him, sore for his own dear lord. Sorrow is renewed

Although the dream of kinsmen (ll. 50b-57) includes
one of the great cruxes in the poem, several matters im­
portant to this discussion are quite clear. First there
is the significant collocation of swaesne (one's own dear
lord) and sorg (sorrow) in 1. 50. Sorg biô geniwad func­
tions poetically much as Wyn eal gedreas did, as a poetical
pivot, a Janus-face looking both backward to the emergence
from the dream of the lord and forward to the memory of
kinsmen that is the concern of the next few lines. Sorrow
is renewed between two passages of remembered joy. That
the memory of kinsmen is one of remembered joy is obvious
from the language even if the meaning is not too clear.

Sorg biô geniwad,
ðonne maga gemynd mod geondhweorfeð;
greteô gliwstafum, georne geondsceawað
secga geseldan. Swimmað eft on weg!
Fleotendra ferð no ðæer fela bringeð
cuðra cwidegiedda. Cearo bið geniwad
ðæm ðe sendan sceal swīðe geneahhe
ofer waðema gebind. werigne sefan.

(11. 50b-57)
Sorrow is renewed when the memory of kinsmen passes through his mind; he greets [them] joyously, earnestly surveys the companions of men. They swim again away! The spirit of the seafarers brings there not many known songs. Care is renewed to him who must send very often a weary mind over the frozen waves.

The problems of interpretation here stem from the way in which one is meant to understand such terms as secga geseldan, Swimmað, Fleotendra ferð, cwidegiedda, and perhaps gliwstafum. But these complexities may be partially simplified, although by no means rendered entirely clear, if one is aware of the poet's use of dream or memory up to this point.

At l. 34 the wanderer remembers hall-thanes, gift-receiving, and feasting—the joys of the hall. The passage begins with the explicit indication of remembrance, gemon, and ends with the emphatic wyn eal gedreas (l. 36b). At l. 41 the wanderer remembers the joys attendant upon his relation to his lord. The passage begins with the explicit ðinceð him on mode and ends with the emphatic Ponne onwaecneð eft (l. 45a). And here, at l. 51, the wanderer remembers his kinsmen. The passage begins with the explicit maga gemyn mod geondhweorfeð (the memory of
kinsmen passes through his mind) and ends, as have the previous memory passages, with an emphatic Swimmað eft on weg! (1. 58b). Between the explicit statement of remembrance and the emphatic conclusion to the memory lies a passage of remembered joy. Judging from the wanderer's previous remembrances---(1) happy memory of the hall, and (2) happy dream of his lord---we might well expect this third remembrance, of his kinsmen, also to be a happy one.

There is some indication in the language of the passage that this is so. Following Bosworth-Toller, I understand greteð gliwstafum to mean "greets joyously"; and I take secga geseldan to mean quite literally the "companions of men," a reference to the maga (kinsmen) of l. 51 and not a veiled allusion either to seagulls or protective spirits.

I would like to present an interpretation of the remainder of the passage purely as a conjecture which is, I hope, not too impressionistic. Whatever Swimmað eft on weg means, it clearly indicates the end of the happy memory, the removal of the vision of kinsmen. And whatever the next sentence means,

Fleotendra ferð no ðaer fela bringeð
cuðra cwidegiedda

The spirit of seafarers does not bring there many known songs,

the logic of the poem would lead us to believe that it is to be understood in terms of the disappearance of the kinsmen. I understand Fleotendra ferð to refer to the
dead kinsmen and cuðra cwídegiedda to refer to the familiar songs that they would have sung had they been alive. Part of the wanderer's misery stems from the fact that in the absence of his own kinsmen if he is to listen to any songs at all they must be the unfamiliar songs of those who are not of his own hall, songs praising the deeds of those who are unknown to him. The last lines of this passage,

_Čearo bĩ̊ geniwad_

ðám þe sendan sceal swĩ̊e geneahhe
ofer waðema gebind werigne sefan

Care is renewed to him who must send a weary mind very often over the frozen waves,

strike me as less obscure than has previously been suspected, again, if one understands them as relating to the kinsmen of the wanderer. These kinsmen, all or most, are dead, for the wanderer is _gemyndig... winemaega hryre_ (mindful of the fall of kinsmen, ll. 6-7). He is separated from them, _freomaegum feor_ (far from free kinsmen, l. 21); by death. If there were some still alive, he would not have to seek a new hall or a lord who remembers his own dear lord and who would treat him with kindness (ll. 25-29a). Now, it is a commonplace of medieval studies that the dead are separated from the living by, among other things, a body of water, and that anyone journeying to the land of the dead must by necessity cross water. 65 Therefore, the wanderer, if he wants to be with his kinsmen even in memory, must send his weary mind (werigne
sefan) over the frozen waves (ofer wađema gebind) which separates the living from the dead—an act which, by its very nature and by the way in which it emphasizes his own estrangement, renews his sorrow (cearo bið geniwad), especially if he must do it very often (swiðe geneahhe).

These dream passages are central—and crucial. Only after a clear understanding of the three dream passages can one come to a clean and coherent understanding of the poem as a whole. Let us go back for a moment. As a result of the death of his lord and kinsmen (ll. 6-7), the wanderer is a solitary being (anhaga, l. 1) who must tread the paths of exile (wadan wraclastas, l. 5). The only thing fixed and firm, stable and secure for him is his fate (Wyrd bið ful araed, l. 5). As an exile he says explicitly that he lacks hall (he is eðle bidæeled, deprived of home, l. 20), he lacks kinsmen (winemaega hryre, l. 7; freomaegum feor, l. 21) or friends to whom he can unburden his mind (ll. 9b-llla), and he lacks his lord who is covered by earth in darkness (hrusan heolstre biwrah, l. 23a). These three (hall, kinsmen-companions, and lord) could provide security for him in this world. Consequently he says, again explicitly, that he searches precisely for these three things: for hall (sohte sele, l. 25), for lord (sinces bryttan, l. 25; ðone ðe . . . min mine wisse, l. 27), and for friends or companions who would comfort him, the friendless one, and treat him with kindness.
(11. 28-29a). And the three memory passages emphasize precisely these three things. The first concentrates on the joys of the hall: the companions, the gift-receiving, and the feasts. The second concentrates on the lord and the wanderer's personal relationship to the lord. And the third concentrates on his kinsmen or companions.

Thus, 11. 1-58, the first section of the poem, comprise a unified, cohesive unit. The unification is engineered in several ways—all of which derive from the dona in 11. 1-5. Most important is the consistent point of view, the view from the anhaga's head, as it were.

Secondly, the poem expands upon and defines the anhaga's situation in two interrelated and parallel lines of development: what the anhaga lacks (hall, lord, kinsmen), and what the anhaga seeks (hall, lord, kinsmen). Each line of development is set in clear contrast to the other as the poet flickers back and forth between the two. But the subject remains the same. And the movement within the first section is clear and logical; not one word is wasted.

A great many things are at work contrastively in this first section of the poem. The joys of the past (most clearly presented in the memory passages) are set against the actualities of the present since all the memory passages clearly contrast what he has known and what he now knows. The misery of the present is set against his hopes for the future, which he understands in terms of what he
has known in the past. Thus, both his memory of time past and his hopes for the future, which are one and the same since he conceives of them in the same terms, are set against his present state. In larger terms, the poem to this point reflects not merely an attempt to create in future time the joys of time past (hall, lord, kinsmen), but rather an attempt to exchange that which is wandering and insecure (wraeclastas, the paths of exile) for that which is fixed and secure—something that the wanderer conceives of only as hall, kinsmen, lord. But at l. 58, at the end of the third memory-passage, the poem shifts. The remainder of the poem argues that everything the wanderer has to this point considered firm and joyful is not at all as secure as the wanderer thinks. To this extent, the second section of the poem stands in basic and fundamental contrast to the first 57 lines. Whereas the first section suggests from the point of view of the wanderer that hall, lord, and kinsmen can contribute to stability and are conducive to permanence in a chaotic world, the second section argues that from a larger point of view they are not at all stable. It is only in the last and powerful line of the poem that we are told where seo faestnung stondeð (security stands).
II

Students of The Wanderer agree that something happens within the poem at 1. 58 or, possibly, at 1. 62b. The major problem here stems from the variety of ways one can understand the ic of 1. 58. But whether the ic refers to the poet speaking in propria persona or to a second speaker or to the wanderer himself should not really concern us at this point. Finally, any given critic will interpret the ic in the way that makes most sense to his own understanding of this very difficult poem. (For reasons that will become plain as this chapter progresses, I suspect that the ic continues to be the wanderer.) But what is clear is that at about this point the focus of the poem shifts. Instead of looking inward and focusing on the anguish of a solitary man (anhaga, eardstapa), the poem now looks outward and focuses on the anguish of all men (eorla lif eal, all the life of earls, or all of an earl's life, 1. 60). Instead of being intense and immediate and personal, the poem becomes detached and homiletic and vaguely didactic. While the first section of the poem emphasized what one knows (Ic to soðe wat, I know as a truth, 1. 11; Wat se ðe cunnað, He knows who is able or who suffers, 1. 29; Forðon wat se ðe sceal, Therefore he knows who must, 1. 37), the second section of the poem, which I take to include 11. 58-87, emphasizes thinking
about what is known (geðencan, l. 58; geondence, l. 60) and the awareness of the world that comes from doing so—the business of becoming wise (forðon ne mæg weorðan wis wer aer he . . . , therefore a man may not become wise unless he . . . , l. 64). If the focus of action, the "pole of consciousness," in the first section of the poem was the solitary one, the anhaga of l. 1, the eardstapa of l. 6, and the earme anhogan of l. 40, the point from which we are asked to understand in the second section is that of the wita (wise one) of l. 65 and the gleaw haele (wise or smart man or warrior) of l. 73: Ongietan sceal gleaw haele, the wise man must perceive . . . . And what is it that the wise man must perceive? Why, only that everything in which the wanderer put his hope for stability in the first part—hall, lord, kinsmen—is not stable at all. The second section of the poem very carefully and quite explicitly destroys all the hopes that had been formerly expressed. And this, I think, is what the wanderer comes to know in the second section by stepping back and examining his own anguish in terms of the anguish of all men, what must by necessity and the nature of things attend the life of all earls on this earth.

Beginning at l. 58 with the first sentence of the second section, the poem turns away from the anhaga and his particular weary mind (werigne sefan, l. 57) to more
general considerations. The key phrases which immediately indicate the new point of view are both *eorla lif eal* (l. 60) and, more importantly, *geond ðas worulde* (throughout the world, l. 58) which I take as modifying *eorla lif eal*: "all the life of earls throughout the world, in general, on the larger scheme." References later in this section (*ealre ðisse worulde*, l. 74; *geond ðisne middangeard*, l. 75; *ðisne eardgeard*, l. 85) clearly establish that the point of view has greatly expanded, grown more inclusive, from what it had been in the first section of the poem.

What is particularly striking about the life of earls and what sets the wanderer off on the meditations that lead him to wisdom is *hú hi faerlice flet ofgeafon, modge maguðegnas* (how they [the earls] suddenly give up the hall [metonymy for the death of earls], the brave retainers [literally, kinsmen-thanes], ll. 61-62b). After *maguðegnas* Krapp and Dobbie, mistakenly, place a period. The sense of the next line is that as a result of the death of earls, or concomitant with the death of earls, this world every day falls to ruin and fails. This is the typical medieval macrocosm-microcosm parallel. The two ideas are linked logically in terms of cause, or, more conservatively, they are linked syntactically in that they are both objects of the wanderer's consideration (*geondðence*)--a reading that Krapp and Dobbie's punctuation denies. Instead,
they and the majority of modern critics read the next four lines as a syntactic unit.

Swa ðes middangeard
ealra dogra gehwam dreoseð ond fealleð,
forðon ne maeg weorðan wis wer, aer he age
wintra dael in woruldrice.

(11. 62b-65a)

So this world every day falls to ruin and fails; therefore a man cannot become wise ere he knows many winters in the kingdom of the world.

But if one sees the connection, either causal or syntactic, between the fall of earls and the fall of the world, then one can see the logical sequence of thought that leads the wanderer to the topic of the second section of the poem: the impermanence of everything under the sun. And if one understands swa as an adverbial conjunction marking a consequence (so, therefore, on that account), a reading which Bosworth-Toller allows (s.v., swa, V, 6), then the logical connection becomes all the stronger. I would repunctuate the text in such a way as to reveal that connection:

Forðon ic geðencan ne maeg geond ðas woruld
for hwan modsefa min ne gesweorce,
ðonne ic eorla lif eal geondóence,--
hu hi faerlice flet ofgeafon,
modge maguðegnas, swa ðes middangeard
ealra dogra gehwam dreoseð ond fealleð.
Forðon ne maeg weorðan wis wer aer he age
wintra dael in woruldrice.

(11. 58-65a)
Therefore [i.e., as a result of all that I have said already in section one about the fall of my lord and kinsmen and my own search for security in this dark and darksome world] I cannot think why my mind does not become dark when I consider all the life of earls throughout the world [i.e., in general]—how they, the brave warriors, suddenly give up the hall; so [i.e., on which account] this world every day falls to ruin and fails. Therefore [i.e., because of what I have just said about earls and the world] a man may not become wise until he knows many winters in the kingdom of the world.

Stanley Greenfield understands this part of the poem essentially the way I do, although he retains the old punctuation: although earthly things are perishing daily, man cannot recognize the universality of this decay until the experience and reflection of many years has brought it home to him.

But the punctuation, as such, in this case, is not crucial. What is important is the sequence of thoughts that modulates between the first section of the poem and the second. The changes in punctuation I have suggested only clarify and emphasize that modulation. Briefly, that sequence is this: from thoughts of his own dead lord (ll. 41-44) and his own dead kinsmen (ll. 51-53) both of which are involved in the wanderer's concern for himself and his own estrangement, the wanderer turns first to thoughts of any earl, all earls, and how they too, like his lord and kinsmen, can die, can give up the meadhalls,
how their lives can suddenly change; and secondly to thoughts of the whole world, how it too is daily changing and falling to ruin. This then, and the way in which a wise man understands it, becomes the major concern of the second section of the poem. But the poet does not discuss the transience of the world haphazardly. Rather, he discusses it precisely in such a way that it counters each concern and hope of the wanderer in the first section of the poem.

The fact of the wanderer's life which serves to ignite him in the first section of the poem into vocalizing what precisely deprives him of security—that is, the poetic fiction we are asked to accept as the stimulus for the wanderer's monologue—is the fact that as an anhaga he must bewail his sorrow (ceare cwiðan, l. 9) alone (ana, l. 8). There is no man alive to whom he can tell his heart openly (ll. 9a-11b). As I have shown above, he implicitly contrasts his own desire to speak out with what he knows is noble conduct (indryhten ðeaw, l. 12b). After the lines which modulate between sections one and two and shift the focus of the poem, the poet clearly shows the attitude that a wise man (wita, l. 65b) must take in response to such a situation.

Wita sceal geðyldig,
ne sceal no to hatheort  ne to hraedwyrdæ,
ne to wac wiga  ne to wanhydæ,
ne to forht ne to faegen,  ne to feohgifre
A wise man must be patient, nor must he be too passionate, nor too hasty of speech, nor too weak a warrior, nor too rash, nor too timid, nor too joyful, nor too avaricious, nor ever too eager to boast before he knows well. A man must wait [or bide his time] when he boastfully speaks, until he, bold of spirit, knows clearly whither the heart's thoughts want to turn.

My concern here is not whether the catalogue of "Thou shalt nots" derives from pagan and gnomic philosophy or Latin rhetoric or from both, but rather the function that these lines serve within the poem. That function is revealed in the poet's emphasis. This emphasis clearly is "nothing in the extreme, moderation in all things" and especially with regard to speaking out: a man, and particularly a wise man, must be patient (gedyldig) and not too hasty of speech (to hraedwyrde) nor too eager to boast (gielpes to georn) nor should he speak boastfully (beot spriceð) until he has achieved wisdom—i.e., until he knows well (has full knowledge, geare cunne) and knows clearly (cunne gearwe). And a man cannot know well or clearly, cannot become wise, until he owns many winters in the kingdom of the earth (11. 64-65).

Now, what the wanderer has shown in the first section
of the poem in his desire to find someone to whom he can reveal his thoughts is not so much a lack of noble conduct (indryhten ðeaw) as it is a lack of wisdom. The distinction is important: it is the difference in twentieth-century terms between a man who is merely well-educated and a man who is wise. In late medieval terms it is the difference between Parzifal's first appearance at the Grail Castle when he neglects to ask the vital questions and his later appearance there when he acts wisely. At first Parzifal behaves poorly because he is following his mother's advice; at last Parzifal, er küene traecliche wis (a brave man slowly wise), behaves in a manner that behooves a man who has gained wisdom. In The Wanderer it is the difference between the man who behaves rightly by necessity rather than choice (he has no one to speak to, but if he had, he would speak out) and the man who behaves rightly by virtue of his experience in the world and his awareness of the world gained through many winters.73 On the one hand there is the desire of the wanderer to speak out which stems from his estrangement in the universe and his search for engagement; on the other is the wisdom of a wise man who knows that one ought not to speak out until he has full knowledge. It is the difference between the wanderer who knows that his desire does not indicate noble conduct and the wise man who knows why such conduct is considered noble. The distinction derives from the
shift in point of view—a shift which I think the wanderer himself makes and which indicates his growth toward wisdom. In contrasting the wanderer's first thought on speaking out with his later thoughts (from a new point of view, as a wise man), the poet indicates this growth. There is no doubt which of the contrasted attitudes toward speaking out (ll. 9b-14 or ll. 65b-72) the poet prefers.

The remainder of this second section of the poem (to l. 87) focuses upon precisely those things which the wanderer, in the first section before he adopted his larger more inclusive point of view, says his security and well-being depend upon—hall, lord, kinsmen. Seen from the new, less personal, less intimate point of view, ðes middangeard / ealra dogra gehwam dreoseð ond fealleð (this world every day falls to ruin and fails, ll. 62b-63). And that is, as we might well expect, precisely what ll. 73-87 insist is true about hall, lord, and kinsmen.

Ongietan sceal gleaw haele hu gaestlic bið, ðonne eaire ðisse worulde wela weste stondeð, swa nu missenlice geond ðisne middangeard winde biwaune weallas stondað, hrime bihrorene, hryðge ða ederas. Woriað ða winsalo, waldend licgað dreame bidrorene, duguð eal gecrong, wlonc bi wealle. Sume wig fornorn, ferede in forðwege, sumne fugel ððbaer ofer heanne holm, sumne se hara wulf deaðe gedaelde, sumne dreorighleor in eorðscraeфе eorl gehydde.
Yōde swa āisne eardgeard aelda scyppend
ōōaet burgwara breahtrna lease
eald enta geweorc idlu stodon.

(11. 73-87)
The wise warrior must perceive how fearful it is when all this world's well-being stands barren, as now variously throughout this earth walls stand firm, swept by wind, covered by frost, the dwellings storm-beaten. The winehalls crumble, rulers lie deprived of joys, the duguō all have died proud by the wall. Battle destroyed a certain one, bore [him] forth on far paths; a certain one the bird bore off over the high sea; a certain one the grey wolf shared with death; a certain one a sad-faced earl hid (buried) in an earth-cave. The maker of men laid waste thus (i.e., in this way) this earth until the cities (or inhabitants of cities) [stood] void of revelry, [and] the old work of giants stood idle.

This understanding of the world is more than a meditation upon a ruin. Rather it is an understanding predicated upon the wise man's vision (Ongietan sceal gleaw haele, l. 73) and the newly adopted larger, less personal point of view (ealre āisse worulde, of all this world, l. 74; geond āisse middangeard, throughout this earth, l. 75; āisse eardgeard, this earth, l. 85). Here all the well-being which the wanderer sought and remembered is far from secure—a point which the poet emphasizes by his contrastive collocation of wela (well-being—a term connected in the logic of the poem with the remembered Wyn of l. 36) and weste stondad (stands barren) in l. 74. If the
wanderer earlier put his joy in the stability of halls, the wanderer as wise man now focuses upon the remains of halls and dwellings—the wind-swept, frost-covered walls and storm-beaten dwellings that can be seen variously scattered throughout the world. The assertion becomes explicit when the poet turns away from the destruction of halls to consider lord and kinsmen, all the life of earls. The transition serves both as a logical connection (winsalo refers to what immediately preceded; waldend and duguð refer to what will follow) and as a summary statement.

Woriað ða winsalo, waldend licgað
dreame bidrorene, duguð eal gecrong,
wlonc bi wealle.

The winehalls crumble, the rulers lie deprived of joys, the duguð all have died, proud by the wall. The contrasts become even more powerful by virtue of the faith the wanderer expressed earlier in the contribution to stability and well-being provided by halls (winsalo), lords (waldend), and kinsmen-companions (duguð).

The next five lines (ll. 80-84), whatever else they mean in the particular, surely refer to the death of lords and kinsmen, how they suddenly give up the hall (l. 61). They also reflect the wanderer's earliest concern, the impetus for his monologue in the first section of the poem where he was mindful of hardships, of bitter battle-slaughter, the fall of dear kinsmen (ll. 6b-7). And more particularly, they contrast with his remembrances
of the joys of lord (ll. 41-44) and kinsmen (ll. 51-53b) and his expressed hope to find these joys again (ll. 25-29a). The point of the contrast, of course, is that all lords, any lord, all kinsmen, any kinsmen, will die—the conclusion at which the wanderer arrives and which he explicitly states in the next section of the poem (ll. 108-110)—and that a wise man ought not to put his hope for firmness and stability in them.

The last three lines of the second section (ll. 85-87, quoted above) emphasize this attitude and summarize this segment of the argument by expanding slightly the broad point of view. Instead of surveying hall, lord, and kinsmen from the point of view of geond ðas woruld (throughout the world, l. 58b), the poem looks upon the world itself (ðisne eardgeard, l. 85) from this viewpoint, and thus prepares the way for the third section. What is seen is articulated in terms of three closely aligned contrastive collocations: Yôde (laid waste) set against scyppend (maker) in l. 85; burgwara (cities, or inhabitants of cities) set against breahþma lease (void of revelry) in l. 86; and geweorc (work) set against idlu (idle) in l. 87. To this extent, the second section concludes by expanding upon the contrastive collocation of wela (well-being) and weste (barren) at l. 74 and by making concrete and explicit the general assertion about the world every day falling to ruin and failing (ll. 62a-63). Bound
up in this conclusion and subsumed by it are the assertions on all the life of earls (l. 60) stated explicitly at ll. 78-80a and treated individually in ll. 75-77 (hall) and ll. 80b-84 (lord and kinsmen).

Finally, what is viewed is not a pretty picture: nothing endures, nothing remains, neither hall, nor lord, nor kinsmen, nor this broad earth itself. It reflects a view of life infinitely more sad than that which Arnold voiced in "Dover Beach," for to the Anglo-Saxons ðīs deorcor lif (this dark life, l. 89) is not only one lived upon a "darkling plain . . . Where ignorant armies clash by night," but it is one in which a man cannot even say "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another!"

III

The same problems that attend the shift in point of view between the first and second section of the poem (the identification of the ic in l. 58) obtain when one moves from the second to the third section of the poem, for the poet refers to se (he) in l. 88. But whether one chooses to read the subsequent lines as the monologue of a real wiseman, a second person in the poem (Huppé) or an imaginary wiseman (Lumiansky) or the wanderer himself generalized into the third person (Anderson) or a wiseman postulated by the wanderer who speaks the whole poem (Greenfield) ought not to occupy our primary interest here.
Finally what is said and the way in which it relates to the poem as a whole must take precedence in our inquiry at this moment over the identification of the speaker. (For reasons that I shall argue below, I prefer to read this section of the poem as the words of the wanderer become wise man---even more wise than he was in section two.)

The relation of the third to the second section of the poem is revealed in the language of the transition which provides the introduction to the *ubi sunt* passage.

Se ðonne ðisne wealsteal wise geðohht
ond ðis deorce lif deope geondðenceð,
frød in ferðe, feor oft gemon
waelsleahta worn, ond ðas word acwið . . . .

(11.88-91)

He then wisely pondered this spot where the walls stand and deeply meditates this dark life, wise in his mind, often remembers the slaughtered multitudes [from] afar, and speaks these words . . . .

The key words here, *wealsteal* and *ðis deorce lif*, derive from and refer to the major concerns in the immediately previous lines of the poem: the condition of the world and the state of man's life. Bosworth-Toller read *wealsteal* as "a spot where the walls stand," and this reading is acceptable so long as one understands the reference to mean not this one particular spot where walls stand but rather anywhere variously throughout the world (*missenlice geond ðisne middangeard*, 1. 75) where walls stand—or, to extend the symbol even further, the whole earth itself.
This is clearly the poet's intention when he initially describes the walls (ll. 75-77) and when he returns to them at the end of the second section (ll. 85-87). Thus, I take the devastation of this earth, the cities void of revelry, and, most obviously, the old work of giants (i.e., walls—as in *The Ruin*) standing idle in the preceding three lines to be the precise referents of *ōísne wealsteal*. Similarly, the precise referent of *ōís deorce lif* is the inevitable loss (given the nature of things defined in section two) of hall, lord, and kinsmen explicitly stated in ll. 78-80a and expanded upon in the preceding and subsequent (the sum-passage) lines. Thus, *ōísne wealsteal* and *ōís deorce lif* are both summary phrases.

What obtains then in the third section of the poem is the observation of a man who is *froð in ferðe* (wise in his mind, l. 90), who wisely ponders (*wise geðohte*, l. 88) and deeply meditates (*deope geondðenceð*, l. 89) on *ōísne wealsteal* and *ōís deorce lif*. Consequently, one might well expect this section to focus upon the objects of the speaker's meditation. And that is exactly what happens. However, it is far more than a new reiteration of sections one or two of the poem. Since I read the poem as a unified poetic expression, the wanderer's (and the audience's) understanding increases as the wanderer's vision broadens. The meaning is cumulative; the final statement is at the end. Each new view of man and the world incorporates and
comments upon (by contrast) the preceding views. The wanderer who speaks the third section of the poem benefits from the two-fold vision he has experienced earlier: the intense and personal understanding of the world he reveals as the eardstapa and anhaga of section one, and the somewhat larger, detached, and objective understanding of the world he reveals as the wita and gleaw hæle of section two. And this change is made clear in the language. In section two, the wanderer only thought (geôencan, l. 58) and considered (geondôence, l. 60). But in this section, although the verbs remain the same, they are intensified; he ponders wisely (wise geôohhte, l. 88) and meditates deeply (deope geondôenceð, l. 89). Instead of considering all the life of earls (l. 60) and this world which falls to ruin and fails (ll. 62b-63), the wanderer meditates upon symbols of this world's transience (ôisne wealsteal) and the life of man (ôis deorce lif). And the difference between considering a wide and general statement and considering a symbol is the difference between the wanderer's understanding or vision of man and the world in sections two and three. Indeed, as a mark of his maturity of vision, what the wanderer was mindful of at the beginning of the poem, the fall of dear kinsmen (winemaega hryre, l. 7) has become, by this point in the poem, transmuted into waelslehta worn (slaughtered multitudes, l. 91). They have in the increasingly larger consideration lost their
personal and intimate associations for him. He has progressed beyond the need for engagement and for personal involvement that tormented him earlier. We no longer hear, in quite the same way, about those things which dominated his memory and his waking and sleeping thoughts in the first part of the poem. He has become *frod in ferðe* (wise in his mind, l. 90).

What the third section of *The Wanderer* focuses upon, then, is the life of man (hall, lord, kinsmen) and the state of the world—and it draws the only logical, earth-bound conclusion (ll. 106-110) that one can come to as a result of that consideration. The wanderer's new vision of the life of man (this dark life) is voiced in the famous *ubi sunt* passage that implicitly contrasts past and present.83

Hwaer cwom mearg? Hwaer cwom mago? Hwaer cwom maðdum-gyfa?
Hwaer cwom symbla gesetu? Hwaer sindon seledreamas?
Eala beorht bune! Eala byrnwiga!
Eala ðeodnes ðrym! Hu seo ðrag gewat, genap under hinthelm, swa heo no waere.

(ll. 92-96)

Where has gone the horse? Where has gone the man (or rider)? Where has gone the treasure-giving? Where have gone the banquet seats? Where are the hall-joys? Alas the bright cup! Alas the burnied warrior! Alas the glory of princes! How that time departed, darkened under the helmet of night, as if it had never been.
Such is ðís deorce lif. The ubi sunt passage emphasizes the present absence of the joys of hall, lord, and kinsmen-companions, the camaraderie qua stability that the wanderer sought in the first section of the poem. They are no longer any meadhall, lord, or comrades geond ðes woruld as they were in section two. They are, rather, the very idea of all halls, lords, kinsmen. They have been transfigured into symbols: Ėala beorht bune (hall), Ėala byrnwīga (kinsmen), Ėala ðeodnes ðrym (lord).

Yet it is in the nature of an ubi sunt passage to assert the absence now of something that had been in the past. It contrasts the present with the past and shows how the present is lacking. What in the past was bright, colorful, and intense is in the present, if it exists at all, only a thin copy: dull, gray, and limpid. The implications are great. "The ubi sunt . . . functions as a reminder to one and all that in the face of death all earthly preoccupations are puny and vain and that it is time to concentrate on the behavior that would save one's soul." And this once again points the difference between the points of view of the second and third sections. The second section reveals the transience of earthly joys—hall, lord, and kinsmen. But the ubi sunt passage in section three not only shows that all things pass, but also implies the speed with which they pass (hu seo ðrag gewat, how that time departed, l. 95) so that they are
swa heo no waere (as if it had never been, l. 96). While section two declares that all men die, section three questions the validity of hall, lord, and kinsmen as sources of stability. It is not only that they crumble and die; it is as if they never were. And by beginning here to question the validity of those very things in which the wanderer put his faith at the beginning of the poem, the poet (wanderer) reveals the degree to which the wanderer has matured by his shift through ever more encompassing points of view and also prepares for the final negation (of hall, lord, and kinsmen) and the final affirmation (security in God) of the poem.

If the wanderer comes to discover that hall, lord, and kinsmen comprise an invalid source of worthwhile stability and joy, he has yet to discover that the foldan blaed (earth's bounty, l. 33) which he lacked and sought in section one and ealre ðisne worulde wela (all this world's well-being, l. 74) in section two are equally unsatisfying. After the destruction of kinsmen (which I take here in a generic sense to include comrades, lord, the comitatus-joys of the hall) in l. 97, the only thing that remains is a wall wondrous high (l. 98); the bounty of the earth is no longer so bountiful.

Stondeð nu on laste leofre duguðe
weal wundrum heah, wyrmlicum fah.
Eorlas fornoman asca ðryðe,
waepen waelgifru, --wyrd seo maere!!--
Now stands after (i.e., in place of) the more beloved warriors, a wall wondrous high, wrought with serpentine ornaments. The powers of ash-spears destroyed the earls, the weapon slaughter-hungry, --Fate the renowned one!--and storms beat the rocky slopes, falling snowstorms enfold the earth, the terror of winters, then comes darkness, darkness darkens, [and] sends from the north fierce hailstorms in hatred to men.

It is a world essentially hostile to man, a world not only where the old work of giants stands idle (1. 87) but also where the very foundations of the world (eal ðis eorðan gesteal, 1. 110), the rocky slopes and cliffs, are constantly under attack. Man doesn't really stand a chance. Wyrd, about which everyone knows (seo maere, the renowned one, 1. 100) and which is fully resolute and determined (1. 5), so arranges the world that the power of ash-spears destroys earls, and storms beat the rocky slopes. To refer to Wyrd at this place in the poem is both to recognize, with awesome appreciation, its terrible power and to indicate a cause for the fall of earls and the general hostility of this world.

The sequence of visions and their concomitant realizations that we have noted so far in the poem can point
to only one conclusion, the penultimate statement of the poem toward which everything from the very beginning has been leading. Not only does this statement maintain the point of view of the third section which it concludes, but it embraces all, casting back to the very beginning of the poem. To that extent it includes all the major considerations of the poem—hall, lord, kinsmen, and the world. The explicit language does not leave the meaning of this conclusion in doubt.

Eal. is earfoðlic eorðan rice,
onwendeð wyrda gesceafte weoruld under heofonum.
Her bið feoh laene, her bið freond laene,
her bið mon laene, her bið maeg laene,
eal ðis eorðan gesteal idel weorðeð.

(11. 106-110)

All the earth's domain is full of hardship; the decree of fate turns (or changes) the world beneath the heavens. Here is wealth transitory; here is friend transitory; here is man transitory; here is kin transitory; all the firmness of this earth becomes worthless.

The wanderer has come a long way from the anhaga of the beginning of the poem, the eardstapa for whom there was no one alive to whom he could tell clearly the thoughts of his heart and who indicated his desire to recreate in present time the conditions of involvement with hall, lord, and kinsmen that had contributed to his security, stability and joy in past time. How small, how narrow, how limited in perception and understanding the wanderer's
initial search for hall-joys and companions seems now from the point of view of the end of the poem. But by designing his argument so that it stems from the very intense condition of the wanderer at the start of the poem, the poet very gently leads his fiction (the wanderer) and his audience in the meadhall through a succession of increasingly wider points of view so that both wanderer and audience are led to accept a conclusion at the end of the poem that would have been too sudden to accept at the beginning. Both wanderer and audience are made to see things in a new light, from the "eighth spere," as it were, to which Chaucer, later, raises Troilus. Thus, from the point of view of the third section of the poem, it is not just hall, lord, and kinsmen that are transient; the very foundations of the earth itself (eal ðis eordan gesteal, l. 110) are called into question. The poet emphasizes the point with the contrastive collocation of gesteal (constitution, frame) and idel (worthless) in l. 110. The fourth section of the poem shows where the gesteal is not idel, where security lies.

IV

At the beginning of the fourth and final section, as at the beginning of the three previous sections, the speaker once again receives a new designation, snottor on mode (sage in spirit or mind, l. 111). Huppe reads this
as the concluding formula for the ubi sunt speech of the wise man who, he believes, is introduced at l. 88, and G. K. Anderson appears to agree, at least in part, since he finds the lines which follow to be "weak and intrusive." For Stanley Greenfield, the snottor on mode is either "a convenient fiction" and "a hypothetical mouthpiece" for the wanderer who speaks the whole poem or, in a later reading of the poem, the poet himself apparently speaking in propria persona after dropping the fiction of the wanderer. But to my mind the poet maintains the fiction of the wanderer here and allows his creation to speak the last lines of the poem from the vantage point he has achieved by passing through the points of view that characterize earlier sections of the poem. From the eardstapa who was concerned only with his own personal problems, the wanderer by expanding his vision becomes the wita, the gleaw haele, who, by adopting yet a new point of view toward the basic problem, becomes frod in ferðe and finally snottor on mode. The poem, as I understand it, presents the growing wisdom of man, not necessarily literally (i.e., it is not to be understood that the speaker matures from eardstapa to snottor on mode in the space of time it takes to read or listen to the poem) but rather symbolically, indicating in this case the four steps that lead one from misery to a kind of wisdom. Nor do I mean to suggest that snottor on mode describes a wisdom
necessarily greater than *frod in ferðe*; they are probably about equal. But it is clear from the progression of points of view that *wita* is intended to be wiser than *eardstapa* and that *frod in ferðe*—*snottor on mode* is intended to present a greater wisdom than *wita*. For the *snottor on mode* suggests the antidote to the depressing vision of the world defined in the conclusion to section three and epitomized in the contrastive collocation of the preceding line (l. 110) when he offers the extraterrestrial step provided by Christianity.

Swa cwaeð snottor on mode, gesaet him sundor aet rune. Til bið se ðe his treowe gehealdeð, ne sceal naefre his torn to rycene beorn of his breostum acyðan, nemðe he aer ða bote cunne, eorl mid elne gefremman. Wel bið ðam ðe him are seceð, frofre to faeder on heofonum, ðaer us eal seo faestnung stondeð. (11. 111-115)

So spoke the one sage in spirit; he sat apart in a secret moment of meditation. Fortunate (happy, good) is he who guards his faith; nor ought a man ever to declare his grief from his breast too hastily unless he previously knows the benefit; [such an] earl performs with strength. Well (blessed) is he who seeks honor (grace) for himself, comfort (solace) from the father in heaven [instead of from other men?], where the security of all of us stands.

With consummate artistry the poet evokes the opening of the poem by returning to the wanderer's first concern
(which was also the concern of the *wita* at the beginning of section two): his desire for someone to speak to. Even though the wanderer knew what constituted noble conduct (*indryhten ðeaw*, l. 12), he intimated that his desire was other. But having matured in understanding through the poem and from the *snottor on mode*'s point of vision, the wanderer reaffirms with a new understanding the *indryhten ðeaw* he chose to disregard earlier. To speak hastily and openly the thoughts of one's heart to lord and kinsmen-companions is to commit them to that which passes and passes swiftly *swa heo no waere* (l. 96b). One must be judicious in speaking out; such a man *mid elne gefremman* (performs with strength, l. 114a). Rather, instead of seeking *are* (honor, favor, grace, glory—the word is the same as that in l. 1 and maintains its connotations of public adulation) and *frofre* (comfort) from other men, all of whom are transient, like the very foundations of this earth, one ought to seek *are* and *frofre* from God in heaven which is eternal and abiding and secure. The security of God gains enormous power since it stands in stark contrast to what the entire poem has taught us, as audience, to see: that hall, lord, and kinsmen-companions are transitory and that even this earth every day falls to ruin and fails so that *eal ðis eorðan gesteal ðed weorðeð* (l. 110). Since *ealre*
the poet consciously contrasts this transience with the stability one finds with God. Both weste stondeò and idlu stodon are set against faestnung stondeò.

When one understands the poem in this way, most if not all of the problems that critics have stretched their minds to solve disappear. The relation of individual parts of the poem to one another becomes consistent and straightforward. Not only do the various parts link in terms of new points of view toward essentially the same material, but they are also connected by the system of basic contrasts that pervades the poem and dictates its structure. And the relation of the last lines to the poem as a whole is understandable; they are not the obtuse intrusions of an inartistic Christian scribe but the logical end toward which the poem has all along been pointing. One no longer has to insist that the poem does not make clear sense and that the incongruities can be explained in terms of the incongruities of gnomic wisdom (I. L. Gordon) or the dream-connections of the speaker's reverie (Rumble, Anderson). The poem is neither a consolatio (Greenfield, Cross), nor a peregrinatio with eschatological overtones (Smithers, the Robertsonians), nor an exile poem (Elliott). Rather, when one sees that the poem progresses through a sequence of increasingly
larger and more inclusive points of view which move both speaker-poet-wanderer and the audience from ignorance to wisdom, and when one sees the series of contrastive collocations near the end of the poem that implicitly urge contemptu mundi and finally redirect one's eyes from this world to the next, then one must see the poem as one which acknowledges the impermanence of the joys and sorrows of this world and emphasizes the joy and security of heaven, ðæer us eal seo faestnungen stondæ.
Chapter II: Footnotes

1. Robert D. Stevick, "The Text and the Composition of The Seafarer," PMLA, LXXX (Sept., 1965), p. 333. Stevick, of course, goes on to say that there is a variety of "definitions of thematic structure and meaning," which is precisely the point at issue here. In attempting to distinguish between the "good" text of The Wanderer and what he feels is the "unfinished" text of The Seafarer, Stevick overstates the case for The Wanderer.


4. Ibid., p. 3.

5. Ibid., p. 1.


7. Ibid., p. 159.


9. Ibid., p. 229.


12. See, for example, C. C. Ferrell, "Old Germanic Life in the Anglo-Saxon Wanderer and Seafarer," MLN, IX (1894), 402-407. And, for a more modern reading based on the two-speaker theory, see J. C. Pope, "Dramatic Voices in The Wanderer and The Seafarer," in Franciplegius, eds.

15. Ibid., p. 526.
16. Ibid., p. 536.


19. Ibid., p. 454.
20. Ibid., p. 463.


23. Ibid., p. 218.


26. Ibid., p. 64. And see p. 73, n. 8, where Cross implies he will expand the argument of R. M. Lumiansky ("The Dramatic Structure of the Old English Wanderer," Neophilologus, XXXIV [1949], 104-112): "By broadening the issue to consolatio in general, . . . the probability of the poet's knowing either the principles or examples of consolatio grows." Lumiansky was the first scholar, to my knowledge to suggest that The Wanderer is a consolatio, but he went too far in asserting that the poet presents "a fundamental contrast identical to Boethius' idea of true and false felicity" (p. 111); therefore, the poet knew Boethius' book and "his poem is meant to convey the same 'consolation'" (p. 111). But this, as Greenfield points out (Critical History, p. 218) is "debatable and unprovable"; thus, the modern critical stance, following Cross, is that the poem is within the consolatio tradition and not the reflection of any one work.


33. Hupé, op. cit., p. 537.


36. I will discuss in due course below the shift to the impersonal third person at 1. 29b which no longer bothers modern scholars to the extent that it dismayed earlier ones.

37. Hupé, op. cit., pp. 523-524, believes, perhaps too categorically, that the first five lines provide an introduction wherein "the mercy of God is contrasted with the harshness of Fate [and that] in the conclusion, the blessedness of the man who gains the mercy of God is balanced against the good of the steadfast man of reticence and self-restraint" (p. 524). That is, the first five lines and the last five lines of the poem are consciously and purposefully balanced. Stanley B. Greenfield, however, in a less impressionistic analysis points out the impossibility of being sure. "Syntactically, then, the formula in 1. 6 [Swa cwaeS] may refer to what precedes or what follows, and 11. 1-5 may or may not be a part of the wanderer's speech" ("Reconsideration," p. 456). See also Chadwick, op. cit., p. 162.

Scholars are, nonetheless, still perplexed by where to begin and, more important, where to end the wanderer's monologue. Traditionally the wanderer's monologue begins at 1. 7. Chadwick ends it at 1. 29a; Hupé at 1. 62a; Wyatt, An Anglo-Saxon Reader (Cambridge, 1919), at 1. 87; and Krapp and Dobie, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, vol. III, The Exeter Book (New York, 1936), although they say
they will follow Chadwick, place no end-quotation marks at all. For a brief remark on the policies of other editors, see Krapp and Dobbie, op. cit., p. xxxix.

38. All references to The Wanderer are to the text in Krapp and Dobbie, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 134-137.

39. Since I am suggesting a new reading of the poem, I have tried to present a most conservative yet sensible translation. Thus, I translate anhaga (1. 1) as "solitary one (one who meditates alone" following I. L. Gordon, op. cit., p. 3, n. 2: "anhaga (anhoga) is probably to be connected with hogian 'to think' rather than with hoga 'enclosure'; . . . it was used more generally to describe one who is isolated, exiled, or bereft of friends." The difficulties in translating ḍeah ḍe as "although" (its most common meaning) are pointed out by Greenfield, "Reconsideration," pp. 464-465 and notes 23 and 24. Consequently, I have quite respectably avoided the anacoluthon by translating ḍeah ḍe as "while."

40. Huppé, op. cit., p. 523, suggests that "lines 1-2a (the mercy of God) [are] contrasted with the remaining portion, 2b-5 (the inexorability of Fate)." And Stanley Greenfield ("Reconsideration," pp. 464-465), by translating ḍeah ḍe as "while" and gebideō as "to experience," finds that "This brings out fully the contrasting value of ḍeah ḍe; although a solitary one may long have been in exile, spinning out his lot as decreed by Fate, he may often in the end experience the grace and the mercy of God."

41. So I. L. Gordon, note 39 above. See also Bosworth-Toller, s.v. anhaga.

42. In the Bosworth-Toller Supplement, the Latin statuerunt is translated into Anglo-Saxon by hafað araeded; s.v. araedan.

43. So Bosworth-Toller, s.v. sweotole. The word connotes public expression and is an expansion of the anhaga-are contrast in 1. 1.

44. Tacitus, in the Germania, #27, relates the different acceptable responses expected of men and women at the death of lord and kinsman: "A woman may decently express her grief in public; a man should nurse his in his heart." (A useful translation is that of H. Mattingly, Tacitus on Britain and Germany, Penguin Books [Baltimore, 1964].)

45. Greenfield, "Reconsideration," p. 457, reads this
as a gnomic reflection "about the noble custom of restraint in grief."

46. The problems associated with this word are discussed below in connection with 1. 37. The most common meanings of the word are acceptable here: therefore, consequently, for that reason.

47. The two adjectives domgeorne and dreorigne are used substantively as the subject and the object (respectively) of the verb bindað in the next line. See Jackson Campbell and James Rosier, Poems in Old English (New York, 1962), p. 66.

48. Campbell and Rosier, op. cit., p. 66, read biwrah as a verb that goes with ic of 1. 19 and translate: "I covered my gold friend."


50. The MS reads only mine wisse. For the wide variety of words supplied for metrical reasons by editors since Thorpe, see Krapp and Dobbie's notes to The Wanderer, op. cit., pp. 288-289. They omit reference, however, to the gloss by Bosworth-Toller of mine under myne ("love"). They cite this passage and translate: "would feel love, would love." Most modern editors and students of the poem accept the addition of min and translate: "who knew my lord."


52. The three most persuasive critics of the poem, Lawrence, Huppé, and Greenfield, agree that the wanderer's monologue does not stop, as Norah Kershaw Chadwick would have it, at this point, 1. 29a. But they differ on the relationship of 11. 8-29a to 11. 29b-57. Huppé believes that "Lines 8a-29a thus serve as a dramatic introduction to lines 29b-57b which bear the burden of the narrative: the former tell in the first person of the wanderer's grief, then lines 29b-57b picture the actuality of his grief" and by shifting to impersonal discourse they merge
"the wanderer's experience with that of all who have suffered exile" (p. 521). Huppé suggests that the shift in tense is not unusual in Anglo-Saxon; and the shift may function rhetorically to engage "the reader's imaginative participation in the scene through the reminder that he is reading of cold sorrow in warm security" (p. 522). Lawrence (op. cit., p. 472) and Greenfield agree, however, that at l. 29b "The wanderer is merely using a fictional character to underscore the emotions and feelings he had, the visions and frustrations he had and all have had and will have under similar circumstances" ("Reconsideration," p. 457).

Of greater importance to the Huppé-Greenfield argument is whether the whole speech, ll. 8-57, describes events in present time or in the past. Huppé believes they are present events; Greenfield believes, because key verbs are in the past tense, that they are past events ("Reconsideration," p. 457). The question, however, is not particularly relevant to my understanding of the poem because my point here is only that the poet presents certain ideas and hopes (either present or past) from a particular point of view and that later in the poem he will examine these same ideas and hopes from another point of view. Although I incline toward Greenfield's belief, I have represented, for stylistic reasons, the events in this part of the poem as occurring in the present. My remarks in the preceding paragraph do not depend on whether the events described here are present or past. The point is that they are different and contrasted whether one is in present and the other in past time or whether both are at different times in the past.

53. Huppé would read se þe cunnaþ, l. 29b, to include all who have experienced exile; Greenfield, following Lawrence, reads it as a "straw man." The distinction is not important for my argument since whether one reads it as generalized or particularized by the wanderer, the events which follow are tied to the wanderer's understanding and articulated in terms of his experience. See the previous note.

54. Cross, op. cit., p. 66.


56. Whitelock, op. cit., p. 264 and n. 1; and p. 266.

58. Although W. W. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 475, n. 32, feels that oft "evidently belongs logically with ðinceð [l. 41 rather] than with gebindeð," I have kept the more commonly accepted reading.

59. The translators implicitly acknowledge this. So Chadwick, op. cit., p. 11, and, in a more literal translation, R. K. Gordon, op. cit., p. 73: "The joy has all perished. Wherefore he knows this [my italics] who must long forego the counsels of his dear lord and friend, when sorrow and sleep together often bind the poor solitary man . . . ."

60. There may be a very subtle point here revealed only by the final point of view that the poem takes. It is possible to understand this as an implicit argument against the Anglo-Saxon concept of the permanence of fame:

61. Campbell and Rosier, op. cit., p. 66, suggest that "The obeisance described here probably represents the pledge of loyalty to the lord at the time of gift-giving." But judging from the similar position of Unferð who sits at the feet of Hroðgar in Beowulf, I tend to read this as a position of honor.

62. The same idea is repeated in a slightly different but more explicit form in The Seafarer, ll. 19b-21.

63. The MS reads oft, but I accept Thorpe's emendation of oft to eft as do most modern editors.

64. One need not recount in full the variety of scholarly opinion here. Vivian Salmon, "The Wanderer' and 'The Seafarer,' and the Old English Conception of the Soul," MLR, LV (1960), 1-10, admirably reviews that opinion before 1960 and rejects most of it to argue that the wanderer is here "in touch with the spirit world" (p. 8). She reads gliwstafum as "with music-runes or with magic-songs" (p. 8): glecg, music; staef, "has many associations with magic practices" (p. 8). The secga geseldan are the same as the Old Irish guardian spirits (fylgjur manna) which also means "companions of men." Thus, "Lines 55-7 seem to contain the idea of the soul as a bird; the preceding lines may refer to the wanderer's summoning the bird-souls of dead or absent comrades, which, however, swim and float on the water silently" (p. 9). G. Midgley, "The Wanderer, Lines 49-55," RES, N.S. X (1959), 53-54, reads fleotendra ferð as "a group or troop of floating ones" (p. 53) and argues that the reference is to seagulls, a reading which avoids attributing a unique figurative usage to swimmað and avoids emending MS oft to eft (see
previous note). Campbell and Rosier, op. cit., p. 67, translate "The mind produces not many familiar speeches of the sailors" and suggest that "The very vagueness of this reverie passage may have been intentional." The most recent writer on this passage, Stephen A. Gottlieb, "The Metaphors of Wanderer, Lines 53r-55s," NM, LXVI (June, 1963), p. 147, substitutes a new vagueness for the already established one. See Krapp and Dobbie, op. cit., p. 290, and Wyatt, op. cit., p. 263, who suggests rather gratuitously that "The general sense of this passage is not obscure, yet a good translation is hard to come by."


66. This is not an uncommon syntactic pattern in Anglo-Saxon. And understanding geond ðæs worulde in this way makes more sense to me than I. L. Gordon's suggestion that it has the force of "no reason in this world (no reason at all)," op. cit., p. 6.

67. Huppé, op. cit., p. 537, ends the wanderer's monologue here and begins what he calls the "Bridge Passage" to the wiseman's monologue which, for him, begins at l. 91. I can see no reason for ending the monologue at this point since the syntax connects the death of thanes with the fall to ruin of the earth.

68. For a discussion, irrelevant to my case, of whether or not the wanderer's mind does become dark, see Lumiansky, op. cit., p. 106, and I. L. Gordon's attack of that position, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

69. The meaning of wintra dael is both literal and figurative. Figuratively, winter is associated with misery, with personal suffering, and finally with experience. For the argument that winter necessarily evokes sorrow and misery, see E. G. Stanley, "Old English Poetic Diction and the Interpretation of The Wanderer, The Seafarer, and The Penitent's Prayer," Anglia, LXXIII (1956), pp. 436 and 441. For the argument that the wanderer is here insisting that wisdom comes with experience, see I. L. Gordon, op. cit., pp. 6-7, quoting the gnomic saying: "the old man is wisest with the experience of years behind him, who has suffered much."

70. "Reconsideration," p. 458. Greenfield here retains the old reading of forðon as a loose connective, "but, and yet."

71. The derivation of the "form" these lines assume is
the ancillary concern of I. L. Gordon, Smithers, and Cross. See also S. I. Tucker, "Return to The Wanderer," Essays in Criticism, VIII (1958), 229-237.

72. Cf. E. Suddaby, "Three Notes on OE Texts," MLN, LXIX (1954), 465-468. Miss Suddaby quotes a passage with a similar emphasis from the end of Wulfstan's Sermo De Baptismate and suggests that these lines in The Wanderer may be a "blurred reflection" of the same idea.

73. That same awareness of the world also allows the wise man to expand his vision beyond merely speaking out and to apply it to other matters of behavior—which I take to be the point of the catalogue of warnings.

74. Smithers, Med. Aev., XXVI (1957), p. 141, followed by Cross, op. cit., p. 69, believes that the word "has the strength of its root in agaestan, 'to strike fear into'."

75. Bosworth-Toller: "a hall where there is feasting"; s.v. winsael.

76. Greenfield, Critical History, p. 215, understands this section of the poem to be dominated by the ruin theme which "incorporates Christian attitudes and values." Norah Kershaw Chadwick sees it as a disconnected meditation upon a ruin. See p. 15 above and note 3.

77. Stanley Greenfield, Critical History, p. 218, in arguing for the poet's "deft handling of imagery" implicitly acknowledges the shift in point of view between sections one and two and implies that the poet is contrasting halls in section one with walls here: "the personal difficulties of the wanderer are mirrored in his several uses of terms for 'hall,' implying the warmth he has found and had hoped again to find in civilized society, in the comitatus, whereas his more mature observations on earthly transience are symbolized by the external and forbidding 'wall' ...." For a statement only slightly more explicit in its anticipation of my view, see Greenfield, Critical History, p. 216.

78. For a discussion of the suggested meanings, literal and figurative, of fugel and se hara wulf, see Krapp and Dobbie, op. cit., p. 290, and perhaps Wyatt, op. cit., p. 264. Greenfield, "Reconsideration," pp. 459-460, believes that "Wyrd is the instrumental agent being described here." J. E. Cross, "On The Wanderer, Lines 80-84: A Study of a Figure and a Theme," VSLA, (1958-1959), 75-103, (hereafter cited as Cross, "Figure and
Theme") finds that "The case is strong for a Christian Latin origin for the sum-figure in The Wanderer" (p. 83).

79. Whether or not the sad-faced earl who buries a certain one in the earth-cave (11. 83b-84) refers specifically to the wanderer whose lord was covered by earth in darkness in the first part of the poem (11. 22-23a) is of no major concern here. I suspect that it is not a clear reference; if anything, it is a vague echo. The context of the sad-faced earl is such that the poet's intent is for a general reference: any sad-faced earl.

80. Greenfield, "Reconsideration," p. 460, reads aelda scyppend as "powerful destructive agent" and believes that "there is no real Christianity expressed in the passage." But Cross, op. cit. (note 25), p. 69, views the reference as a Christian one and adds that "Christians could also have seen the congruity of apparently the most unconsolatory line in the poem." He quotes Augustine: "By the destruction of Rome God is correcting his people in order to console them." Thus, the aelda scyppend is God, and the line supports Cross' contention that the poem is a consolatio.

81. On the Christian and homiletic origins of the ubi sunt theme and the significance of that origin to a reading of the poem, see G. V. Smithers, Med. Aev., XXVIII (1959), p. 11, and Cross, "Figure and Theme," p. 84. The ubi sunt theme comprises a major part of Greenfield's tripartite structure of the poem (Critical History, p. 215). See also note 83 below.

82. The word is composed of weall, "wall," and steal, either (1) a standing position (whence, I suspect, Bosworth-Toller's understanding of the word) or (2) position of affairs, state, condition. It is this second meaning that I would emphasize. It is not so much the fact that the walls stand (although to be sure that is a consideration) as it is the condition of the walls and their symbolic value (the earth every day falls to ruin and fails) that sets the wanderer off on the ubi sunt passage.

83. Whether or not this passage "derive[s] ultimately from homiletic writing" (Smithers, Med. Aev., XXVIII [1959], p. 11) is of no concern here.


85. The sense of the Bosworth-Toller citation is "in succession to," and R. K. Gordon, op. cit., p. 74, translates this as "in place of." This is clearly the meaning;
what remains after the fall of the dear duguð is a wall wondrous high.

86. This is a reading of the line slightly different from the usual. The very abruptness of the intrusive reference to Fate dismays most scholars. R. K. Gordon, op. cit., p. 74, translates it as "a glorious fate" and Cross, op. cit. (note 25), p. 70, reads it as "the glorious fate"; both understand it as referring to the death of earls in the previous line. For Cross, the reference to wyrd "reminds us that for heroes 'their renown will be a consolation to the mourners' as Demosthenes puts it." This is unsatisfactory in that it refuses to recognize the pivotal position of the phrase, its reference both to what precedes and to what follows. For this reason, I have set it off with dashes. The remainder of this paragraph expands upon and clarifies my understanding of wyrd seo maere, a phrase which functions as a sudden vehement utterance, an ejaculation.

87. Maeg can also mean "woman."

88. Huppe, op. cit., p. 537.

89. Anderson, op. cit., p. 159.


91. "The poet himself concludes with a gnomic-homiletic exhortation to find true security in the fortress of God" (Critical History, p. 217).

92. T. G. Rumble, op. cit. (note 8 above), who understands the poem in a way basically different from the way in which I do, also believes that the eardstapa emerges a snottor on mode.

93. Huppe's distinction between Til and Wel ("Thus in the conclusion in contrast to the steadfast heathen who is called virtuous [Til] is placed the Christian man who alone is blessed [Wel]," op. cit., p. 525) is predicated upon understanding the poem in his way. I do not find the distinction valid.
Chapter III: The Seafarer

Anyone who comes to The Seafarer expecting to find a poem as coherent, unified, and straightforward in its development as, say, The Wanderer will be disappointed. Although it is possible that words have been omitted, the primary fault does not lie with the manuscript, which is undamaged and impeccable. Yet for a long time students of the poem were at a loss to put the various sections of the poem together in a way that made clear sense and showed the interrelationship of all the parts. The poem seemed to be composed of three almost irreconcilable sections: lines 1-33a emphasized the hardships of life on the sea; lines 33b-64a (or perhaps 66a) apparently revealed the speaker's eagerness to be on the sea; and the rest of the poem (ll. 66b-124) included gnomic and homiletic sayings and not one reference to the sea. (These parts are traditionally labeled A1, A2, and B.) The earliest critics of The Seafarer read the poem as a dialogue between a young man who praises the fascination of the sea and an old, more experienced man who points out the hardship and dangers of the seafaring life. Long after falling into disrepute, the same two-speaker theory with certain crucial modifications has recently been revived by a number of scholars. W. W. Lawrence first read the poem as "the
lyric utterance of one man," and the majority of modern scholars have, in a nonetheless splendid variety of interpretations, concurred in this belief. But even Lawrence felt that at least lines 103-124 were a "homiletic addition." Those critics who accept the poem in toto find that it "bristles with interpretative cruxes." Some, like Robert Stevick, "suggest that the model from which the extant text of The Seafarer is ultimately derived was not a completed poetic composition; rather, it was a draft that had not been fully revised and reworked." To be sure, there are great problems in the poem: nonce words, "defective" meter, abrupt shifts in thought, the function of forðon, and the syntax. And even where the syntax is clear, students of the poem do not agree on what is meant. The point here, however, is not so much whether the problems of the manuscript derive from faulty transmission, but whether one can arrive at a whole, unified, and coherent reading of the extant poem. There are very basic issues still in doubt. And these, in turn, depend upon the movement from line to line within the poem.

It will scarcely be worthwhile to review scholarship on The Seafarer; that has been done often and well. But it may be of value to point up quite briefly some of the major positions taken with regard to the poem. By far the most popular modern reading regards the poem as an allegory, a view first proposed many years ago by Gustav Ehrismann.
But those who read the poem as allegory disagree about the way in which the allegory is to be understood; their disagreement is both a matter of degree and of kind. O. S. Anderson believes "the whole interpretation of the poet's thought hinges" on one passage, ll. 39–43, wherein saefore (l. 42) means, according to Anderson, "last journey" or "last voyage (to death)." The poem is a religious allegory of the life of man conceived as a sea voyage; section A2 (i.e., ll. 33b–64) "describes the poet's longing to be embarked on his last voyage to Paradise [across the open sea], and is contrasted with the sea-voyage [near the shore, by the cliffs] of Al [ll. 1–33a] which represents his miserable life on earth." G. V. Smithers takes a similar view but arrives at it through patristic and vernacular writing. For him, the key words of the poem are elðœodigra eard (l. 38), "the land of aliens," which he takes as a reference to heaven. The seafarer is an exile or "peregrinus (over the sea)" who symbolizes "man as an exile from paradise, and the process of these wanderings stands for his peregrinatio on earth (with reference to his ancestral home in Heaven)." The idea of the seafarer as a peregrinus had first been suggested by Dorothy Whitelock who reads the poem "literally" and not as an allegory. For her, lines 64b–67 are "the central lines of the poem"; the seafarer is a real pilgrim-hermit, a peregrinus, who wants to earn heaven: "the poet has shown
us that for him the way lies through pilgrimage, the renunciation of worldly pleasures." And "elōgodīgra eard is merely the land visited by peregrini. Stanley Greenfield agrees with Whitelock but qualifies her argument by showing that the seafarer is more hesitant than anxious to make his pilgrimage. E. G. Stanley also reads The Seafarer as a Christian poem, but for him it "is neither realism nor allegory. It is an imagined situation, invented to give force to the doctrine which forms the end of the poem and is its purpose." And I. L. Gordon finds that "the most plausible explanation of the form and theme of The Seafarer is that it is an imaginative evocation of physical and emotional experiences that are used to illuminate a symbolic spiritual truth" and that the first part of the poem is cast "in the mould of the conventional lament of the 'homeless wanderer'" while the second half derives from homiletic literature.

There is much to recommend each of these views. They all, either explicitly or implicitly, recognize that the poem is built upon a contrast, although precisely what is being contrasted differs for each reader. Of course, the most compelling contrast, that which dominates the concern of each writer on The Seafarer, is the contrast between the speaker's apparently ambivalent attitude toward the hard life on the sea and the more comfortable life on land. Most critics, and especially those who read the poem as an
allegory, feel constrained to assign some value to each term of the contrast and to understand the second half of the poem, the obviously Christian and homiletic half, as either an extension of or a commentary upon the themes established by the contrast in the first half. In doing so, they make two questionable assumptions. First, they assume that the values assigned to the life on sea and on land can be determined by the proper understanding of one word or phrase or a few "key" lines, "the central lines of the poem." Secondly, they assume that the seafaring portion, clearly the most poetically impressive section of the poem, is more important than any other to an understanding of the poem as a whole. Thus, they concentrate on the first 64 or 66 lines and slight the second half of the poem, treating it as a homogeneous unit of Christian moralizing. I think this is a mistake in critical approach, since it implicitly refuses to accept the poem as a whole. It assumes that the whole of what appears to be an essentially disparate poem can be understood in terms of a few lines from the opening half, and it also seems to assume that the first half is somehow vaguely "better" or more purely Anglo-Saxon or more significantly evocative of the "spirit" or "mind" or civilization of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers.

There is another way to read the poem, a way which understands the poem as a whole. In one sense, it will
not be a happy reading, since I propose to subordinate
the seafaring section to the thematically dominant homi­
letic part. But in another sense, my understanding of the
poem recognizes The Seafarer as a coherent and unified
whole, structured in a way that has not been suggested
heretofore. While the reading I suggest does not solve
all the interpretative curxes in the poem, some of which
may be the result of careless transmission, it does show
the clear sequence of thought, the movement from line to
line and idea to idea through the poem.

The Seafarer is not carelessly constructed. As I
have suggested above, the dominant constructive principle
of much Anglo-Saxon poetry is one of contrast. In The
Seafarer many of the contrasts have been noted—but many
have not, and the proper point and meaning and function
of the contrasts have not, to my mind, been clearly under­
stood. For example, I do not find an essential difference
in attitude toward the sea between lines 1-33a and 33b-57.
To my mind, the first 57 lines of the poem, the so-called
seafaring section, comprise a whole and indivisible unit
which establishes the speaker-poet-seafarer as a man of
experience whose wisdom is essentially greater than that
of his listeners in the meadhall or refectory and whose
opinions on the state of the world and the nature of human
existence are, by virtue of that fact, worthy of belief.
In so establishing himself, the poet-seafarer tangentially
calls into question the lord's ability to provide and describes the state of life in this world. In the second section, ll. 58-102, the poet argues in a series of contrasts that neither fame nor the flesh nor gold endure in any sense beyond the grave. And in the final exhortation, the poet-wiseman enjoins his audience to strive for heaven whose permanence is set against the transitoriness of this world and whose bliss is contrasted with the hardships of earthly life.

I

The first 57 lines of *The Seafarer* are pierced by three assertions which are essentially the same: *Paet se mon ne wat* (That the man does not know, or The man does not know this) in l. 12b; *Forðon him gelyfeð lyt* (Therefore [he] little believes) in l. 27a; and *Paet se beorn ne wat* (That [or This] the man does not know) in l. 55b. In all three instances the subject of the verb, the referent of *se mon* and *se beorn*, is identical: the man who lives on land and has little understanding or knowledge of the sea. And in each case the object of the verb, the referent of *ðaet*, is different. The demonstrative pronoun *ðaet* can function in several ways, as it does in modern English. It can point backward to what has gone before; it can point forward to what will follow; or it can do both, especially if the following statement is a variation or
extension of the previous one. I think that the first 57 lines of the poem can best be understood and discussed by examining the blocks of lines governed by ðæt, the object of the verb in the three similar and structurally significant sentences. The three parts thus formed in the first half of the poem recognize, of course, the traditionally accepted contrast between life on sea and life on land, but they also do much more. Implicitly, by contrasting what the seafarer knows with what the land-dweller does not know, they establish the poet-speak in the persona of a seafarer-wiseman, and they introduce and develop the ideas to which the poet as wiseman will turn in the second half of the poem.

The poet begins in a not uncommon, almost formulaic manner that emphasizes the validity of what the poet is about to say.

Maeg ic be me sylfum soðgied wrecan, siðas secgan . . . .

(11. l-2a)

I can sing a true song about myself, tell of journeys . . . .

The complement of this opening syntactic pattern describes life on the sea by expanding upon and detailing soðgied (true song) and siðas (journeys). The emphasis falls upon the poet's assertion that he himself has experienced these things, since variations on verbs which mean "to experience" occur in three successive lines: oft ðrowade (often
endured or suffered, l. 3b), gebiden haebbe (had to experience, l. 4b), and gecunnad (experienced, l. 5a). The object of these three verbs is the same, sorrow, and the total picture is not a pretty one.

hu ic geswincdagum
earfoðhwile oft ðrowade,
bitre breostceare gebiden haebbe,
ecunnad in ceole cearselda fela,
atoł yða gewealc, ðaer mec oft bigeat
nearo nihtwaco aet nacan stefnan,
ðonne he be clifum cnossað. Calde geðrungen
waeron mine fet, forste gebunden,
caldum clommum, ðaer ða ceare seofedun
hat ðymb heortan; hungor innan slat
merewerges mod.

(ll. 2b-12a)
how I in days of hardship often suffered hard times, had to experience bitter sorrow (lit. breast-care), experienced many homes of care in the ship, the evil motion of the waves; there to me often fell (lit. turned) the hard (lit. narrow, close) night-watch in the prow of the ship when it dashes by cliffs. My feet were constricted by cold, bound by frost, fettered by cold; whereas sorrows complained hot around [my] heart; hunger tore from within the spirit weary of the sea.

The sorrow here is carefully distinguished and shown to be of two kinds. One is the expected physical suffering—his feet were constricted by the cold, and so on—but the other is a less readily perceived suffering of the spirit or mind—the anxiety of the night-watch, the lament of
the sorrows hot around his heart, and the effect of his physical discomfort (hunger) upon his sea-weary mind. The poet carefully flickers from one to the other and joins them in the last line quoted above (ll. 11b-12a) where the interrelation of physical and spiritual affliction, the effect of seafaring upon body and mind, is stated unambiguously. And it may well be, as I. L. Gordon suggests, that "there is a deliberate antithesis here between the hot sorrows within the heart and the cold afflicting the body." But what is more important to a general understanding of the way in which this first part of the poem is put together is the emphasis upon seafaring as an experience composed of physical and spiritual affliction. That, the poet carefully tells us in l. 12b, is what a man who lives on land does not know. What had begun in l. 2b as a description of the seafaring life, the development of soögied and siðas, has become by l. 12b the referent of ðæt. And the lines which follow the assertion ðæt se mon ne wat (l. 12b) continue to describe and develop soögied, reveal precisely what it is that the man who lives on land does not know, and, by implying the limits of the listeners' understanding, subtly establish the greater knowledge of the seafarer.

ðæt se mon ne wat
ðe him on foldan faegrost limpeð,
hu ic earmcearig iscealdne sae
winter wunade wraeccan lastum,
That the man does not know "whose lot is cast most happily on land," how I, wretchedly sorrowful, remain in winter on the ice-cold sea, in the paths of exile, deprived of kinsmen, hung around with icicles; the hail flew in showers. There I did not hear [anything] except the sea roaring, the icy-cold way. At times I had as my entertainment (or I entertained myself with) the song of swans, the gannet's cry, and the curlew's sound in place of the laughter of men, the sea-gull singing in place of the drinking of mead (or mead itself). Storms there beat the cliffs; there icy-feathered terns answered them; full oft the wet-feathered eagle screamed at that; nor could any protector comfort the destitute spirit.

While the entire passage points at the contrast between life on land and life at sea, the lines immediately following Paet se mon ne wat (1. 12b) repeat in different terms the afflictions to body and spirit that preceded 1. 12b: the seafarer is not only hung around with icicles (1. 17a) on an icy-cold sea (1. 14b), but he is wretchedly sorrowful...
(earmcearig, l. 14a) and deprived of kinsmen (winemaegum bidroren, l. 16). To the extent, then, that the lines before and after l. 12b (which introduces the land-dweller) are variations on the same theme, they are the referents of ðaet and help establish ll. 12b-13 in a pivotal position in this first section of the poem.

The subsequent lines, while still pointing out what the land-dweller does not know, develop the contrast made explicit by the introduction of the man who lives on the land in l. 12b. Using an item in his description of the seafaring life, that is, the noise of the sea (Paer ic ne gehyrde butan hlimman sae, There I heard nothing except the roar of the sea, l. 13), as his immediate stimulus, the poet modulates to a new but related topic which implicitly continues the description of life on the sea and explicitly contrasts the life of seafarer and land-dweller. In the famous passage of the birds, ll. 19b-25a, the cries of sea-birds which the seafarer hears are set in direct contrast to the noise and action that the land-dweller experiences in the security of the meadhall. The curlew's sound (huilpan sweg) is set against the laughter of men (hleahtor were) in l. 21, and the seagull's singing (maew singende) is set against the drinking of mead (medodrice) in l. 22; in both places fore (in place of) emphasizes the contrast.

This first part ends on a particularly apt note. The
poet, speaking through the persona of the seafarer to a meadhall full of ædelingas who may or may not have ever been on the sea, describes the hardships of the sea by particular reference to the experience and understanding of his meadhall-centered, comitatus-oriented listeners. They have recourse, he implies, to their lord in the redress of their afflictions, but there is no recourse available to one who wanders on the sea and whose afflictions derive from the natural world, from storms and bone-chilling weather and a loneliness unrelieved even by the screams of birds. For him there is not any protector so powerful on earth who could comfort his destitute spirit (ll. 25b-26). He emphasizes the point by the contrastive collocation of feasceafhtig ferð (destitute spirit) and frefran (comfort34) in l. 26.

And this is what a man who lives on the land, whose security is tied primarily to the lord of his comitatus, can little believe or understand. Because the land-dweller can little believe how unimportant a protective lord (hleomaega, l. 25b) is to a seafarer, how little comfort any lord can provide, he cannot understand the seafarer's life, how he must remain, often weary, on the sea while the earth is bound with frost (ll. 29b-33a). Because35 a protective lord can offer him no security and (equally possible) because the land-dweller cannot fully understand the physical and spiritual afflictions
of sea-life, the seafarer's heart is oppressed each time
he himself, deprived of kinsmen (winemaegum bidroren,
1. 16) and without protection of a lord (ll. 25b-26),
must explore the salt waves (1. 35) and seek the land of
aliens (1. 38). There is no man on earth, he says, no
matter how brave he is nor how gracious his lord is to
him (ll. 39-41) who is not always anxious about a sea
voyage (1. 42), because his lord can only do too little
for him.36 For while a man is on the sea, his thoughts
are not on what his lord can provide for him, not on the
joys of the hall (hearpán, the harp, 1. 44a), nor on ring-
receiving (hringþege, 1. 44b), nor even on the pleasure
of women (ne to wífe wyn, 1. 45a), nor the joy of the
world (ne to wórulde hyht, 1. 45b); his thoughts are only
on the tossing of the waves (yða gewealc, 1. 46b).

To be sure, the second block of lines (ll. 27-47)
develops the point made earlier by defining what the land-
dweller does not know: (1) that the afflictions of the
sea are both physical (ll. 29b-33a) and spiritual (ll. 33b-
38 and 47), and (2) that the sea is both fascinating
(ll. 36-37a and 47) and afflicting. But more important,
this reading interprets ll. 27-47 as a cohesive unit
dominated by the seafarer's assertion, both at the begin-
nning (ll. 25b-26) and at the end (ll. 43-46), that the
protective lord is unable to provide the same comfort or
security on sea that he can provide on land. While this
reading does no violence to the text, I find that I must repunctuate it. I drop the semi-colon Krapp and Dobbie place after *cunnige* in l. 35 and understand *ðaet ic hean streamas* . . . *cunnige* (that I high seas explore, ll. 34b-35) and *ðaet ic feor heonan* . . . *gesece* (that I far hence seek, ll. 37b-38) as parallel clauses which develop *geðohtas* in l. 34a, a reading which the syntax and the formulaic patterning of the two clauses seem to support; and I add a semi-colon after *naebbe* in l. 42. Thus, I read the passage in this way.

*Forðon him gelyfeð lyt, se ðe ah lifes wyn gebiden in burgum, bealosiða hwon, wlonc ond wingal, hu ic werig oft in brimlade bidan sceolde.*
*Nap nihtscua, norðan sniwe, hrim hrusan bond, hægl feol on eorðan, corna caldast. Forðon cnyssað nu heortan geðohtas, ðaet ic hean streamas, sealtyða gelac sylf cunnige, monað modes lust maela gehwylce ferð to feran, ðaet ic feor heonan elðeodigra eard gesece.*
*Forðon nis ðaes modwlonc mon ofer eorðan ne his gifena ðaes god, ne in geogûe to ðaes hwaet, ne in his daedum to ðaes deor, ne him his dryhten to ðaes hold, ðaet he a his saefore sorge naebbe; to hwon hine dryhten gedon wille.*
*Ne bið him to hearpan hyge ne to hringðege, ne to wife wyn ne to worulde hyht, ne ymbe owiht elles, nefne ymb yða gewealc,*
ac a hafað longunge se ðe on lagu fundað.

(11. 27-47)

Therefore he who owns the pleasures of life, experiences few misfortunes among the dwellings of men, proud and merry with wine, little believes how I, often weary, had to remain on the path of ocean. The shade of night grew dark, snowed from the north, frost bound the earth, hail fell on earth, the coldest of grain. Therefore (Because of which) the heart is now oppressed by thoughts (lit. thoughts oppress heart) that I myself explore the high seas, the tumult of the salt waves, each time the desire of spirit urges the heart to go, that I far hence seek the land of aliens. (Therefore) there is no man on earth so proud of spirit, nor so generous of his gifts, nor so vigorous in his youth, nor so bold in his deeds, nor whose lord is so gracious to him that he does not always have anxiety (concerning) his sea-voyage; too little the [earthly] lord will do for him. His thoughts are not on the harp, nor on ring-receiving, nor on the pleasure of women, nor on the joy of the world, nor on anything else except on the tossing of the waves, for he always has weariness of mind who is eager to go on the sea.

When one reads the passage in this way, the sequence of thought from line to line becomes clear. By accepting the structurally significant position of Forðon him gelyfeð lyt, one sees that the passage discusses the complement of the verb, the insufficiency of the lord to provide solace mentioned in 11. 25b-26 and developed more fully in 11. 39-47. The two points of view with regard to this topic are revealed and emphasized by the contrastive
collocation of the land-dweller, wlonc ond wingal (proud and merry with wine) with the seafarer, werig oft (often weary) in l. 29. And the entire passage emphasizes the greater wisdom of the seafarer, for even though his mind is weary of the sea (merewerges mod, l. 12a), his thoughts do not turn, as a land-dweller might suspect, to the joys provided by the lord (ll. 44–46a), but rather they remain with the tossing of the waves (ymb y5a gewealc, l. 46b).

Not only do these lines (ll. 27–47) continue the contrastive pattern of development, distinguishing what the land-dweller does not know from what the seafarer does know, but they also contribute to what will become, in the second half, the major theme and chief focus of the poem: the insecurity of life in this world. By calling the protective possibilities of an earthly lord into question, as I feel the seafarer does here, the poet prepares his listeners to accept the perorative admonitions that comprise the homiletic half of the poem. More immediately important, however, is the way in which recognizing the unity of ll. 27–47 dispenses with the need to excuse these lines as a loose montage of attitudes toward and scenes from life on the sea. Indeed, it is no longer necessary to assert, as do those who read the poem as an allegory, that there is a difference between dryhten ([earthly] lord) in l. 41b and dryhten ([heavenly] Lord) in l. 43a—a reading for which there is no textual evidence
and which implicitly insists upon a shift of thought between 1. 43 and 11. 44-47.

The transition to the third and final part of the first 57 lines is subtly prepared for by the end of the previous part. Just as the mention of the lord at the end of the first part (1. 25b) served as the immediate impetus for the second, the mention of the world's joy (\textit{worulde hyht}, 1. 45b) and of one who is eager to go on the sea (\textit{se ðe on lagu fundað}, 1. 47b) at the end of the second part serves as the impetus for the third.

\begin{quote}
Bearwas blostmum nimað, byrig faegriað, womgas wlitigiað, woruld onetteð; ealle ða gemoniað moðes fusne sefan to siðe, ðam ðe swa ðenceð on flodwegas feor gewitan.
Swylce geac monað geomran reorde, singeð sumeres weard, sorge beodeð bitter in breosthord. ðaet se beorn ne wat, esteadig secg, hwaet ða sume dreogað ðe ða wraeclastas widost lecgæð.
\end{quote}

(11. 48-57)

Groves take on blossoms; dwellings grow fair; meadows are made beautiful; the world is quickened; all these urge the heart of the eager-minded man to a journey, for him who so thinks to depart far on the paths of ocean. Likewise, the cuckoo urges with melancholy voice, the guardian of summer sings, announces sorrow, bitter in the brest. That the man does not know, the man blessed with comfort, what those endure who direct most wide the paths of exile.

There are great problems here. But some of them, at
least, can be solved if one recognizes the return of spring and the call of the cuckoo to be governed by āet in l. 55b (Paet se beorn ne wat) and to reveal something that the land-dweller does not know about the bitter-sweet fascination of the sea. Strictly speaking, spring and the cuckoo are presented from two different and contrasting points of view—that of the land-dweller and that of the seafarer. Lines 55b-56a, which refer to the land-dweller as a "man blessed with comfort, who does not know," emphasize the contrast and the difference in point of view. The point of this section, as I understand it, is that the land-dweller sees the spring as a time of joy and (implicitly) the cuckoo as a bird of good omen since it heralds the summer. But since the land-dweller is one who does not know, he cannot see that from another point of view, that of the seafarer, both spring and the cuckoo are full of ill-omen because they herald the seafaring season, a time of affliction and privation, albeit fascinating, for the seafarer. The land-dweller does not know what those endure who direct most wide the paths of exile (ll. 56b-57).

II

In the first 57 lines of the poem, then, the seafarer unobtrusively establishes himself as one perhaps wiser and certainly more aware of the immediacy and significance of things in the world than are his listeners. While pretending
to sing a true song (soðgied wrecce, l. 1b) and tell of journeys (siðas secgan, l. 2a), the poet as seafarer indicates that those who live on land do not realize (1) that seafaring has its spiritual as well as physical afflictions, (2) that the power of a protective lord is severely limited since he can provide no security against storms and cold upon the sea, and (3) that the natural world is not always what it seems to those who live on land. To a certain extent, The Seafarer can be said to fit within a literary tradition (the seafarer or traveller as wise man) that extends from the narrator of Lucian's A True History, through Raphael Hythloday (who tells Sir Thomas More about Utopia), Lemuel Gulliver, and the Ancient Mariner, to name only a few.

From the position of eminence thus established, the poet shifts his point of view in the second half of the poem to include both earth (eorðan sceatas, the expanse of earth, l. 61a) and sea (mereflood, l. 59b), and, with this broadened vision, the poet as wiseman delivers the homily that is the second half of the poem. The shift in point of view is clearly marked (ll. 58-64a), and the topic of the homily is unambiguously stated (ll. 64b-67).

Forðon nu min hyge hweorfeð ofer hreðerlocan, min modsefa mid mereflood ofer hwæles eðel hweorfeð wide, eorðan sceatas, cymeð eft to me gifre ond graedig, gielleð anfloga,
Therefore now my soul turns beyond the heart's enclosure; my mind [is] with the ocean, turns wide over the whale's domain, [over] the expanse of earth, comes again to me, eager and longing; the solitary flier [i.e., the soul] cries, irresistibly urges the heart over the expanse of ocean. Therefore, more dear (lit. hotter) to me are the joys of the Lord than this dead life, transitory on earth. I do not believe that earthly wealth endures forever.

I understand Forðon at 1. 58a to refer to the whole of the previous argument—a view which Dorothy Whitelock allows (op. cit., p. 266) although she prefers another. But no matter in what way one understands the inciting of the heart to wander, it is clear that the point of view of the poem shifts here. The returning soul, after examining both land and sea, urges the heart to depart because life on the sea is hard and insecure (11. 1-57, by implication) and life on land is no better, as the rest of the poem (and specifically 11. 68-71) will show. Therefore (forðon, l. 64b), the joys of the Lord are more dear than this dead, transitory life on earth where illness or age or hostility wrest life from all men, who, because they are men, are doomed and dying (11. 68-71).
Since the remainder of the poem is fairly straightforward and logical, it will not be necessary to quote it at length. But it will be to our advantage to point out the way in which contrast functions in structuring the homily. Essentially the homily is composed of two parts: an argument (ll. 72-102) and an exhortation (ll. 105-124). The exhortation serves both as the logical outcome of the homiletic argument and as a contrast to the ideas presented in the first 102 lines. The argument develops the topic unambiguously stated in ll. 66b-67: *Ic gelyfe no / ðaet him eorðwelan ece stondað* (I do not believe that earthly wealth endures forever). Under the rubric of *eorðwelan*, the poet will consider fame (ll. 72-90), the flesh (ll. 91-96), and gold (ll. 97-102). Earthly wealth cannot endure forever because:

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Simle ðreora sum ðinga gehwylce,  
aer his tid aga, to tweon weorðeð;  
adl oððe yldo oððe ecghete  
faegum fromweardum feorh oððringeð.
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(ll. 68-71)

Always a certain [one] of three things turns each [man] do doubt [that his earthly prosperity endures forever]: illness or age or hostility (lit. edge-heat) wrests life from [one] doomed [and] dying.

The contrastive collocation of *faegum fromweardum* (doomed [and] dying) and *feorh* (life) in l. 71 emphasizes the topic of the homily and leads to the discussion of the preservative power of fame in ll. 72-80a.
It was a familiar progression of thought in Anglo-Saxon poetry to move from the inevitability of death to the idea that the fame of one's earthly actions, the singing of a man's deeds, in a way preserves him after death. Therefore, says the poet, because all men must die, the best reputation for every man is the praise of living men, of those speaking of a man after his death (ll. 72-73).

A man must fight with bold deeds against the hatred of enemies and the devil so that the children of men may praise him, and his praise, after he dies, may live with angels forever and ever, a joy among the host— which may be either the earthly duguð or (as some have suggested) the heavenly host or both (ll. 74-80a).

But if one believes in the preservative powers of fame described above, he is wrong. The days when a man's fame would be remembered awa to ealdre (forever and ever, l. 79a) and sung by the children of men have passed (Dagas sind gewitene, The days are departed, l. 80b). The poet carefully attacks the notion that fame endures in the commonly recognized ubi sunt passage (ll. 80b-93) which contrasts what now is (fame does not endure) with what once was (fame endures). All the glory of earth's kingdom (that is, fame as a part of eorðwelan, l. 67a) is not now what it once was (ll. 81-83). The duguð that might have preserved the fame of heroes have all fallen; their joys have departed (l. 86), and the world is now held by
inferior men (wacran, 1. 87a) who possess it through toil. It is not so brave for a scop to say this (if the poem was ever recited in a hall instead of a cloister) before a lord and his comitatus since he has already indicated the limitations of a lord and the insufficiency of land-dwellers in the first half of the poem. His point here is only that glory is brought low (Blaed is gehnaeged, 1. 87b), the nobility of earth; and instead of enduring forever and ever (awa to ealdre, 1. 79a), it now ages and withers (ealdað ond searað, 1. 89b) as now does each man throughout the world (l. 90).

Each man, argues the poet as he shifts to the second point that is subsumed under eorðwelăn (earthly wealth) which does not endure forever (ece stondað, 1. 67), must age and wither just as the glory of heroes has. Age comes on him (l. 91a) and he, gray-haired, laments; he knows he has given up his former friends to the earth (ll. 92-93). And when he loses his life (l. 94), his body may neither swallow sweetness, nor feel pain, nor stir with hand, nor think with mind (ll. 95-96). The point is emphasized by the contrastive collocation of swete (sweetness) and sar (pain) in l. 95 as well as by the contrast of physical action (hond onhreran, stir with hand) and mental or spiritual activity (mid hyge ðencan, think with mind) in l. 96. Death, which comes to all men, is complete and final as far as the joys and sorrows of this earth are
concerned. To that extent, the passage reflects the general point of this part of the homily—that earthly wealth (in this case, the physical concerns of a man's life) does not endure forever.

The mention in ll. 93 and 94 of losing life and giving up the body to the earth quite naturally leads to talk of the grave: *Deah ðe graef wille golde stregan* (Although [he] will strew the grave with gold, l. 97). But in fact, the argument here concerns gold, the final point the poet considers under the rubric of *eorðwelan* (earthly wealth, l. 67a). Although this passage (ll. 97-102) is, as I. L. Gordon has said, "probably the most disputed passage of the poem," the dispute is not concerned with what is meant so much as it is with a precise interpretation, with how the passage comes to mean what it means. Almost all readers of the poem agree that whatever the purpose of strewing the grave with gold, whatever the relationship between the one who streus the gold and the man in the grave, and whatever the motive, the point of this passage is that gold will not be a help to the sinful soul (ll. 100-101a) before God's awful power (*for godes egsan*, l. 101b).

Thus, in the section of the homily that is basically argument (ll. 72-102), the poet shows that three things considered as *eorðwelan* do not endure forever. He argues against the preservative power of fame by insisting that
times have changed, that glory is brought low (l. 88b). He argues against a man's life enduring in any physical sense (in Valhalla, say) beyond the grave (ll. 94-96). And he argues that gold, whether one tries to take it with him or hoard it while one is alive (ll. 99-102), cannot endure beyond the grave to be of any help before God's awesome power. It is a hard truth and a powerful argument, worthy of a man of established wisdom who sees and knows what the land-dweller does—and more. Everything follows quite logically from the announced topic (ll. 66b-67). Yet the homily would be incomplete and the didactic point of the poem obscured if the poet did not reveal where it is that things do endure forever. The poet-seafarer-wise-man, speaking from the depth of his greater experience and wisdom, does this in the concluding exhortation.

The positive link that connects the argument (ll. 72-102) to the final exhortation (ll. 103-124) is the awful power of God (l. 101b) before which gold can be no help. The exhortation begins:

Micel bið se meotudes egsa, forðon hi seo molde oncyrrreð; 45
se gestaðelade stiðe grundas,
eorðan sceatas ond uprodor.

(ll. 103-105)

Great is the awful power of God, whereby the earth turns; he established firm foundations, the expanse of earth and the firmament on high.

It is with the power of God understood and, as it were,
brooding over the passage that the conclusion to the poem is to be read. The point is emphasized by the contrast in ll. 106-108 between one who does and one who does not believe in God's awesome power. Foolish (Pol, l. 106a) is he who does not fear God; death comes to him unexpectedly (l. 106). Blessed (Eadig, l. 107a) is he who lives humbly; honor comes to him from heaven; the Lord makes steadfast his heart because he believes in the Lord's power (ll. 107-108). Lines 109-115a, as I understand them, define more carefully what it means to live humbly (eaðmod leofað, l. 107a) and are in fact an exhortation to Christian living. A man must control his violent mind, hold it in place (l. 109), and be trustworthy to men and pure in his way of living (l. 110), and each man must hold his malice with moderation toward friend and foe.

This emphasis upon God's power leads to the peroration.

Wyrd bið swiðre,
meotud meahtigra ðonne aenges monnes gehygd.
Uton we hycgan hwaer we ham agen,
ond ðonne geðencan hu we ðider cumen,
ond we ðonne eac tilien, ðaet we to moten
in ða ecgan eadignesse,
ðaer is lif gelong in lufan dryhtnes,
hyht in heofonum. ðaes sy ðam halgan ðonc,
ðaet he usic geweorðade, wuldres ealdor,
ece dryhten, in ealle tid. Amen.

(ll. 115b-124)

Fate is stronger, the Lord more mighty than any man's thought. Let us think where we possess [our] home,
and then think how we may come thither, and then moreover endeavor that we be allowed into eternal bliss, into the love of God, where is the source of life, bliss in heaven. For that, thanks be to holy God, the prince of Glory, eternal lord, that he exalts us in all time. Amen.

Here one finds, in summation, an answer to the thematic concerns of the poem. To be sure, it is a Christian answer, but one must be prepared to accept that when one accepts the unity of the poem as it has been preserved. Fate is stronger, the poet says, God more mighty than any man could think. Surely He is more mighty than any earthly lord who cannot provide comfort and security for a seafarer upon the sea (ll. 25b-47). Since this is so manifestly the case, the poet-seafarer-wiseman enjoins the audience in the meadhall to think about all that he has said and to consider where it is that they possess their true home. Surely, it cannot be on this little spot of earth where life is not always what it seems (ll. 1-57) and is harder than most people think, where nothing endures forever—neither fame nor flesh nor gold. But if one thinks how he may come hwaer we ham agen (where we possess [our true] home, l. 117b), he must surely realize, as the poet has said, that he who lives humbly and controls a violent mind is blessed (Eadig, l. 107a). And to endeavor to live in this way is to endeavor to be allowed (l. 119) into eternal bliss in heaven where the
hardships and vagaries of life on sea and life on land vanish in the love of God, the source of all life. The poet carefully controls this direction of thought in ll. 117 ff.: Let us think where we possess our home; let us think how we may come thither; and let us endeavor to be allowed into eternal bliss. And for this exaltation, thanks be to God.

I do not find The Seafarer to be carelessly organized. In the first half of the poem, ll. 1-57, the poet establishes himself as a man of experience whose wisdom is essentially greater than that of his listeners because he can see the reality behind the appearance, the transcendence of desire beyond the hardships of sea and earth. In doing so, he tangentially defines life in this world as hard and calls into question the ability of an earthly lord to provide solace. When he turns, at l. 58, to a discussion of this world, which he couches in the form of a homily, he insists that nothing endures forever—and he supports his assertion by showing how fame, the flesh, and gold do not endure in any meaningful form beyond the grave. In the exhortation (ll. 103-124) and the peroration (ll. 115b-124), he argues that there is only one Lord whose power is beyond question and who provides everlasting security and comfort, and he indicates the way in which a man can endeavor to be allowed into the bliss of heaven. Everything in the poem points
toward this final argument. The *Seafarer* is a Christian poem. It is also a great poem because, and not in spite of, the Christian design and conception.
1. See the facsimile of the manuscript, folios 81b-83a, in R. W. Chambers, M. Forster, and R. Flower, eds., The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry (London, 1933). The manuscript is still in the Library of Exeter Cathedral to which it was presented by Bishop Leofric about 1072. However, quotations from The Seafarer are from G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, vol III, The Exeter Book (New York, 1936), pp. 143-147.


3. Chief among the modern adherents to the two-speaker theory are E. G. Stanley, "Old English Poetic Diction and the Interpretation of The Wanderer, The Seafarer, and The Penitent's Prayer," Anglia, LXXIII (1956), 413-466; and J. C. Pope, "Dramatic Voices in The Wanderer and The Seafarer," in Franciplegius, eds. J. B. Bessinger, Jr. and R. P. Creed (New York, 1965), pp. 164-193. Stanley suggested that the poem, while not a dialogue, does indeed have two speakers: an "ethopoetic exile (ll. 1-33a) and the wise, pious man eager to go on pilgrimage (ll. 33b-end)" (p. 454). One is quoting the other at the beginning of the poem. Pope believes that Stanley "is right in feeling that the relation between speakers is not that of an ordinary dialogue. The second speech is not so much a reply to the first as a major declaration of purpose and belief for which the first speech has given the stimulus" (p. 178). But by modifying Stanley's "account of the structure and also his interpretation of the meaning" (p. 179), Pope wants to "accept the simpler view of the old dialogue theory and assume that the two speakers belong to the same plane of dramatic reality: that is, they are equally fictitious and speaking in turn" (p. 179). To the first speaker, Pope assigns lines 1-33a; to the second, lines 33b-102; and the poet himself speaks the remaining lines which are "a mere epilogue to the poet's dramatic vision" (p. 181).


5. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 480. N. Kershaw Chadwick,
Anglo-Saxon and Norse Poems (Cambridge, 1922), believes that lines 64 ff. were written by someone "whose religious zeal was greater than his poetic inspiration" (p. 16) and that lines 102 ff. are "lacking in coherence, and the sentiments expressed have no obvious connection with the rest of the poem" (p. 18). E. E. Wardale, Chapters on Old English Literature (London, 1935), agrees that lines 64 ff. do not belong in the poem.


7. Robert Stevick, "The Text and Composition of The Seafarer," PMLA, LXXX (1965), p. 334. Stevick concludes: "To regard the final portion of The Seafarer as draft-composition, in short, seems to make more sense of the manuscript, the text, the pointing, and the poem than do any attempts to reject 11. 103-124 or to construct continuous linguistic and poetic sense from the sequence of words in the manuscript" (p. 335). The point was anticipated by Chadwick, op. cit., p. 19. J. J. Campbell, "Oral Poetry in The Seafarer," Spec, XXXV (1960), 87-96, believes that a Christian poet "was adapting an older poem" (p. 91) and that he "did not know or could not use the vast quantity of older poetic formulas and vocabulary" (p. 94). But W. A. O'Neil, "Another Look at Oral Poetry in The Seafarer," Spec, XXXV (1960), 596-600, greatly qualifies Campbell's assertions about the distinction between oral and written composition in different parts of the poem. Pope agrees that the poem is imperfect: "there has indeed been a mechanical failure in the written presentation of the poem" (p. 187).

8. Pope is quite right in asserting that The Seafarer is a much harder poem to follow [than is The Wanderer] from passage to passage, so that the question of its dramatic form is seriously entangled with other problems of interpretation" (p. 173).

10. Gustav Ehrismann, "Religionsgeschichtliche Beiträge zum germanischen Frühchristentum, II, Das Gedicht vom Seefahrer," Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur, XXXV (1909), 213-218. Ehrismann argued that the seafaring portions of the poem allegorically represented the hardships of the monastic ideal of life and were contrasted with the aristocratic ideal of worldly contentment on land. In the second half of the poem the aristocratic ideal was disparaged as transitory and the monastic ideal was lauded. This view was not widely held. When O. S. Anderson argued for an allegorical interpretation of the poem in 1937, the terms of the allegory were different.


17. Ibid., p. 266.

18. Ibid., p. 267.


22. Ibid., p. 22 ff.

23. J. C. Pope was the first to suggest that the second half of the poem was not consistent throughout. "Hitherto we have not paid attention to the internal structure of the
second half of the poem, called B, since most of the problems could be treated by assuming its homogeneity. But in fact there is a noticeable difference between the part that extends to line 102 and the remainder, lines 103-124 (pp. 179-180). Pope's point in making this distinction is that lines 33b-102 belong to the second speaker and that lines 103 to the end are the poet's epilogue. For a fuller statement of his views, see note 3 above. While I disagree with Pope on the two-speaker theory, his acknowledgment of the differences in the second half of the poem anticipates my own view.

24. It is possible, of course, depending upon one's point of view and major concern with the poem, to organize these lines in a different way. Thus, R. F. Leslie, in an interesting article, "Analysis of Stylistic Devices and Effects in Anglo-Saxon Literature," in Stil- und Formprobleme in der Literatur, Vorträge des VII Kongresses der Internationalen Vereinigung für moderne Sprachen und Literaturen in Heidelberg, ed. Paul Böckmann (Heidelberg, 1959), pp. 129-136, understands these lines in terms of their formal organization and finds them placed in "the ABA sandwich pattern" (p. 134). He reads the poem as a whole in much the same way O. S. Anderson does.

25. Similar words are used to open the poem called The Wife's Lament: Ic òis giedd wrece bi me ful geomorre, minre sylyre silō (I recite this song about me, very sadly, about my own lot or journey). And the Deor-poet remarks Paet ic bi me sylfum secgan wille (I want to say this about myself, l. 35).

26. Whether or not the poet-speaker, the scop in the hall, had in fact ever been on the sea is, of course, irrelevant. The problems of point of view, persona, the "I" of medieval poems has yet to be exhaustively and systematically studied. A start was made by Leo Spitzer, "Note on the Poetic and Empirical 'I' in Medieval Authors," Traditio, IV (1946), 414-422, and recent scholars (notably Morton W. Bloomfield, Dorothy Bethurum, and Donald Howard among others) have concerned themselves with the problem, especially in the late Middle Ages and particularly as it is related to Chaucer.

27. Cearselda is a nonce word. For a discussion of possible emendations, see Krapp and Dobbie's notes to the poem, p. 295, and I. L. Gordon's note, p. 33. I follow most editors in retaining the MS reading and translating "homes of care" or "abodes of sorrow."

29. It is not necessary to an understanding of what is going on here to assert, with I. L. Gordon, that hungor (I. 11) "may imply more than its literal meaning here and include figuratively the pangs of loneliness and suffering that gnaw at the Seafarer's heart" (p. 34).

30. I. L. Gordon, op. cit., p. 34.

31. W. W. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 466, n. 19, believes a line has been lost between I. 25a and 25b. He gives no reasons for his belief.

32. So I. L. Gordon, op. cit., p. 34. There is some difficulty in getting a clear translation for limpeť, but the meaning of the passage is not obscure.

33. For the proper identification of the birds mentioned here and in the next few lines, see Margaret E. Goldsmith, "The Seafarer and the Birds," RES, N.S. V (1954), 225-235.

34. I accept, as do all modern editors and students of the poem, Grein's emendation of feran to frefran in I. 26.

35. Forôon is a difficult word to translate adequately. It occurs eight times in The Seafarer, at I. 27a, 33b, 39a, 58a, 64b, 72a, 103b, and 108b, and at most points scholars have tried to determine how forôon functions with regard to the immediately previous and immediately subsequent lines. There is no general agreement. For the views of early scholars, see Marjorie Daunt, "Some Difficulties in The Seafarer Reconsidered," MLR, XIII (1918), 474-479. She defends Rieger's "adversative rendering of forôon as adding to the colour and force of the poem" (p. 475) and translates "and yet, but." S. B. Liljegren (op. cit., note 11 above) cites several Anglo-Saxon translations of St. Matthew to illustrate "the sense possibilities of forôon" (pp. 153-154) and concludes that "the sense of forôon in most cases is 'albeit, howbeit, however, nevertheless, indeed, because, actually, but'" (p. 154). Hence, "it is difficult to ascribe the definitive and strictly logical sense of 'therefore' to forôon" (p. 154) at I. 33. Here, at I. 33b, where most of the difficulty seems to be, Greenfield, "Attitudes and Values," p. 16, reads forôon as "despite," and Dorothy Whitelock, op. cit., p. 264, n. 1, finds "forôon is here correlative with the forôon at I. 39 and redundant in a modern rendering." I find, however, that the word makes perfectly good sense in its lexical definition of "therefore, because" once one identifies precisely what it refers to. Consequently, I give forôon the force of a logical connective slightly greater than that given by other readers of the poem.
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36. The usual translation of to hwon here, at l. 43a, is "as to what" and the line is most often translated "as to what the Lord will bring him to" or "about what the Lord will do to him (while on his journey)." I find this an unnecessary torturing of the line. To hwon most com-
monly means "too little": Bosworth-Toller, s.v. hwon. It is used in this sense at l. 28b: bealosida hwon, few of misfortunes. And this seems to make most sense in the context established at 11. 25b-26: no lord can bring com-
fort to a seafarer. The lines which follow to hwon ex-
plicitly state that the comforts provided by a Lord, hearpan and bringoege (l. 44), are insufficient, "too little," for a seafarer: his mind is not on them.

37. For an ample discussion of most of these problems, see I. L. Gordon’s notes to these lines, pp. 39-41. James Cross, "On the Allegory in The Seafarer—Illustrative Notes," Med. Aev., XXVIII (1959), 104-106, first argued from patristic evidence that "the exile could and did link springtime beauty with 'the hastening world' and, with 'woruld onetteo' [l. 49b], the poet made it clear to his listeners that the situation was symbolic" (p. 105).

Smithers, Med. Aev., XXVII (1959), agrees with Cross and, citing Blicking Homily V, concludes: "The beauty of the earth (for the poet, as for the homilists and exegetes) is a familiar example of the transitoriness of the world: the life of the world was limited to six ages and the end of the world was at hand" (p. 7). Thus, for Cross and Smithers, the description of spring is grist for their allegorical mills. There is equal difficulty about the way in which one is to understand the cuckoo of l. 53a which may either be a "bird of lament" as it is in Welsh poetry (I. L. Gordon, p. 17) or a bird of joy. The various views are adequately summarized by J. D. Pheifer, "The Seafarer 53-55," RES. N.S. XVI (August, 1965), 222-224. Pheifer argues that "the cuckoo somehow typifies the cen-
tral paradox, the attraction and hardship of a sea voyage, but its precise significance . . . remain[s] undetermined" (p. 283). He concludes that the cuckoo is normally joy-
ful, but in connection with a sea voyage, the cuckoo is mournful (p. 283).

38. There is some lively dispute about the way in which one ought to understand anfloga. I. L. Gordon, op. cit., p. 41, following Sieper reads anfloga as the cuckoo of l. 53a. G. V. Smithers, Med. Aev., XXVIII (1959), p. 104, analyzes the action ascribed to anfloga and finds that "the anfloga of The Seafarer (i) brings about the death (i.e. by sickness) of the person speaking, just as the valkyries of the OE charm are responsible for causing sickness . . . ; (ii) is characterized as gifre . . . and
graedig [;] (iii) has the power to move through the air; (iv) "yells". . . . It is therefore possible that anfloga designates a valkyrie." Depending much upon this reading, Smithers argues that "The Seafarer 59-61 refers to the impending or wished-for (cf. ll. 53-5) death of the person speaking, and that it does so in terms of a belief . . . that at death the soul would make a journey by sea to the abode of the dead" (Med. Aev., XXVIII [1959], p. 20). But the more common reading, I think, is that anfloga here refers to the soul—so Dorothy Whitelock, op. cit., p. 266, by implication. Vivian Salmon, "'The Wanderer' and 'The Seafarer,' and the Old English Conception of the Soul," MLR, LV (1960), 1-10, provides strong evidence for the body/soul dichotomy in O.E. thought, whereby the soul was regarded as a separate entity enclosed by a wall of flesh" (p. 4). She argues that "the ability to send out the soul was not confined to the magician . . ., but that any man of special intelligence was thought able to practice the art during normal sleep" (p. 6). I therefore translate anfloga as "solitary flier" and understand it to refer to the soul.

39. Ðís deade lif (l. 65b) does not refer necessarily, as some have maintained, to the life of the land-dweller. Indeed, the context, which includes both land and sea, would seem to argue against such a reading. Since the point of view has broadened, I prefer to read Ôis deade lif/laene on londe as referring to the life of man.

40. I do not agree with G. V. Smithers who translates aer his tid aga as "before His awesome time" and understands by it the Day of Judgment. His translation, which also understands tweon (l. 69b) as "separation" instead of the more commonly accepted "doubt," runs as follows: "Invariably, in every instance, before His awesome time, one of three things brings about the separation [of a man from the living]—disease, or old age, or the enemy who wields a sword—wrests life from the mortal who is marked for death" (Med. Aev., XXVIII [1959], p. 13). I have accepted here the text as given by Krapp and Dobbie fully aware that it is emended. See Krapp and Dobbie's notes to these lines, pp. 296-297. For a slightly different reading based on different emendations, see I. L. Gordon, pp. 42-43. In either case, the emendations of the text do not significantly affect an understanding of the lines as I have given them here. The meaning is fairly clear.

41. See I. L. Gordon, p. 43, note to ll. 72-80a. She ascribes the same idea to Old Norse poetry. The idea is common among primitive tribes to this day.
42. For example: Stanley Greenfield, "Attitudes and Values," p. 19. For the opposite point of view, see Stevick, op. cit., pp. 335-336.

43. I. L. Gordon, op. cit., p. 45.

44. See Krapp and Dobbie's notes to these lines, pp. 297-298, and I. L. Gordon's discussion, pp. 45-46.

45. Line 103 and ll. 106-109 are hypermetric, as are the final lines of The Wanderer. This fact has led Pope and others to consider the passage an epilogue spoken by the poet, but I do not find this necessary. Since l. 103 begins a new page and a new gather of the manuscript and since its relevance to previous lines was not clear, early readers of the poem thought that ll. 103-124 were not part of The Seafarer at all. For a review of their views, see J. J. Campbell, op. cit. (note 7 above), p. 95, n. 13. Campbell and most modern critics agree that "the evidence for separating lines 102-124 from the rest of the poem . . . [is] insufficient."

46. Stevick finds that "the repetition of se [i.e., meotud] gestaðeldee <sic> (1. 104) and meotud . . . gestaðelad (1. 108), a repetition echoed in on staðelum healdan (1. 109), is unusual in itself; it does not appear to be poetically or thematically functional . . ." (p. 334; the square brackets are his). It is possible, however, to discern a pattern, a movement from macrocosm to microcosm, from God to man in the use of gestaðelian. Just as God established (gestaðelade, 1. 104a) the firm foundations of heaven and earth and makes steadfast (gestaðelad, 1. 108a) the heart of him who believes in God's power, so man must hold in place (on staðelum healdan, 1. 109b) his violent mind. Each contributes to order.

47. I have translated bealo as "malice" in l. 112, following I. L. Gordon, p. 47. Although the line is imperfect metrically, it seems that one can still make sense from it. This is not the case, however, with ll. 113-115a, and if there is any place in the poem that has clearly suffered in transmission, it is here. I have therefore neglected to translate these lines. For a discussion of the problems involved, the emendations suggested, and the interpretations offered, see Krapp and Dobbie, p. 298, and I. L. Gordon, pp. 47-48.
The Old English poem called *The Wife's Lament*, beautiful and haunting as it may be, presently suffers from too many interpretations. When C. W. Kennedy said "The essential outlines of the unhappy fate she [the wife] rehearses are clear enough," these outlines were clear, but recently scholars have resurrected long dormant, early theories that call into question the basic premises of the poem, have questioned the translation of key words, and have put forward interpretations that scarcely agree with each other in essential outline, let alone in detail. The speaker of the poem, the "I," may either be a man or a woman who is either young or old. His or her lord or husband (1) is exiled as a result of a feud, (2) goes into exile voluntarily, (3) goes on a military expedition, (4) goes on a journey over the sea, or (5) is forced into exile by kinsmen who hate him or by revolutionary forces for political reasons. He either returns or he does not return. The wife is maligned to her husband or to another lord (from whom she has sought protection) for marital unfaithfulness, witchcraft, plotting against him, or some other crime. She is exiled once or twice, voluntarily or by force, into her own (or her husband's)
land or into a foreign land. He banishes her because he has been tricked or he has not been tricked. She looks upon him as cruel for banishing her or for plotting some evil (perhaps murder) against her, or she looks upon him as sympathetic to her, an unwilling dupe of his kinsmen. She either bewails her husband's altered mood (his hatred of her) or reveals her unqualified respect and pity for him who is guiltless and victimized. Or, if there are two lords, one may be cruel and one sympathetic to her. She must either endure his hatred of her or suffer for the hatred (probably the result of a feud) that others direct at her lord, or suffer persecution by the world in general. Her place of banishment or captivity is an eorðscrafu (earth-cave) which is either (1) a ruin overgrown with briars, (2) a grove-dwelling, (3) a cave, (4) a succession of chambers as in natural caves, (5) a heathenish abode, (6) a prison, (7) some sort of sanctuary, (8) an old and neglected but fortified building, or (9) the grave (cf., The Wanderer, l. 84). The poem closes with either a cry of despair, a prediction of trouble for her husband, gnomic verses suggested by reflection on her husband (or herself, or himself), an exhortation, or a curse directed either at her husband or at a third person (perhaps one of the mischievous relatives) who has come between them.

Many difficulties of interpretation could be simplified
if students of the poem could agree (1) on whether the events of the poem are presented in chronological order or not and (2) on the basic structure of the poem. Most critics accept the sequence of events as chronological and explain the lack of a coherent order by acknowledging the poet's "attempt to portray excited feelings"; for example, "the breaks in continuity . . . are completely consistent with the ebb and flow of the woman's feelings." But J. A. Ward, in a recent article, argues rather convincingly that "The intense emotion of the wife and the rather unsystematic organization of the poem in general indicate that the wife's hasty summary of antecedent action may be confused and unchronological." Similarly, the structure of the poem has been variously defined. S. Stefanovic divides the poem into eleven parts: 11. 1-4, 5-8, 9-14, 15-20, 21-26, 27-31, 32-36, 37-41, 42-45, 46-49, and 50-53—with a full stop at the end of each. A. C. Bouman makes nine divisions: 11. 1-5, 6-8, 9-10, 11-14, 15-17a, 17b-20, 21-26, 27-41, and 42-53. By far the most common structuring of the poem recognizes a prologue (11. 1-5) and four sections: 11. 6-14, 15-26, 27-41, and 42-53. Nonetheless, Robert Stevick absorbs the prologue into the first section, recognizes no major division at 1. 6, and consequently finds the poem composed only of four sections. Similarly, Thomas Davis, while recognizing the basic prologue and four-section division of the poem,
rearranges the divisions so that "each unit begins with a statement of cause and ends with the effect"\(^8\): ll. 6-10, 11-26, 27-41, and 42-53. R. F. Leslie divides the poem into "two distinct and almost equal sections"\(^9\): the first, ll. 1-26, is narrative; the second, ll. 27-53, is almost wholly descriptive.

The Wife's Lament is most often considered a "self-contained lyric."\(^10\) There have been several attempts, however, to render the poem more intelligible by connecting it to other, more well-known tales. The various suggestions include the tale of Constance or the "Banished Wife," especially as it is related to Offa, king of Mercia from 757 to 798\(^11\); the Crescentia tale (the exiled queen)\(^12\); the Odoaker saga\(^13\); some Irish parallels\(^14\); a folktale, "The Search for the Lost Husband" or "The Tale of Cupid and Psyche" (Tale Type 425)\(^15\); and the Sigurd cycle.\(^16\) There have been some attempts to connect The Wife's Lament to The Husband's Message\(^17\) and even to The Last Judgment,\(^18\) the poem which follows The Wife's Lament in the Exeter Book. None of these suggestions has received wide critical acceptance.\(^19\) I might add, rather tongue in cheek, that it is not impossible to read the poem as a riddle, the answer to which is body and soul (although I must admit that I cannot decide whether the husband is body and the wife is the soul or vice versa). But finally one can only draw a great breath and declare that "The Old English lyric
The (Banished) Wife's Lament has evoked much critical comment without producing an acceptable interpretation."²⁰ Some order has been imposed upon this seeming chaos by Thomas Davis who defines the "three major critical positions regarding The Wife's Lament."²¹ First is the "three person" theory wherein the husband is banished for a capital crime, but husband and wife remain constant in their devotion to each other. A third person, the geong mon of l. 42, is in some way responsible for the separation and receives the wife's curses at the end of the poem. Second is the heretical suggestion most recently argued by Rudolph Bambas²² and Martin Stevens, to whom I shall return below, that the speaker is a man. This view has not been widely accepted. "While differing on certain points, the majority of critics hold the view that 'The Wife's Lament' concerns the song of a woman experienced in suffering, who is separated from her banished husband and is languishing in a wuda bearwe. In the Prologue to her lament (ll. 1-5) the wife presents a brief history of her ceaseless suffering."²³ "In Section I (ll. 6-14) the speaker reveals the cause for her present misery." Her husband has departed, his kinsmen have plotted against her, and she has sought "protection or support from strangers." "Section II (ll. 15-26) raises several critical problems and, with the exception of lines 42-47, has been the cause of most of the critical disagreement concerning
the poem." Yet however one interprets herheard (or her heard, l. 15b) and mordor hyggendne (l. 20b), the section ends "with a restatement of the speaker's isolation."

Section III (11.27-41) visualizes that isolation in graphic detail. And the final section (11. 42-55), because of "unclear syntax," has been understood in a variety of ways from an exhortation to a malediction.

However, Martin Stevens has shown that the conventional interpretation and the premise which underpins it (namely, that the speaker is a woman) "is not at all based on the text, and it is very much subject to challenge." His argument, without the flesh of his sustaining evidence, proceeds in this way:

The hypothesis that a woman is the speaker is based entirely on the occurrence of the three feminine forms geomorre, minre, and sylfre in the opening lines of the poem . . . . According to the established view, geomorre, minre, and sylfre take the feminine ending in -re because they refer to a feminine speaker who, in this case, has to be the Ic or me of line 1 . . . . [But] it is a well-known fact that in Old English, the possessive pronoun agrees in number, case, and gender with the noun it modifies . . . . It follows, therefore, that the grammar of minre and sylfre cannot possibly prove that the speaker is a woman.

Martin Stevens solves the problem by understanding geomorre as an adverb formed from the adjective and understanding sið as "a feminine noun used here as a genitive singular and, therefore, demanding an -e ending." From this point of view, the passage reads as follows:

Ic ðið giedd wrece  bi me ful geomorre
minre sylfre siðe . . . .

(11. 1-2a)
I recite this song about me very sadly, of my own journey.

To my mind, Mr. Stevens has shown beyond any reasonable doubt that "The traditional interpretation of the so-called 'Wife's Lament' as a woman's monologue is plainly in error. It is not sustained by the context, the setting, or the diction of the poem. And, even more important, neither is it sustained by the grammar which has been used as its primary justification."^28

Although Martin Stevens and I disagree on other points (the chronology in the poem, for example), I am convinced that the speaker of the poem, the "I," is not an unfortunate wife but an alienated, perhaps exiled, man and that the poet is working within the same tradition as is the poet of The Wanderer. I am also assuming with many other critics that the chronology of the poem is essentially straightforward,^29 and hope to show that the poet employs a series of important contrasts which provide the structural underpinnings of the poem and contribute to its power and poignancy. I propose to read the poem as an Exile's Lament, the monologue of a man who, in a massive and chaotic universe, can find no still point, no security, outside of himself. Reading the poem in this way, one discovers the point and focus of the poem to be the relationship between a thane and his lord, a discussion of the comitatus bond and how it can be broken. More specifically, the
poem concentrates on the response of one man, the alienated thane, and shows his growth, through increasing awareness, to knowledge of the way a man must behave vis-à-vis the often conflicting ethical demands of Anglo-Saxon society. The Exile's Lament, like so many other Old English poems, teaches. Not to behave in a certain way is to court disaster, to shake the stabilizing forces of one's society, and to bring a multitude of perpetual grief (sinsorgna gedreag, l. 45a) upon oneself and ironically upon those one loves.

The Exile's Lament, like The Seafarer, begins with the claim that what is to follow is the personal experience of the speaker. This claim differs from that of The Seafarer, however, by insisting not upon the validity of the song but upon its sadness (ful geomorre, very sadly, l. 1). In this way the prologue (11. 1-5) does more than introduce the poem: it establishes the context within which the events to be related are to be understood, and it establishes the contrast between past and present sorrows that will become a major concern of the poem.

Ic ðis giedd wrecce bi me ful geomorre, minre sylfre sið[e]. Ic ðæt secgan maeg, hwaet ic yrmða gebad, siððan ic up weox, niwes ððe ealdes, no ma ðonne nu. A ic wite wonn minra wraecsìða.

(ll. 1-5)

I recite this song about me very sadly, of my own journey. I can say that since I grew up I endured
miseries, new or old, never more than now. Ever I
endure the torment of my exiles. It is important to note, I think, that the speaker insists
upon a plurality of exiles (wraecsiôa, l. 5). These
exiles, which the speaker goes on to say involve a sepa-
ration from his lord, are not only present and continuing but are also set against and said to be worse than any
or all of the miseries, niwes oôe saldes, that a man can
endure in this life. The old or everyday miseries, I
think, are understood and assumed by both poet and audience; they need no expansion. The one kind of misery that is
worst of all, wraecsiôa, which involves the destruction of
the comitatus bond, is the subject of the rest of the poem.

The characteristic shift in Anglo-Saxon poetry from
the general to the specific and immediate (often the per-
sonal experience of the speaker) begins in the next few
lines, which detail the separation of the speaker from his
lord.

Aerest min hlaford gewat heonan of leodum
of er yôa gelac; haefde ic uhtceare
hwaer min leodfruma londes waere.
Pa ic me feran gewat folgaô secan,
wineleas wraecca, for minre weaðearfe.

(11. 6-10)
First my lord departed, hence from the people,
over the tossing of waves; I had dawn-sorrow [about]
where my people-prince might be in the land. Then
I, a friendless [or possibly lord-less] exile departed
to seek service [among the retainers owing service
to a lord] on account of my woeful need.
By accepting the chronological sequence of these events, it is clear that the behavior of lord and thane is being compared in some way: first the lord departs (Aerest min hlaford gewat, 1. 6a), then the speaker departs (Pa ic me feran gewat, 1. 9a). There is some evidence to indicate that the separation of lord and thane, the breaking of the comitatus bond, is permanent and final. I suspect that the lord, the min hlaford of 1. 6, has died. 36 We are told several things about his departure: (1) he goes hence from his people, (2) he goes over the tossing of waves, (3) sadness (uhtceare, 1. 7b) attends his departure, (4) his retainer, the poem's narrator, must seek a new lord because of his woeful need, and (5) there is some mystery attending his destination (hwaer min leodfruma londes waere, 1. 8). The departure of this lord resembles in a great many details the death and departure of Scyld Scefing in Beowulf. Scyld departs hence from his people over the tossing of waves (leton holm beran, / geafon on garsecg, [they] let the sea bear [him], [they] gave [him] to the ocean, Beowulf, ll. 48b-49a); sadness attends his departure (him waes geomor sefa, their mind was sad, Beowulf, 1. 49b); and there is some mystery attending his destination:

Men ne cunnan
secgan to soðe, seleraedende,
haeleð under heofenum, hwa ðæm hlaeste onfeng.

(Beowulf, 1. 50b-52)
Men do not know, truth to tell, hall councilors, heroes under heavens, who received that load.

The death of the lord provides sufficient cause for the narrator's calling himself a *wineleas wraecca* (friendless exile, 1. 10a) and for his seeking new service (*folgað secan*, 1. 9b) on account of his woeful need (*weaðearfe*, 1. 10b). The cause would clearly be insufficient if the lord merely undertook "a sea journey of some duration" and neglected to include the narrator "in his selection of shipmates." But the important point here is that the *comitatus* bond is broken since the narrator must seek service elsewhere.

I think he finds that new service and satisfies the need established by the departure of his lord. This is the only possible conclusion if one accepts the chronology of the poem here as straightforward (and there is no reason not to): first the lord departed (died), then the speaker sought new service (and found it), [then] the kinsmen of the [new] lord tried to separate the speaker from his new lord. To insist that the chronology is not straightforward here is to impose a great deal of temporal chaos upon what is otherwise a clear sequence of events and to stretch beyond belief the agility of the Anglo-Saxon mind to follow such leaping about in time. The speaker says he will seek a new lord, and he finds one; I think this is taken for granted, implicitly understood. Thus, there is a temporal shift between 1. 10 and 1. 11: it is not a twist in time.
(a return to discussing the speaker's difficulty with his lord who died, l. 6), but rather it is a leap forward in time to focus upon the speaker's difficulties with his new lord, the one he found when he went to seek service (folgað secan, l. 9b). The ðaes monnes magas (the kinsmen of the man) of l. 11 and the hlaforð min (my lord) of l. 15a refer to the new lord.39

This new relationship is, like the first, dissolved but for a different reason. In the first case, the separation of thane and lord was caused by the departure (a formulaic euphemism for death) of the lord. In the second case, the separation originates outside the thane-lord relationship (among the kinsmen) and involves the lord turning away from the thane, or, by virtue of a choice that the lord must make (between thane and kinsmen), being forced to turn away from his thane. Thus I read The Exile's Lament as a poem which focuses upon and discusses one of the stabilizing forces of Anglo-Saxon society—the comitatus relationship. It defines and describes two of the ways in which that relationship can be destroyed by referring to two obvious truths about any human relationship: (1) men die, and (2) men turn away from each other. And since the second is less easily anticipated, it receives the more careful exposition.

Ongunnon ðæet ðaes monnes magas hycgan
ðurh dyrne geðoht, ðæet hy todaelden unc,
ðæet wit gewidost in woruldrice
The kinsmen of the man began to think through hidden thought that they would separate us, so that we two lived most hatefully and most wide in the world, and I was ill at ease. My lord commanded me to take up residence here; I possessed few dear ones, faithful friends in this country. Therefore my mind is sad, when I did not find the man fully like me, unfortunate, sad in mind, concealing thoughts, contemplating slaughter with a blithe demeanor.

It is not necessary to provide a specific motive for the kinsmen's action; finally it is irrelevant to the poem. What is important is that thane and lord are separated, for that separation is the worst of yrmōa (miseries, l. 3a) that the narrator has endured since he grew up (siðgan ic up weox, l. 3b).

What makes the separation even more painful from the speaker's point of view is the different ways in which he and the lord respond to the separation. Apparently, the lord is willing to accept the separation since he commands the thane to take up his dwelling in the lord's own land where the retainer has few dear friends. Since the lord
responds in this way (Forðon, 1. 17b), the thane is sad because the lord will not oppose the separation; the lord is not like the thane who is unhappy (heardsaeligne, 1. 19a), sad in mind (hygegeomorne, 1. 19b), concealing thoughts (mod miðendne, 1. 20a), and, while maintaining a blithe bearing, considering the slaughter (morðor hycgendne, / bliðe geæaero, 11. 20b-21a) of the lord's kinsmen who wrecked the thane-lord relationship.

Clearly the lord's response is contrasted with that of his thane, but I suspect that his very attitude toward the way such dilemmas should be handled is also examined and subtly contrasted with that of his thane and kinsmen. Both kinsmen and thane keep their thoughts hidden (11. 12a and 20-21a respectively) in a well-established Anglo-Saxon tradition. (This seems to be the point of The Wanderer, 11. 11b-14, and it is reflected in action when Judith goes to the tent of Holofernes, when Hengest resides in peace with Finn [Beowulf, 11. 1063-1159a], and when Signy effects the death of her husband in the Volsungasaga.) Since no reason is given for the kinsmen's behavior, it appears malicious. The thane, with apparent good cause, plots retribution against the kinsmen (morðor hycgendne, considering slaughter, 1. 20b). The attitudes of thane and kinsmen provide a contrastive frame for the attitude of the lord. The lord does not keep his thoughts hidden, nor does he plan retribution against his kinsmen (whom
the laws of kinship protect except for the most flagrant and abusive of crimes). Instead, with a concern for re-establishing peace in his household, he separates the discordant elements by removing the thane (Het mec hlaford min her heard niman, My lord commanded me to take up residence here, l. 15), perhaps as much to protect the thane as to protect his own kinsmen. Both the attitude and the action are displeasing to the thane: he does not find the man, his lord, to be like him in considering the mordor (slaughter, l. 20b) of the kinsmen. That is, the thane is unhappy that the lord should banish him and unhappy that the lord should choose banishment instead of slaughter to solve the dilemma. In the gnomic statements at the end of the poem, the thane reappraises his own attitude and arrives at a more complete understanding of the lord's position and of the choices the lord had to make. This, as I shall show, is the didactic point of the poem.

After the sadness (geomor, l. 17b) which attends the discovery that his lord does not share his desire for revenge and has indeed cast him out, the thane feels betrayed. His voices his sense of betrayal in ll. 21b-26.

Ful oft wit beotedan
ðaet unc ne gedaelde nemne deað ana
owiht elles; eft is ðaet onhworfen,
is nu swa hit no waere
freondscipe uncer. Sceal ic feor ge neah
mines felaleofan faehōu dreogan.

(11. 21b-26)
Full often we two promised that [nothing] would separate us save death alone, naught else; that also is changed; our friendship is now as [if] it never were. Far and near I must endure the enmity^ of my dear companion.

The contrast between the anticipated effect of the promise (that nothing save death would separate them) and the actual result of the kinsmen's plotting (the separation of lord and thane) is clear. Indeed, the contrast heightens the thane's sense of betrayal. I understand nemne deað ana (save death alone, l. 22b), in addition to its obvious and ordinary meaning, as an implicit reference to the way in which the thane was separated from his first lord who departed from his people over tossing waves (ll. 6b-7a). Likewise, nothing but death should have separated him from his second lord, but they are separated: it is as if their friendship had never been. As a result, the thane must endure the enmity (faehōu, l. 26b) of his lord. Faehōu, a technical term denoting a state of feud, is quite appropriately used in this context. The animosity between the thane and the kinsmen of the lord, reflected in the thane's desire for revenge upon the kinsmen (morōor hyegendne, l. 20b), implies the existence of capitalis inimicitia between them. The lord is caught in the middle. A feud with his kinsmen necessarily involves him, and he must choose between defending his thane or his kinsmen. But nowhere in the poem does the speaker denigrate him or hold
him guilty in his actions for the separation. The anguished position of the thane is revealed in the contrastive collocation of felaleofan (dear one) and faehōu (enmity) in l. 26.

From the point of the lord's command in l. 15 that the speaker of the poem take up his residence here (her heard niman) to l. 26, the poem has focused on the response of the thane to that command, describing first his sadness, then his awareness of the difference between his own and his lord's attitude, and finally his sense of betrayal (epitomized in the contrastive collocation of felaleofan and faehōu). At l. 27, however, the poet returns to the lord's command to the thane, and, in the next block of lines (ll. 27-41), the speaker first describes his place of exile and then reveals his response to that fact of his existence. This last is most important because it modulates between his desire for revenge and the gnomic reflections at the end of the poem. The detailed description of his place of confinement need not concern us here: he is commanded to dwell in a grove of trees, in an old earth-hall beneath an oak tree, the whole wound about by briars; it is, as he says, a wic wynna leas (a joyless dwelling, l. 32a). The description of the bleak dwelling is interrupted only once by a statement vaguely contrastive in that it implies the speaker's desire for something other than what he has received—a hall, perhaps,
with a friendly lord: the exiled thane declares *eal ic eom oflongad* (I am all longing, l. 29b). It is not difficult to see why, since the bleakness of his physical surroundings reflects the bleakness of his spiritual state.

Full oft mec her wraðe begeat fromsið frean. Frynd sind on eorðan, leofe lifgende, leger weardiað, ðonne ic on uhtan ana gonge under actreo geond ðas eorðscrafu. ðaer ic sittan mot sumorlangne daeg, ðaere modceare minre gerestan, ne ealles ðaes longaðes ðe mec on ðissum life begeat. (11. 32b-41)

Full often the departure of the lord laid hold of me in this place in a grievous manner. Friends are on earth, dear living ones, [who] rest in their couches while I go alone at dawn through these earth-caves beneath the oak tree. There I must sit a summer-long day; there I can bewail my exiles, [my] many hardships; for I can never calm my care of mind nor all that longing which came upon me in this life.

There are several important contrasts in this passage which reflect and emphasize the isolation of the speaker and lead him toward the realization that occupies the end of the poem. The fact that he is in a joyless dwelling place (*wic wynna leas*, l. 32a) wound about by briars (*brerum beweaxne*, l. 31b) brings home to him as nothing else can that he is separated from his lord, that the lord
himself has ordered that separation, and that lord and thane can no longer enjoy the relationship that they enjoyed before. The lord is no longer the friend of the thane (cf. ll. 24–25a). The poet emphasizes the point by what, in this poem, is the contrastive collocation of frean (the lord [who is no longer a friend]) and Frynd (friends) in l. 33. I understand Frynd in l. 33b to be "friends" in general in this sense: there are people on the earth, dear living ones, who, unlike my lord and me, are friends, who rest in their couches . . . . Surely these Frynd cannot be the speaker's friends: after the departure of his first lord, the thane complains that he is a friendless exile (wineleas wraecca, l. 10a) and must search for new service; and when his second lord banishes him, he laments that he has few dear friends (i.e., none) in this land (ll. 16–17a) and that their friendship is now swa hit no waere (l. 24b). Such friends behave in certain ways (among other things they leger weardiað, l. 34b), but since he has been separated from his lord, he is removed from such a relationship. Instead, he must go alone at dawn (ic on uhtan ana gonge, l. 35) and all alone beweep his outcast state. Stevick has already argued that in the sentences which describe the conditions of lamentation (ðaer ic sittan mot, l. 37a, and ðaer ic wepan maeg, l. 38a) one finds "two verbs emphatically suggesting habitually repeated or enduring action."50 If this is so, the cause
is not far to seek: as an isolated and friendless outcast, there is no one outside himself who can provide comfort for him (and in this he is similar to the narrator of The Wanderer who seeks friends and a hall and someone to comfort him, the friendless one [mec freondleasne frefran wolde, Wanderer, l. 28]), and he admits that alone he can never calm his care of mind (forðon ic aefre ne maeg / ðæere modceare minre gerestan, ll. 39b-40).

Although the "general gnomic character" of ll. 42-47a has long been noted, some uncertainties of interpretation remain. Chief among these are the identification of the geong mon in l. 42, the way in which the two sy-clauses in ll. 45 and 46 are to be understood, and the grammatical function of ðæt in l. 47b which governs the relationship between ll. 42-47a and ll. 47b-53. And, of course, punctuation to a large extent determines interpretation. I want to offer a new reading of these lines which is based upon the premise that the speaker of the poem is a man, a thane separated from his lord, and which stems quite logically from the reading of the poem I have suggested above. It involves identifying the geong mon of l. 42a as any young man with specific reference to the speaker of the poem. It also involves a repunctuation of the sy-clauses. Heretofore, (1) sinsorgna gedreag (a multitude of perpetual grief, l. 45a) has most commonly been read as a variation of breostceare (breast-care,
l. 44b) and the object of habban sceal in l. 43b; (2) eal his worulde wyn (all his worldly joy, l. 46a) has been read as the subject of sy in l. 45b; and (3) the subject of sy in l. 46b has been the understood subject "he." Thus, if one takes sy as optative, the sy-clauses can become a male-diction: may all his worldly joy be dependent upon himself, may [he] be far banished into a distant land . . . . I think another reading is possible, a reading which does not recognize sinsorgna gedreag as a variation of breost-ceare but as the subject of sy in l. 45b and which recognizes eal his worulde wyn as the subject (replacing the understood "he") of sy in l. 46b. Thus, I place a period after breostceare (l. 44b), begin a sentence with Sinsorgna (l. 45a), remove Krapp and Dobbie's comma after gedreag (l. 45a), place a semi-colon after gelong (l. 45b), remove the comma after wyn (l. 46a), and translate the whole as follows:

A scyle geong mon wesan geomormod,
heard heortan geôcht, swylce habban sceal
blîðe geaero, eac ðon breostceare.
Sinsorgna gedreag sy aet him sylfum gelong;
eal his worulde wyn sy ful wide fah
feorres folclondes, ðaet min freond siteð
under stanhliðe storme behrimed,
wine werigmod, waetre beflowen
on dreorsele. Dreogeð se min wine
micle modceare; he gemon to oft
wynlicran wic. Wa bið ðam ðe sceal
of langðe leofes abidan.

(11. 42-53)
Even may [i.e., have as one's duty] a young man be sad of mood, hard in the thought[s] of [his] heart; likewise [he] may [must?] have a blithe demeanor together with [or in addition to] breast-care. A multitude of perpetual grief may depend upon himself alone; all his worldly joy [i.e., his lord] may be banished far into a distant land, where my friend sits beneath a rocky slope, covered with hoar-frost by storm, [my] friend weary in mood, girt-around by water in a sad dwelling. My friend endures great grief; he remembers too often a more joyful dwelling. Woe be to him [or them] who must suffer from the longing of a dear one.

Let us neglect, for a moment, the problem of the second lord's apparent exile; I will come to that below. Lines 42-44, at least, clearly present gnomic wisdom. "The signs are significant: the A scyle formula with its consequent material is the same as that found in Beowulf and the Edda, where universal truths are uttered, suggested by the immediate circumstances, but unquestionably free from it."54 This gnomic wisdom defines admirable behavior--the indryhten ðeaw (noble conduct) described in The Wanderer.

Ic to soðe wat
ðæt bið in eorle indryhten ðeaw,
ðæt he his ferðlocan faeste binde,
healde his hordcofan, hycge swa he wille.

(Wanderer, 11. 11b-14)
I know as a truth that it is [considered] noble conduct in a man that he bind fast his soul-locker, hold [fast] his treasure-coffer, think what he will.
Similarly, in the fifth "stanza" of Deor, we see the same indryhten ðeaw at work among the retainers of the savage king Eormanric. Although many a warrior sat bound by sorrows, in expectation of woe, he only wished (*wyæcte*, Deor, 1. 25b) that the kingdom would be overcome; he did not actively work to overthrow it. This is all highly relevant to The Exile's Lament because, as I read the poem, the thane-narrator did not adhere to this principle of indryhten ðeaw, did not bind fast his heart, when he plotted revenge against the kinsmen who tried to separate him from his lord. But I think he comes to realize, after he has been banished to the eorðsele and after he discovers that alone he can never calm his care of mind, that a young man should indeed bind fast his soul-locker, think what he will; instead of plotting revenge, he should have a blithe demeanor together with his breast-care (*habban sceal / bliðe gebero, eac þon breostceare*, ll. 43b-44). Not to do so is to bring a multitude of perpetual sorrows of one's own making upon oneself and to see all one's worldly joy banished into a distant country.

The Exile's Lament is a sad poem not because it describes a maligned wife separated from her lord but (1) because it defines a man's separation from two lords--from the first through no fault of his own and from the second as a result of the machinations of his lord's kinsmen and his own seemingly justifiable desire for
revenge; and (2) because, among other things, it pits an inexorable necessity (the thane's desire for revenge upon the kinsmen of his lord) against an irrevocable law (which protects those kinsmen). It is a characteristic theme of Anglo-Saxon literature (cf., for example, the choices faced by Hreðel as related in Beowulf, ll. 2425-2471).

The thane clearly had a choice: he could either adhere to indryhten ðeaw and conceal his vengeful thoughts behind a blithe demeanor until, like Hengest at Finnsburg, for example, he was assured of success, or he could reveal that he is considering slaughter (morðor hyggendne, l. 20b). He makes his choice and he makes a mistake. He discovers that his lord is not like him (l. 18), does not or cannot share his desire for revenge; he is banished; he is separated from his lord; and he brings sinsorgna gedreag upon himself and, ironically, upon his lord.

The lord, of course, is in a similar position, caught between his obligation to a member of his comitatus and his obligation to his kinsmen. He too has an ethical choice to make, and he chooses to banish the thane. Ironically, this is unsatisfactory, since at the end of the poem we are presented with a picture of the lord himself banished into a far land (l. 47a). The apparent banishment and exile of the lord may be understood in any one of several ways, and the ambiguities of the poem do not help in resolving the problem. First, the lord may have
been banished in a power struggle that resulted either from the thane's plotting revenge or from the lord's banishing the thane (instead of killing him). Indeed, an earlier power struggle within the comitatus may well account for the original desire of the kinsmen to separate lord and thane (ll. 11-12). This, at any rate, would account for the speaker's knowing his lord was exiled. Second, the voices of poet and thane may well merge in this final section of the poem. The poet, speaking from a vantage point outside the action of the poem, utters the universal truths in the form of gnomic wisdom and provides information about the lord (i.e., his exile) that the thane as speaker could not know. Third, the description of the lord's exile may be hypothetical, an imaginative projection of what can happen when one does not conceal his vengeful thoughts and thus all his worldly joy is banished to a far folk-land (eal his worulde wyn sy ful wide fah / feorres folclondes, ll. 46-47a). And fourth, it is possible that the thane merely uses the diction of exile to describe what he knows to be the lord's sense of estrangement from the thane. Just as the speaker describes the barren surroundings of his own exile as a reflection of his spiritual state, so he attempts to portray the feelings of his lord by describing him as an exile, one who remembers a happier dwelling (wynlicran wic, l. 52a) not beset by factious quarreling among retainers, kinsmen, and lord.
In this last interpretation, to which I incline, the lord is not literally exiled. But whether the lord's exile is literal or, as I believe, figurative, the point is that the lord is unhappy and that his unhappiness stems ultimately from the thane's desire to plot revenge and refusal to bear his sorrows quietly. As I read the poem, the unhappiness of the lord and the thane's part in causing that unhappiness become part of the thane's realization (and the poet's didactic point) when at the end of the poem the speaker reaffirms the importance of bearing one's sorrows with a blithe demeanor, of living with sadness (*wesan geomormod*, l. 42b), and realizes that a multitude of perpetual grief (which includes his and that of his friend-lord) attends the man who does not do so.

The poem closes on a vision of two men, each isolated from the other and from happy company. Both are condemned to inhabit sad dwellings: the thane's is a *wic wynna leas* (l. 32a); the lord's is a *dreorsele* (l. 50a). The sadness of each is intensified by the contrast with other, more happy circumstances: the lord *gemon to oft / wynlicran wic* (remembers too often a more joyful dwelling, ll. 51b-52a), and the thane says *eal ic eom oflongad* (I am all longing, l. 29b). Both are made sad by their having responded to the ethical demands of their society. But there is a further irony which contributes to the pathos of their relationship. In the course of the poem, the thane-narrator
comes, through his realizations, to knowledge. Whereas earlier he had insisted that his friendship with his lord was, as a result of the thane's banishment, *swa hit no waere* (as if it never were, l. 24b), at the end of the poem he recognizes that his lord behaved as the ethics of his society demanded: three times in the last seven lines the thane calls his lord his friend. The irony, of course, is that there is no indication that the lord knows the thane has come to this realization.

In one sense, *The Exile's Lament* is a Christian poem in the same way that *The Wanderer* is a Christian poem.55 The poem examines the *comitatus* bonds that join lord and retainer and shows two ways in which that relationship can be severed. The underlying assumption, one with which no Anglo-Saxon would have seriously disagreed, is that security in this world is difficult to establish and, once established, difficult to maintain. Men die, friendships fail, all one's worldly joy may be banished into a distant land, and one can never calm his care of mind, nor all the longing which comes upon him in *this* life (on ðissum life, l. 41b). The poem presupposes a world in which there is little security and less surety. It takes little imagination to guess *ðæer us eal seo faestnung stondeð* (where the security of us all stands, *Wanderer*, l. 115b).
Chapter IV: Footnotes

10. C. W. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 120.
12. S. Stefanovic, op. cit. (note 5 above).
15. Robert P. Fitzgerald, "The Wife's Lament and 'The Search for the Lost Husband'," JEGP, LXII (1953), 769-777. Fitzgerald does not argue for a direct connection: The Wife's Lament, "if it is related to Aa 425, is undoubtedly related to a rationalized version of the tale" (p. 771).

16. A. C. Bouman, op. cit., pp. 73-91. Bouman's argument is that both The Wife's Lament and The Husband's Message, taken together, are related to the Sigurd cycle. For a fuller treatment of the possibilities discussed above, see Bouman, pp. 78-80, and Leslie, pp. 9-10.

17. Most recently by A. C. Bouman. See the previous note.


21. Davis, op. cit., pp. 291-299. Davis omits "the large body of criticism which attempts to relate 'The Wife's Lament' to some cycle or legend . . . [and] the interpretations which try to establish a relationship between 'The Wife's Lament' and 'The Husband's Message'" (p. 291, n. 3).

22. Rudolph Bambas, "Another View of the Old English 'Wife's Lament'," JEGP, LXII (1963), 303-309. The interpretation of the poem that understands the speaker as a man was argued much earlier by L. L. Schücking in a much neglected article, "Das angelsächsische Gedicht von der 'Klage der Frau',' Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum, XLVIII (1906), 436-449. (I would like to thank Mrs. Paul Bauer of Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, for her help in translating Schücking's awkward German.)

23. Thomas Davis, op. cit., pp. 296-297. The following quotations which define the majority position are also from Davis, pp. 297-299. Davis, who understands the events of the poem in a chronological order, differs from the majority opinion (1) in the structure of the poem as I have indicated above, p. 123, and (2) in interpretation since he finds no animosity directed against the husband by the wife. He defines his position on pp. 299-304 and provides a translation based upon his understanding of the poem on pp. 304-305.
24. Martin Stevens, "The Narrator of 'The Wife's Lament'." Unpublished article. I would like to thank Professor Stevens for making the article available to me in manuscript and for allowing me to quote from it.


27. Stevens, pp. 7-8. He cites Bosworth-Toller, s.v. siðð(ð).

28. Stevens, p. 16.

29. It is also possible to read the poem in such a way that events related late in the poem occurred in time before events related early in the poem. The problem, in large part, depends upon one's understanding of Aerest (1. 6), Da (1. 9), and Ongunnon (1. 11). As I indicated above, J. A. Ward first argued for an unchronological arrangement of the events within the poem. However, since there is no grammatical or formal necessity for reading the poem in that way, I have chosen to accept the events in the poem as essentially chronological—except, of course, where they clearly are not so: e.g., 11. 21b-27 obviously refer to a condition existing between lord and man before the command voiced in 1. 15. For more detail on Ward's position, see note 34 below.

30. Robert D. Stevick, op. cit., identifies what he calls the "geomor pattern" which "provides an iteration of the dominant mood of sadness, the mood of lament" (p. 21). He also takes note of "the abundance of terms permeating the poem with the tone of misery" (pp. 22-23). He lists 32 instances of words or phrases which mean or connote estrangement, sadness, misery.

31. Edith Rickert, op. cit., p. 366, n. 1, finds that "L. 5 is not clear; but the meaning seems to be, 'Always I got suffering through my exiles,' i.e., 'My suffering has always come through exiles'." By translating in this way, she takes minna wraeckiða as a dative. I have retained the more conservative and literal genitive. See R. K. Gordon, Anglo-Saxon Poetry, Everyman ed. (London, 1926), p. 79. The text is that of Krapp and Dobble, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, vol III, The Exeter Book (New York, 1936), pp. 210-211.

32. A.C. Bouman, op. cit., p. 48, believes that "Wraec-siða in line 5 need not be taken in its strictly literal sense, as a plural, denoting more than one journey or time of exile; it is rather a synonym of yrmeða in line 3, and
of earfoða fela in line 39." R. K. Gordon also translates it as a singular. But I follow Edith Rickert (see the previous note) and others in translating wraescióða literally as a plural.

33. Robert Stevick, op. cit., p. 23, discusses "the persistence of verbs which, drawing fully on their contexts, present a constant feeling of long-lasting or repeated action (or circumstance) which anticipates no end . . . ." The fiction of the poem requires us to believe that the speaker delivers his song from  sæs eoræscrafu (these earth-caves, 1. 36b).

34. It is possible to understand Aerest and Pa (1. 9) in a way that does not recognize the chronological sequence of events that most translators find here. "Aerest . . . may simply indicate a general past time. In other words, Aerest may mean 'first' not in the sense that the departure of the lord was the first step in the wife's misfortune, but in the sense that the wife feels that 'first,' before describing her present state, she must explain the happenings leading up to it; thus the word may be taken to refer to all the events prior to the present time of the poem. "Likewise Pa does not necessarily mean 'then' in the sense of 'next,' but possibly in the sense of 'at that time.' Thus, the wife's emphasis may be upon a general period of time prior to the present, rather than on a precise chronological order" (Ward, op. cit., pp. 27-28). Stevens, op. cit., pp. 15-16, is essentially in agreement with Ward.

35. Folgað "has invariably the technical sense of service due to a lord by his retainers" (Leslie, op. cit., p. 7). Students of the poem who insist that the speaker is a woman try to explain away this word by insisting that "the wife stood in the same relation to her husband as a retainer" (Leslie, op. cit., p. 7). Recognizing a male narrator avoids this awkwardness and accepts folgað secan as "a phrase which traditionally applies to the wineleas wraecca [1. 10] in his quest to find a new lord" (Stevens, op. cit., p. 10).

36. Martin Stevens has pointed out to me in conversation that although the primary meaning of gewitan is "to depart," the verb also means "to die." It is used in this sense in Queen Eadgifu's charter, quoted in A. J. Wyatt, An Anglo-Saxon Reader (Cambridge, 1919), p. 119, l. 470. See Bosworth-Toller, s.v. gewitan, II, for further references.

37. Rudolph Bambas, op. cit., p. 305. Bambas believes that the narrator is "obliged to wait for the chief's return" (p. 305). But, to my mind, 11. 9-10 indicate that
the narrator does not wait; he departs to seek service.

38. Schücking makes the same point, op. cit. (note 22), p. 440: "we cannot therefore object for a moment to the fact that the finding of a new vassal service is not further mentioned but that it is taken for granted that it was achieved" [Mrs. Bauer's translation].

39. Schücking, op. cit., pp. 440-441: "Without a doubt then the mon mentioned in v. 11 and the hlaford mentioned in v. 15 is also the new feudal lord. That the one who is speaking now lives in a new country is very clearly shown in v. 16 on ðissum londstede" [Mrs. Bauer's translation].


41. "The MS reads her heard but since her ends one MS line and heard begins the next, we cannot say whether the copyist had before him one word or two" (Malone, op. cit., p. 114). For a discussion of the suggested emendations, see Krapp and Dobbie, op. cit., p. 352, and Thomas Davis, op. cit., p. 301. In understanding heard as "abode" or "Residence," I am following Malone, op. cit., p. 114, and Chadwick, op. cit. (note 2), p. 173.

42. In this reading I am following the closely reasoned argument of Martin Stevens, op. cit., pp. 12-15. "The separation of gemæc and ne is, of course, an editorial privilege. The scribe of the Exeter book, like most medieval scribes, often runs words together (and it should be noted that the R. W. Chambers facsimile edition does not show a connecting stroke between gemæc and ne)" (p. 13). Stevens suggests "the possibility, if not the probability, that gemæc in a construction of this type has prepositional force in the sense of modern English 'like'" (p. 14).

43. I follow Stevick, op. cit., pp. 23-25, and Malone, op. cit., p. 114, in ending the sentence after gebaero. Stevick bases his argument on syntactic patterning, and Malone points to the contrast between "outward appearance and inward reality" (p. 114). The contrary opinion, that the sentence ends with hycgendne (1. 20b) and a new sentence begins with Blīðe gebaero, has most recently been argued by Stanley Greenfield, op. cit., p. 910, who follows the punctuation of Krapp and Dobbie.

44. This point is tentatively anticipated by Stevens, op. cit., p. 15.
45. It was long thought that faehôu indicated the hostility of the husband toward his wife. But "faehôu is a technical term used to describe a state of feud... It cannot, therefore, refer to hostility of the husband towards his wife; personal enmity is generally expressed in Old English by hâtê or its compounds" (Leslie, op. cit., p. 55). It is also possible to understand this in such a way that "the husband possesses hatred in the sense that he endures the hatred of his kinsmen" and that "the wife is forced to suffer on account of the enmity experienced by her beloved" (Ward, op. cit., p. 51). See also Bouman, op. cit., p. 53 and n. 2; Chadwick, op. cit., p. 174; and Swanton, op. cit., pp. 284-285.

46. Bosworth-Toller, s.v. faehô.

47. Most students recognize Hêt mec mon wunian (One [or a man] commanded me to dwell, I. 27a) as a "simple periphrasis for the passive voice" (Greenfield, op. cit., p. 910).

48. Stevick, op. cit., p. 22, reads this half-line as "a momentary loss of restraint by which we may measure the urgency of the woman's feelings."

49. I find this reading from Bosworth-Toller (s.v. lêger, III) to be the least unsatisfactory among many unsatisfactory readings.

50. Stevick, op. cit., p. 23. See also note 53 above.


52. The most recent and ingenious of these is that suggested by Stanley B. Greenfield, "The Old English Elegies," in Critical Studies in Old English Literature, ed. E. G. Stanley, to be published in England in the summer of 1966. I am indebted to the kindness Mr. Greenfield showed me by allowing me to see the galley proofs of this article. Mr. Greenfield suggests a new interpretation based on, among other things, a shift in punctuation: "it involves splitting the two sy-clauses and putting a semicolon at line 46b, and reading the first sy-clause as an expression of good rather than of bad fortune, as it is commonly taken. We then have an opposition expressed: the young man (her husband) will in the nature of things ever have a sorrowing mind, etc., beneath a happy exterior, even if (sy) all of his worldly joy depends on himself alone.... if it be (sy), on the other hand, that her freond (husband) is an exile, like herself, on dreorsele (comma
after line 50b, not full stop), se min wine will endure
great anguish of spirit; he will then remember a happier
dwelling: wynlicran wic . . . . In other words, the wife
concludes her lament with a consideration of her husband's
situation . . . . The gnomic conclusion can then embrace
both man and wife" (galley, p. 61).

53. Leslie, op. cit., p. 8, argues that "The geong mon
is an impersonal figure; he does not represent the woman's
husband, as has recently been suggested, but the woman
herself, for the generalised mon could be used of women
as well as men." Martin Stevens, whom I follow in this
matter, agrees but qualifies his agreement: "the less
strained reading, and the one suggested implicitly by the
structure of the poem, would assign the passage to men in
general and to the poet-narrator in particular" (op. cit.,
p. 11). Schücking, op. cit., p. 445, identifies the geong
mon as the speaker himself: "der 'junge mann' ist weder
einer der bösen magan, noch der ehegatte, es ist--der
sprecher selbst."

54. Blanche Williams, op. cit., p. 50.

55. Edith Rickert, op. cit., p. 370, first suggested
that "The Wife's Complaint then is the only poem in the
Exeter Book (barring the fragmentary Ruin and the Riddles)
that has not to a certain extent been edited"--i.e.,
which has not had Christian allusions inserted. She
attempts to Christianize the poem by arguing, among other
things, that The Wife's Lament is connected to The Last
Judgment.
Chapter V: Deor

Although Deor has long been the object of scholarly investigation, most writers on the poem have concerned themselves with the literal meaning and especially with the identification of the proper names in the catalogue of misfortunes which occupies more than half of the poem. I want to forgo for the moment the problems of literal meaning that have concerned serious students of Deor—the hapax legomena, the elliptic and allusive style, the identification of Meoêhild (or Hilde or [Beado]Hild) and Geat and Peodric and the burg of the Maerings—and approach the poem, rather, from another direction, that of the whole poem, "its overall signification." There have been, so far as I know, only a few important attempts to view the poem as a whole; I will suggest another.

By far the most popular view of the poem recognizes Deor as a lyric or lament concerned with the misfortunes and afflictions that befall men in this world and suggesting that these sorrows pass in time. "There are differences of emphasis, but the essential notion of a romantic personal lament remains more or less standard." This understanding of the poem recognizes an essential tripartite structure most recently described by Stanley B. Greenfield.
The first five stanzas deal with individual misfortunes of specific characters from the realm of the Germanic heroic world: Welund, Beadohild, Maethhild, Theodric and Eormanric; the sixth is a generalised reflection on God's allotting of joys and sorrows to all mankind (this section is attached by many critics as an introduction to the final stanza; no large capital letter introduces it, unlike the other sections); and the seventh gives the case history, as it were, of the fictitious speaker-poet (Deor) himself. The situations alluded to and expatiated upon in the poem present a spectrum of misfortunes which seem to have no relation to the merits or demerits of the individuals concerned; they are simply typical of the lot of mankind in its darker moments.]

Clearly such a description, precise and accurate though it may be, does not account for the existence of the first five stanzas nor indicate the way in which they contribute to the unity of the poem. I suggest that one can read the poem in such a way that the specific instances of misfortune described in ll. 1-27 do more than provide an introduction to the general reflections on adversity, ll. 28-34, which most clearly express the point and "theme" of the poem.

F. Norman accounts for the existence of the five exempla of misfortune by arguing for an associational linking of the various personages in the poet's mind. The basic statement of his argument, although long, is worth quoting.

The poet intended to give examples of people who had ultimately triumphed in spite of initial calamity, and he chose these examples from among people who were, for a time, cruelly treated by fate. Welund, the lamed smith, was the first. His triumph was achieved largely at the discomfiture of the wholly innocent Beadohild who thus, quite naturally, became the second example. Beadohild's misfortune came to a good end: she bore
Widia. The wronged Beadohild reminded the poet of the wronged Maeôhild. Her trouble was caused by Geat who, as I shall suggest, was presumably exiled or went with Maeôhild into self-imposed exile. This called forth a reference to the most famous exile story in Germanic antiquity, that connected with Theodoric the Ostrogoth. His opponent was Ermanaric, and that led on naturally to a general consideration of the Gothic tyrant. There follows a passage (ll. 28-34) which commentators have often looked upon as a later Christian interpolation. In this passage the poet reflects that many a man sits bereft of joy conscious that life is full of care and troubles. Whoever thinks so should remember that God rules over this world, grants honour and glory to many a man, to others nothing but woe and misery. At first sight this does not seem to fit in with the other heroic contexts but there is nevertheless a close connexion. Ermanaric, in heroic tradition, became the inscrutable father figure. He dispensed gifts munificently and capriciously, and at the same time he acted with inexplicable treachery. His warriors are depicted by the poet as living under a cloud. These reflections called forth in the mind of the poet the heavenly father figure whose actions, from the point of view of man, are just as inexplicable, and whose designs are just as inscrutable. Thus the whole scheme as it came into the poet's mind stands revealed and becomes intelligible. We are not dealing with a number of heroic references strung together like beads on a string but with a grand and simple structure carried through without a flaw by a consummate artist, as melancholy and civilized a figure as one is likely to meet in literature.

P. J. Frankis, in a somewhat less popular reading of the poem, wants to "assume that the first five sections of the poem have a special connection with the story of Deor... Of course the five episodes do not make up any continuous or systematic allegory: each section points to an isolated aspect of human relationships and misfortune, and tells of a situation parallel to one part of Deor's story." Thus, by examining the five exempla and assuming that Welund, Beadohild, and the others appear in the poem
because they share a particular experience with Deor, Frankis reconstructs, on the evidence of the poem alone, a story of Deor: "Deor, scop to the king of the Heodeningas, aroused the wrath of the king by his love for the king's daughter, who conceived a child by him; because of the king's tyrannous behaviour, Deor was forced to flee (with or without the king's daughter: we cannot guess at that); his estates were confiscated and given to his successor, the rival poet Heorrenda; Deor becomes an exile."\(^9\)

But Morton Bloomfield, in a very interesting article (cited above), prefers to argue "that Deor is either a sophisticated, Christianized charm against any kind of misfortune due to social or personal relations, particularly loss of property or rights of some sort, or against some particular unknown (to us) misfortune of a similar sort; or a poem influenced by the charm form and meant to suggest its prototype. Above all, it is not a monologue by a minstrel Deor, hoping for alleviation of his sufferings. It rather attempts to do or to effect something which is not stated and which may have been stated in a lost prose introduction."\(^10\) Bloomfield's case depends largely upon the way in which he interprets the "refrain"\(^11\) and the structural similarities between Deor and the charms. But by reading the poem in this way, Bloomfield reduces the five exempla to "suitable narrative episodes"\(^12\) and does not consider their structural importance at all.
The chief importance of Bloomfield's article, however, lies in the attention he draws to the òisses of the refrain: òæs ofereode, òisses swa maeg, which appears at the end of each exemplum (ll. 7, 13, 17, 20, 27) and again, rather surprisingly, at the end of the poem (ll. 42). "What then does this in the refrain refer to? I assume it is being used to refer to any or a particular social misfortune unknown to us, and that the poem is meant to have a practical and ritualistic purpose as a charm may have or, more likely, to suggest a charm."13

While I am not quite willing to accept Deor as "a very sophisticated version of a charm,"14 I do agree with Bloomfield that the òisses of the refrain refers to something outside the poem itself--some particular social misfortune unknown to us--and that it can not refer to Deor's own misfortune which he describes at the end of the poem (ll. 35-41). Indeed, I am not convinced that the five exempla exist in the poem because "the sufferings of each separately are in some way comparable to Deor's own troubles."15 Rather, it is my belief that Deor is designed to teach--and designed very carefully.16 Each of the five exempla and Deor's experience at the court of the Heodenings characterizes and epitomizes one kind of adversity, all of which are subsumed under the general rubric weana dæl (portion of woes, l. 34b) which God can give to man. This is in keeping with Anglo-Saxon poetic
tradition, since "often in OE verse individual experience is regarded as a manifestation of a universal principle..."\textsuperscript{17} Two facts about the poem contribute to understanding the exempla as characteristic examples of adversity: first, as I shall show, each exemplum represents a unique kind of misfortune—there is no repetition; and second, the individual exempla are clearly separate from each other—even the Welund and Beadohild exempla, which are part of the same story, are treated as "separate examples of human suffering."\textsuperscript{18} My point here is that by means of the five exempla which open the poem, the Deor-poet is (1) defining a wide variety of possible afflictions, any one of which may strike a response from a member of the audience; and (2) establishing a context for the Christian truth which is the point and purpose of the poem. By closing with a fictionalized reference to himself (or his persona), the poet is indulging in what William Chaney would call the visual proof, an example of the eye-centeredness of the pre-printing Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{19} Essentially, the poet is saying that Welund, Beadohild, and the others were sorely afflicted; whether one is afflicted or not is in the hands of God; even I have been afflicted sorely in my time, and I am living proof of the moral I am preaching.

Moreover, it is not enough to say, with Kemp Malone and others, that the opening exempla are unified because "Each section deals with adversity."\textsuperscript{20} To be sure, the
adversity establishes the tone and contextual background of the poem. But the poet carefully varies the adversity each exemplum presents by defining that misfortune in terms of different kinds of isolation or separation. It should not be too surprising to discover an Anglo-Saxon poet describing adversity in terms of isolation. This undercurrent of separation, as I shall show, contributes to the unification of the individual exempla. Moreover, the poet reinforces that unity by appealing to what the audience knows as true: knowledge, the "we have heard" formula, appears as a leitmotif in the poem and (by creating a context of "that which is known") helps establish the validity of the poet's Christian message. With the exception of the Welund and Beadohild passages, which may have been so well known that the "we have heard" formula would have been gratuitous, the poet emphasizes the audience's awareness of the afflictions suffered by Maeðhild (We . . . gefrugnon, we have heard, l. 14), Peodric (œæt waes monegum cuð, that was known to many, l. 19b), and Eormanric. (We geascodan, We have heard, l. 21a); and he closes the poem with an intimate revelation of his own (or his persona's) affliction—albeit fictionalized. Thus surrounded by what the audience knows and accepts as true, the moral that God gives to some and withholds from others gains in validity. But there may be another reason for this emphasis upon what the audience knows to be true.
If the ðisses of the refrain is supposed to refer to a misfortune suffered by a listener similar to the misfortune suffered by Welund, Beadohild, and the others, then the listener can identify his misfortune more easily once he recognizes that it is similar to one that is publically known and widely understood—the common knowledge of all the listeners.

It goes without saying, of course, that the basic structural principle of Deor is one of contrast. The ðaes and ðisses of the refrain, which beg for a recognition of the similarity of misfortunes, also imply a contrast: that misfortune of the past known to us all passed away, and this misfortune which may plague one of you in the audience can or will likewise pass away if God so wills it. Moreover, within each exemplum, where it is not too vaguely allusive (as in the case of Maedhild and Peodric), one may find significant contrastive collocations. And finally, I think that the afflictions of Welund and Peodric are subtly contrasted with those of Beadohild and Eormanric, respectively.

We may easily assume that the Deor-poet's audience was familiar with the story of Welund: how Welund the smith and his two brothers captured and married three swan-maidens who, nine years later, disappeared. While the two brothers went in search of their wives, Welund remained at home hoping for the return of his wife. There
King Niôhad captured him, imprisoned him at a smithy on a small island, and, at the queen's instigation, hamstrung Welund to prevent his escape. Visited by the royal children, Welund slew Niôhad's two sons, made golden goblets from their skulls and jewels from their eyes, and drugged and then raped the daughter, Beadohild. Then Welund escaped on wings fashioned from the feathers of birds. Although the allusion to Welund may generate the whole story in the mind of the listener, the Deor-poet concentrates on one small point in the story—Welund's physical affliction and his isolation (most probably on the small island).

Welund him be wurman\textsuperscript{23} wraeces cunnade,
anhydig eorl earfoða dreag,
haefted him to gesiððe\textsuperscript{24} sorge ond longað,
wintercealde wraece; wean oft onfond,
siððan hine Niôhad on nede legde,
swoncre seonobende on syllan monn.
Paes ofereode, ðisses swa maeg.

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Welund had his experience of [or knew] misery . . .
. . . the single-minded man endured troubles; he had as company [or companion] to him sorrow and longing, winter-cold misery; often he experienced woe since Niôhad eagerly\textsuperscript{25} laid supple sinew-bonds [i.e., hamstrung] [on] him, on the better man. That passed away; so can this.

The poet emphasizes the estrangement of Welund\textsuperscript{26} by the (ironic) contrastive collocation of gesiððe (companion) and sorge ond longað (sorrow and longing) in l. 3. Similarly, the poet contrasts Niôhad's evil action with Welund's
undeserved afflictions in ll. 5-6 and especially in the phrase on *syllan monn* (on the better man, l. 6b). But the focus of the whole exemplum is upon Welund's knowledge and experience of misfortune: *Welund . . . wraeces cunnade* (Welund . . . had experience of misery, l. 1); *earfoða dreag* (endured troubles, l. 2b); *wean oft onfond* (often experienced woe, l. 3b). It is not on retribution. Only in the refrain does the poet suggest that *ðaes ofereode* (that passed away), and he leaves it to the listener's memory to suggest how it was done. By saying that *ðisses swa maeg* (so can this), the poet implies that whatever misfortune suffered by a listener that is at all similar to Welund's can also pass away, but he leaves it understood, I think, that the passing away of misfortune lies in the hands of God.

The kind of misfortune that the poet describes for Welund is quite different from that which the poet characterizes by the example of Beadohild. For Welund, the affliction was essentially of the flesh: we are told that Welund often experienced woe (implicitly beyond what he would normally feel by being held captive) since or after Niðhad hamstrung him by laying supple sinew-bonds on the better man (ll. 4b-6). But the particular kind of misfortune characterized by Beadohild is one of the mind.

*Beadohilde ne waes ᵇ hyre broðra deað*  
on sefan swa sar swa hyre sylfre őing,  
ðæet heo gearolice ongieten haefde
To Beadohild, the death of her brothers was not so grievous to [her] mind as her own condition, [when] she had clearly realized that she was pregnant; [she] was never able to think resolutely how [she] must go about it. That passed away, so can this.

The emphasis and chief focus here is upon Beadohild's mind, for that is where her particular affliction is located. That this is indeed the case is clear by the contrast the poet uses to begin the passage: although the death of her brothers is a great misfortune, it is not so grievous on sefan (to [her] mind, 1. 9a) as the fact that she is pregnant by the slayer of her brothers. The poet focuses on cognitive rather than physical action: on sefan in 1. 9a, her realization that she was pregnant (ongisten haefde / ðaet heo eacen waes, ll. 10b-11a), and her inability to think resolutely (aefre ne meahte / ðriste geðencan, ll. 11b-12a). Thus what differentiates the misfortune of Beadohild from that of Welund is that Welund's suffering and isolation are physical while Beadohild's isolation and suffering stem from a classic medieval dilemma: she is bearing the child of the man who slew her brothers. Her awareness and the irresoluteness of her thinking on this problem must of necessity create a secret that isolates her from normal human concourse. I think the
poet shows this by his emphasis upon the mental anguish to which the ðaes of the refrain refers. It passes away, we are told, and any listener who suffers in a way similar to this (ðisses in the refrain)—that is, who has a secret problem that tortures his mind—should be made aware that it too can pass away.

Precisely what the poet had in mind when he referred to the tale of Geat and Maeōhild (as the lady is now commonly known) has eluded several generations of scholars. "In the present state of our knowledge, no one can dogmatize about [Maeō]'Hild' and 'Geat'—the passage is too brief, too corrupt and too allusive." But it is not crucial for us to know the details of the story to which the poet alludes; one can discover enough in the section to realize that the poet is presenting yet another kind of affliction, different from those previously epitomized by Welund and Beadohild.

We ðaet Maeōhilde monte geþrugnon
wurdon grundlese Geates frige
ðaet hi seo sorþlufu sleap ealle binom.
Paes ofereode, ðisses swa maeg.

(11. 14-17)

We heard that of Maeōhild's monge; the Geat's love became groundless (i.e., vast), so that sorrow-love deprived them of all sleep. That passed away, so can this.

What distinguishes the exemplum of Maeōhild (and Geat) from the others is that it concerns love, looked upon
here as an affliction. It is characterized as a sorglufu (l. 16a), a sorrowful love. Since something—either Maeôhild's monge or Geat's frige—relevant to this love became boundless (wurdon grundlease, l. 15), we may fairly assume that the event referred to in the exemplum is significant and important enough to characterize this particular kind of misfortune. Like those of Beadohild and Welund, this misfortune seems to affect both the mind and the body; either Maeôhild or Geat or both are so affected by their sorglufu that it deprived them (or him or her) of all sleep. I suspect, although of course it is impossible to prove, that there is the connotation of isolation in these lines—the separation of the lovers one from the other or, equally possible, the separation of the lovers from others by virtue of their sorglufu (which would, in this case, be a secret love affair as, perhaps, between lovers from warring tribes). But this is mostly, in the nature of the case, speculation. What is important to realize here is that the exemplum devoted to Maeôhild and Geat characterizes and epitomizes a particular kind of adversity, that this adversity is different from that experienced by Welund, Beadohild, and the others, and that the point of the exemplum concerns some form of unfortunate love. Anyone listening to the poem in the 8th century (or later) might well recognize, in a way that we cannot, their own misfortune reflected in the story of Geat and Maeôhild.
and realize that, since the *sorglufu* of Maeðhild and Geat passed away, their own *sorglufu* can also pass away.

Whether the Peodric of *Deor* 11. 18-19 is Peodric the Frank (Wolfdietrich) as Professor Malone argues or, as is more commonly believed, Peodric the Ostrogoth (Dietrich von Bern), ought not to concern us overmuch here. "Both these kings were famous alike in history and in story, and to both a long period of exile is attributed, although in neither case does the exile have any historical basis."  

Peodric ahte ðritig wintra
Maeringa burg; ðæt waes monegum cuð.
Paes ofereode, ðisses swa maeg.

(11. 18-20)

Peodric possessed (ruled) the burg of the Maerings for thirty winters; that was known to many. That passed away, so can this.

The lines are so allusive that it is impossible for us to know to what the poet was referring. In what way, for example, are we to understand that the passage refers to woe which subsequently passed away: (1) is Peodric's possession of Maeringaburg meant to indicate a tyrannical rule and therefore woe for the people; or (2) is the woe Peodric's because he ruled Maeringaburg for thirty years and then his rule came to an end; or (3) is the thirty year period that Peodric ruled the Maerings meant to indicate thirty years of exile during which he was separated from his own people (not the Maerings) although he was at the same time ruling the Maerings? We cannot know whether
Peodric was meant to represent a good or a bad king. Choosing among the possibilities, however, I am inclined to understand Peodric as a good king in exile, separated from his rightful people. In this reading, which I want to emphasize is tentative, Peodric characterizes a particular kind of affliction, in accordance with the others mentioned earlier—that of a good man suffering in his separation from his rightful place in society. Any man who suffers similarly can take some consolation in recognizing his own affliction in that of Peodric (ðæt waes monegum cuð, l. 19b), and in realizing that his own deliverance is also possible (ðisses swa maeg, l. 20b).

In the next section of Deor, most critics insist that the poet departs from his usual method and does not use the central figure, Eormanric, as a figure of misfortune outlived, for in Eormanric we find a king who oppresses his people.

We geascodan Eormanrices
wylfenne geðoht; ahte wide folc
Gotena rices. Þaet waes grim cyning.
Saet secg monig sorgum gebunden,
wean on wenan, wyscte geneahhe
ðæt ðæs cynerices ofercumen waere.
Þaes ofereode, ðisses swa maeg.

(11. 21-27)

We have heard [about] the wolfish thought of Eormanric; he possessed widely the folk of the kingdom of the Geats. That was a savage king. Many a warrior sat bound by sorrow, in expectation of evil,
wished constantly that that kingdom would be overcome.\textsuperscript{42} That passed away, so can this.

But the point of this exemplum is not that the people of Eormanric outlived misfortune, but rather that in the relationship between Eormanric and many of his warriors (secg monig, l. 24a) is epitomized a particular kind of misfortune which, in time, can pass away. This misfortune involves a separation of the king and his people; they are not in accord as they ought to be in a well-run kingdom. Rather, the poet carefully juxtaposes and contrasts what the warriors can expect from their lord (wean on wenan, in expectation of evil, l. 25a) and what they wish for their lord (wyscte geneahhe / ðæt ðæs cynerices ofercumen waere, wished constantly that that kingdom would be overcome, l. 25b-26). Thus, by focusing on the retainers' awareness of their isolation from their ruler, the poet uses the tyranny of a bad king to characterize yet another kind of affliction which his listeners can recognize and see, possibly, as similar to their own misfortune.

After the five introductory exempla, the purpose of which to my mind is to define and characterize five different kinds of misfortune or adversity in which a listener may see his own suffering reflected, the poet moves to a general consideration of misfortune. In doing so, he follows a characteristic Anglo-Saxon pattern (which we have seen earlier in The Wanderer and The Seafarer) of
moving from the personal to the general, a process which recognizes a universal principle operating in individual experience. The shift occurs quite easily, since the general passage begins with a *sorgcearig* (sorrowful one, l. 28a) who may well reflect the *secg monig sorgum gebunden* (many a warrior bound by sorrow, l. 24) of the immediately preceding exemplum.

Sited sorgcearig, saelum bidaeled, on sefan sweorceð, sylfum ðinceð ðaet sy endeles ð earfoða dael.
Maeg ðonne gedencan, ðaet geond ðas woruld witig dryhten wendeð geneahhe, eorle monegum are gesceawað, wislicne blaed, sumum weaða dael.

(11. 28-34)

A sorrowful one sits deprived of joy, (becomes) gloomy in mind; it seems to him that [his] portion of sufferings is endless. [He] can then think that throughout this world the mighty lord turns (i.e., brings changes) frequently, to many a man shows honor, a certain fame, to some (others) a portion of woes.

These lines emphatically sound the theme of the poem, which is also reflected in the important contrastive collocation of *sorgcearig* (sorrowful one) and *saelum* (joy) in l. 28. It is the theme reflected also by the refrain, that no matter how steeped in sorrow a man might be (*sylfum ðinceð / ðaet sy endeles earfoða dael*, it seems to him that [his] portion of sufferings is endless, ll. 29b-30), suffering can pass away because mighty God changes
things frequently throughout this world (11. 31b-32). Theive exempla with which the poem begins identify some of
the kinds of adversity that the Lord can make to pass
away: physical (Wælund) and spiritual (Beadohild) af­
\textit{\textit{fliction}, sorrow that can come from love (Mæohild), the
sorrow of exile or of a good king separated from his
people (Peodric), and the sorrow that comes from the
tyrranny of a bad king who is also in a different way separ­
\textit{\textit{ated from his people (Eormanric). The poet, however, does
more that offer Stoic consolation. In his contrast of
honor (\textit{\textit{are ... wislicne blaed, 11. 33b-34a) and woe
(weana dael, l. 34b) which God shows to men, the poet
implicitly acknowledges the transitoriness of both good
and ill in this world.}\textsuperscript{46} It is not just that sorrow is
transient, but good also is subject to the vagaries of
fortune and the will of God. Thus, by pointing specifically
at this world (\textit{\textit{das woruld, l. 31b), the poet introduces a
cosmic dimension to his poem: all things can pass away.

The concluding lines of the poem, which tell us about
Deor himself, concentrate on particular events in the life
of the speaker. I have suggested above that the speaker
is here offering himself and his own experience as the
epitome of a kind of sorrow that can affect all men, and
by making public his past adversity, he permits those in
his audience who have suffered a similar setback to recog­
nize their misfortune in his.
I can say this about myself, that I for a while was the scop of the Heodenings, dear to my lord. My name was Deor. I possessed for many winters good office, a gracious lord, until now Heorrenda, the song-crafty man, received the land-right that the protector of warriors formerly gave to me. That passed away, so can this.

However, the exemplum of Deor himself, while it shares the attributes noted above with the other exempla in the poem, is strikingly different from them. These lines take on added significance, coming as they do after the general remarks on adversity which cast both the exemplum and the refrain in new light. The Deor-exemplum, more precisely and specifically than any of the others, reflects the poet's comments on adversity. The opening five exempla emphasize adversity which is characterized by reference to particular people—those to whom God has shown a portion of woes (weana dael, l. 34b). But in the Deor-exemplum, the poet, by contrasting the rising fortunes of Heorrenda with the falling fortunes of Deor, shows both those to whom God gives honor (Heorrenda) and those to whom God shows a
portion of woes (Deor). And in doing so, the poet complicates the referents of ðaes and ðisses in the concluding refrain. In the previous exempla, ðaes has always referred to the particular kind of misfortune characterized by the action in the exempla, and ðisses has referred, in my reading of the poem, to any misfortune suffered by a listener that is similar to that characterized by the exempla. But the poet has shown us that good as well as ill is in the hands of God and has implied that God can make each pass away. Thus, the ðaes of the final refrain can refer as easily to Heorrenda's good fortune as it can to Deor's ill fortune. It is clear, of course, that the ðisses of the final refrain cannot refer to Deor's trouble since we are told that ðaes ofereode (1. 42a). It can, however, refer to any misfortune similar to that suffered by Deor. But more important, since ðaes can refer to Heorrenda's good fortune, ðisses can refer to any similar good fortune. This is entirely in keeping with the argument of the general reflection on adversity which insists that good and ill are in the hands of God. But it also places a new burden on the refrain as it has been previously employed; from the point of view of the end of the poem, it is quite possible that throughout the poem the ðaes of the refrain refers to misfortune while ðisses (contrastively) refers to activity in the present world: that (misfortune of the past) passed away; this (good
fortune—the pleasures of monastery or king's court, the very singing of the poem) can likewise pass away.

Deor does far more than catalogue the adversity suffered by others. The poem is remarkable for the way in which it involves the listener, asking him to recognize his own suffering in terms of the suffering of others. But Deor also insists, explicitly, that God controls good and evil and can change them; and, by showing how good and evil can change with the will of God, the poet implicitly emphasizes, in a cosmic vision characteristic of much Anglo-Saxon poetry, the transience of this world.

The cloud capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.

(The Tempest, IV, i)
1. Morton W. Bloomfield, "The Form of Deor," *PMLA*, LXXIX (1964), p. 534, has summed up this focus of scholarly inquiry: "The Old English poem Deor is preserved only in the Exeter Book . . . and its obscurities have given rise to a goodly number of speculations and emendations. As is proper, the main concern of scholarship has been to establish the literal meaning of its lines and the identity of the historical and semi-mythical characters to which direct allusion is made. Less attention has been paid for various reasons—at least in this century—to its overall signification . . . ."

2. Bloomfield, p. 534. The whole paragraph is useful as a tentative review of previous scholarship. See also p. 534, n. 6.


4. Cf. H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature* (Cambridge, 1932), I, p. 25: "The references to adventure which occur in them [Deor and Widsith] are merely incidental, and it can hardly be said that their primary object is to entertain"; and F. Norman, "Deor and Modern Scandinavian Ballads," *London Medieval Studies*, I (1938), p. 178, who argues that the five exempla are indeed only introductory: "In the scheme of the poem, however, they ['the heroic references given in the first five sections' (p. 177)] are largely illustrative material that leads up to the real and present content, the last long section that deals first with general adversity and then with the particular event, heroic and fictitiously personal, that deprived a poet of his own honourable position at an heroic court." However, Norman had earlier argued for a more important and poetically functional understanding of these lines, which I give below.

5. F. Norman, "'Deor': A Criticism and an Interpretation," *MLR*, XXXII (1937), 374-381.

of the way in which these lines are connected: "In dividing his poem into sections, the poet did not stop with the formula of consolation. We have already seen that each section deals in its own way with the theme of misfortune common to all the sections; that is, the subject matter of each section is peculiar to that section. But another fundamental feature of the poet's technique of division remains to be considered. Each section is complete and self-sufficient, capable of standing alone as an independent poem. The absence of connective particles, cross-references and other devices commonly used to link the parts of a whole is noteworthy. The poem makes a whole because its various sections are parallel in matter and manner and have a common theme—misfortune. More particularly, the formula of consolation by repetition serves to bind the sections together as well as to hold them apart. But the ordinary links are wholly wanting. For this reason it is possible to take any section of this poem for itself; so taken, it will stand alone, needing no support from its context, and containing within itself not a single reference or allusion to that context."


9. Frankis, p. 168. Frankis goes on to argue for a connection between Deor and Wulf and Eadwacer, pp. 172-175, wherein he identifies Deor of the first poem as Wulf of the second.


11. The "refrain," Paes ofereode, ðisses swa maeg, entails certain problems which Bloomfield carefully discusses, pp. 535-537. Bloomfield's translation is the most viable of many suggested: "in respect to that it passed away; in respect to this it likewise can or will (pass away)" which he renders in a more polished fashion as "That passed away; so will ('shall' or 'can') this" (p. 536). For a significantly different interpretation of the refrain see Frankis, op. cit., pp. 171-172.


15. Frankis, op. cit., p. 166. Frankis is here referring only to the experiences of Welund and Beadohild.
He goes on to expand the statement, by implication, to include all the people mentioned in the exempla. The point is also argued by, among others, H. M. Chadwick, The Cambridge History of English Literature (Cambridge, 1907), I, p. 40: "Deor is taken up with stories of misfortune, which are brought forward in illustration of the poet's troubles"; and by C. W. Kennedy, Old English Elegies (Princeton, 1936), p. 23.

16. In this I am following Kemp Malone, "The Tale of Geat and Maeðhild," ES, XIX (1937), pp. 197-198: "The secular matter is not presented for its own sake, but for the sake of the moral. The poet surely thought of his verses, not as entertainment but as instruction. Through this poem he was teaching others to be patient under affliction and to have trust in God, however great their misfortunes."

17. Frankis, op. cit., p. 165, n. 13. Frankis makes this point with regard to the experience of Deor, ll. 35-41, but it applies equally to the experiences of the people who occupy primary importance in the five exempla.

18. Frankis, op. cit., p. 166, is emphatic on the separateness of the individual examples which "shows us the Anglo-Saxon poet's attitude to his subject. The poet clearly refrains from linking the Weland and Beadohild episodes as parts of one continuous story of crime and punishment, of suffering and revenge; he treats them instead in personal terms, putting himself in the position of the characters on both sides so as to feel first the sufferings of the wronged Weland, and then the sufferings of the woman who was the innocent victim of his revenge. Thus the poet does not take sides or pass moral judgment; he sees these two episodes not as part of a logical sequence of events (cause and effect), but simply as separate examples of human suffering." Kemp Malone argues for the separateness of the individual episodes from a different point of view, which I have quoted above; see note 6.

19. Mr. Chaney argued this point in a lecture at The Ohio State University in May, 1966. It is part of a longer characterization of the Middle Ages that Mr. Chaney will present in a book soon to be published.


22. Whether or not "Deor" is the actual name of the scop who sings the song (which seems unlikely) or the adopted persona of the scop, and whether or not the events he relates concerning his departure from the court of the Heodenings are true (which seems unlikely) or fictionalized are not relevant here. The point is that the story is supposed to be accepted by the listeners as true. And it is possible, of course, that there is a grain of truth in it. The poet says that at the time of his misfortune among the Heodenings his name was (past tense) Deor (Me waes Deor noma, My name was Deor, 1. 37b). And if we agree that "the Deor poet was presumably a priest or monk" (Kemp Malone, "The Tale of Geat and Mæghild," op. cit., p. 198), he could well be referring to his experience prior to entering orders. It is well known that a change of name often accompanied a change in state of life. The most famous in the eighth century was probably Wynfrið who became Boniface. The practice continues in religious orders in the west to this day. I would like to thank Father James Cooney of The College of St. Mary of the Springs in Columbus for helping me date this phenomenon.

23. Precisely what be wurman means is not known; for a discussion of the possible emendations see Krapp and Dobbie, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, vol III, The Exeter Book (New York, 1936), p. 318. (The text of Deor is that of Krapp and Dobbie, pp. 178-179.) For a more recent emendation, wurman to womman (from wom, wamm, evil, anguish, torment), see L. Whitbread, "More Text-Notes on Deor," MLN, LVIII (1943), pp. 367-368. Kemp Malone, in his excellent although controversial edition of the poem, Deor, 3rd ed. (London, 1961), pp. 6-7, argues that wýrm may be a heiti for "sword" and especially a sword with "serpentine decoration (damascening)" (p. 6): "Perhaps the poet thought of Welund as undergoing persecution by (i.e., alongside of, in the midst of) the very weapons with serpentine tracings and the rings and other ornaments in serpentine form which he had made ..." (p. 7). E. Ekwall, in a review of Malone's edition, MLR, XXIX (1934), pp. 80-82, disagrees with Malone; J. R. Hulbert, in another review, MP, XXXIV (1936-1937), 75-77, agrees with Malone. Although Malone's hypothesis is the most convincing yet put forward, I have elected not to translate the phrase.
24. For a discussion of the problems involved with this word, see the review by Ekwall cited in the previous note, p. 81, and L. Whitbread, "Four Text-Notes on Deor," MLN, LV (1940), pp. 204–205.

25. Most students of the poem argue that hine is governed by on, and the whole is a prepositional phrase parallel to on syllan monn (1.6b). See, for example, the note on this line in Malone's edition, p. 25. A somewhat different reading is suggested by Whitbread, "The Binding of Weland," cited in note 21 above: "In these lines hine on 5a is parallel with on syllan monn 6b, and nede 5a with seonobende 6a; nede is thus accusative plural rather than dative singular, and as a plural has not merely its singular abstract meaning 'constraint' but a special concrete value 'instruments of constraint, constraining fetters'" (p. 18). But this, and the more traditional, reading of the word forces a figurative meaning on nede. The editors, I believe, understand nede as a variant spelling of nid (Bosworth-Toller, s.v. nid, VI, force, compulsion). But the word can be more plausibly taken as a variant of neod (desire, eagerness), and Bosworth-Toller cite two instances of the phrase on nede which translate as "earnestly, eagerly." And they add that "The instrumental with adverbial force occurs very frequently in the Psalms," (Bosworth-Toller, s.v. neod). This, I think, makes more sense. Thus, I still understand hine as parallel with on syllan monn but prefer to take on nede as adverbial, "earnestly, eagerly."

26. Frankis, op. cit. (note 7 above), p. 168, suggests that "the poet describes Weland's sufferings in terms that may be more appropriate to exile than to imprisonment (1: wraeces cunnade; 3-4: haefde him to gesiôôe sorge & longad / wintercealde wraece); that is to say, the enslavement of Weland is perhaps seen as a kind of exile, an enforced absence from his proper place in society." Similarly, A. C. Bouman, Patterns in Old English and Old Icelandic Literature (Leiden, 1962), p. 102, finds that "Deor's description of Welund stresses his loneliness to the exclusion of all other features."

27. I disagree with L. Whitbread, "A Medieval English Metaphor," PQ, XVII (1938), who implicitly looks upon Welund's sufferings as more mental than physical: "The epithet wintercealde [l. 4a], though elsewhere in Old English verse used in its literal sense of physical cold... is here no more than figurative, supplying in all its freshness the analogy of the cold of winter to intense mental suffering" (pp. 367–368).
28. I have chosen to translate œæt as "when" for the sake of smoothness and because a temporal connection is clearly implied. This is the sense of the line, although, of course, there is no temporal connotation associated with œæt. Kemp Malone's note to this line in his edition, op. cit., p. 24, defines the possibilities here: (1) the œæt-clause may be taken as a variation of œing in the previous line, or (2) œæt could be a demonstrative. I am inclined to accept the former.

29. The construction of 1. 12b is quite elliptical, and most editors (e.g., Kemp Malone, p. 24) understand the infinitive weorōan, "to happen, turn out," after sceolde. The consequent impersonal translation would be: "(never might she, Beadohild, think resolutely) how it would turn out," that is, what would be the end of her affair" (Whitbread, "Four Text-Notes," op. cit. [note 24 above], p. 206). But Whitbread, in the work just cited, argues that "the phrase is not impersonal at all, that for sceolde just as for meahte 11b, the subject is 'she,' Beadohild . . . . It seems a safe conclusion that . . . Beadohild is again subject of the clause 12b: 'how she must go about it,' that is, deal with her sad situation. Then either beon or wesan is the verb understood" (p. 206). I have translated the line accordingly. Wyatt's reading, An Anglo-Saxon Reader (Cambridge, 1919), p. 261, is clearly unsatisfactory.

30. It is never clear, of course, how Beadohild resolved her problem—that is, how it passed away. The most common suggestion is that she received some consolation (if not retribution) by giving birth to the hero Wvidia.


The problem can hardly be said to have been solved.
Chiefly the problem lies in the interpretation of monge (1. 14b) and Geates frige (1. 15b); I will discuss these below. It might be of some value, however, to cite two different readings of the section: (1) "We learned that the lamentations of Maeoêhild, Geat's wife, became boundless, so that that sorrow love deprived her of all sleep . . ." (Malone, "The Tale of Geat and Maeoêhild," op. cit., p. 198); and (2) "Many of us learned this (affair, case) of Maeoêhild [namely]: her passion for Geat grew boundless [i.e., so great] that this sad love deprived her of all sleep" (Whitbread, "The Third Section of Deor," op. cit., p. 382; the brackets are his).

32. It is also Norman's opinion ("'Deor': A Criticism and an Interpretation," cited in the previous note) that it is not "of very great importance that the puzzle should be solved" (p. 374).

33. The meaning of monge is perhaps the greatest problem in the line. Two suggestions for dealing with it are offered by Whitbread ("The Third Section of Deor," op. cit., pp. 376-377) who argues that "the syncopated form monge, nominative plural of the adjective 'many' . . . , taken with we in l. 14a, makes excellent sense here in Deor"; and Malone ("On Deor 14-17," op. cit.) who argues against Whitbread (pp. 5-6), prefers to emend monge to mone (the scribe, anticipating the g of gefrugnon, wrote it before the g of mone as well as after it [pp. 9-10]), and understands mone as a hitherto unrecorded word in OE which means "moan, lamentation." See also Malone, "The Tale of Geat and Maeôhild," op. cit., p. 196. For objections to Malone's reading, see F. Norman, "Deor and Modern Scandinavian Ballads," op. cit., p. 174.

34. There are several concurrent problems here. On the difficulty of understanding Geat as a tribal and not a personal name, see Malone, "On Deor 14-17," op. cit., p. 17, n. 37. Frige has been variously translated as love, passion, sexual intercourse, sexual desire, wife, lady, and so forth. But of greater concern is whether Geates frige is a variation of Maeôhild in l. 14a (so Malone, "The Tale of Geat and Maeôhild," op. cit., p. 195, and "On Deor 14-17," p. 15; he translates Geates frige as "Geat's wife") or whether it is the subject of wurdon in l. 15a (so Whitbread, "The Third Section of Deor," op. cit., pp. 377-379; he translates the line as "the love of Geat grew boundless" and suggests that it may be "a reference to 'her passion for Geat' rather than 'the passion of Geat' for her" [p. 379]). See also F. Norman, "Deor and Modern Scandinavian Ballads," op. cit., pp. 174-176, and Eliason, "The Story of Geat and Maeôhild in Deor," op. cit., pp. 498-500.
35. "Her" or "him" are also possible. In translating 
hi as "them," I am following Jackson Campbell and James 

36. The critics of Deor are all but unanimous in be­
lieving that the Maeôhild section of the poem is a "love 
episode" (W. W. Lawrence, "The Song of Deor," op. cit., 
p. 44).

(note 7 above), pp. 162 ff., argues for the Gothic King. 
Morton Bloomfield, op. cit. (note 1 above), p. 536, n. 17, 
provides a brief, though adequate, summary of the problem. 
I incline toward Peodric the Ostrogoth, a large equestrian 
statue of whom Charlemagne had brought from Ravenna to 
Aachen in 801.


39. The identification of Maeringa burg is a crux. 
Frankis, op. cit., p. 164, argues that "Maeringa burg 
refers to Ravenna, which does not disagree with the evidence 
that points to its being in some way or another 'the strong­
hold of the Goths.'" Frankis does not believe that this 
section refers to some misfortune in the life of Peodric 
(as is generally assumed), but rather that it refers to 
the misfortune Peodric inflicted on others (p. 164).

40. Margaret Ashdown, "Notes on Two Passages of Old 
English Verse," RES, V (1929), 324-327, argues that "the 
difficulty of Deor, 11. 18-19, vanishes if anthe is inter­
preted not as a simple past, but in a pluperfect sense 
with an implication of finality and completion . . . . 
Line 18 of Deor's Lament might be rendered 'had held and 
then held no more,' and the whole passage paraphrased as 
'For thirty years Theodric ruled the stronghold of the 
Maerings before his rule was brought to an end.' Here, 
then, is the required 'woe,' regarded, as was to be ex­
pected, from the standpoint of a traditional hero, not of 
his victims" (p. 327).

41. For the connotations of wylfenne géðoht (1. 22a), 
see L. Whitbread, "An Allusion in Deor," JEGP, XLI (1942), 
368-369, who argues that the phrase "is meant as a summary 
of the whole character of Eormanric . . . . The terms 
'wolfish, wolflike' would apply to any human being who 
cast aside the laws of his fellow men . . . . Eormanric's 
thought is 'wolfish' because he acted contrary to the 
spirit of the comitatus, the heroic fellowship binding 
lord and warrior: he broke faith with his people and his 
retainers. It is true no specific instance of his treachery 
is alluded to in the brief Deor reference; but only from
such a general conception do the lines in Deor, 22ff., which depict the misery and discontent of Eormanric's men, explain themselves naturally; the desire of the retainers to have done with their king came from his disloyalty to them, not theirs to him" (p. 369). See also G. V. Smithers, "The Meaning of The Seafarer and The Wanderer (cont.)," Med. Aev., XXVIII (1959), p. 18.

42. Bosworth-Toller, s.v. cynerice, recognize ðaes cynerices quite properly as genitive and translate, "many a warrior wished that there was an end of that kingdom." Whitbread, "More Text-Notes on Deor," op. cit. (note 23 above), argues that "They sought only that one part of the rule, the figurehead of the tyrannous king himself, should fall, they wished 'that (this part) of their kingdom should be overcome'" (p. 369).

43. It is also possible to read this as a modern if-clause because of the inverted word order. See Malone's edition, p. 15.

44. The reference to God in 1. 32a led many early students of the poem to consider these lines a late interpolation. See, for example, Blanche C. Williams, Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon (New York, 1914). pp. 51-53; and, more recently, Morton Bloomfield, op. cit., who seems to imply this when he says "The reference to God seems to me to be an attempt to Christianize the structure of the poem by a poet who was perhaps aware of the original pagan form he was using" (p. 539). But I follow Malone and others who find that these generalized reflections on adversity sum up "admirably the theme of the poem" (Malone, in A Literary History of England [cited in note 20 above], p. 49). For Malone, "The victim of misfortune [the sorgearig of 1. 28a] stands for mankind in general, and his troubles are left unspecified. The consolation offered has a correspondingly generalized character. We are told (1) that woe, like weal, comes from God, who knows what is best for us, and (2) that our troubles are of this world (and therefore sure to come to an end)" (ibid., p. 49). Frankis, "Deor and Wulf and Eadwacer," op. cit. (note 7 above), p. 167, is not convincing in suggesting that 11. 28-42 tell us of Deor himself. See also Malone's edition, pp. 14-15.

45. W. W. Lawrence, op. cit. (note 31 above), who does not understand the exempla and the poem as a whole in the way I do, does not believe that these lines reflect the refrain: "their philosophy is not quite that of the refrain, although not contrary to it" (p. 27).
46. Malone, in his edition of the poem, p. 15, points to the importance of ðas in the formulaic phrase geond ðas woruldh: "To be noted also is the alliteration gedencan . . . ðas of 1. 31, which puts emphasis on the earthly and therefore transitory nature of human joys and sorrows."

47. Bruce Dickins, Runic and Heroic Poems (Cambridge, 1915), p. 77, notes that "The name Deor (in the form Dior) occurs in a Kentish charter of 859 . . . . It is also found on a coin of Coenwulf of Mercia (796-822); and Aethelwulf of Wessex had a moneyer of that name at Canterbury . . . ."
Chapter VI: The Dream of the Rood

The Dream of the Rood celebrates, more powerfully and poignantly than any other expression in Anglo-Saxon, the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Although students of the poem have long recognized the importance of certain contrasts in producing particular effects—the most noted of which, of course, is the contrast between Christ, eager and willing to mount the cross, and the cross itself, a reluctant participant in the drama of the crucifixion—only recently have these critics come to recognize how crucial a part is played by contrast: "The presentation of the subject in The Dream of the Rood is largely in terms of antithesis: when mankind . . . sleeps, the inanimate Cross speaks; it is the object of both degradation and adoration; it is the way both of death and life."¹ This awareness of the larger significance of contrast has led to some interesting conclusions both on the nature of the poet's conception of Christ in the poem and on the structuring of the poem itself. Rosemary Woolf, in a carefully argued essay,² insists that

The most remarkable achievement of the poem is its balance between the effects of triumph and suffering, and their paradoxical fusion in the Crucifixion is suggested first by the alternation between the jewelled radiant cross and the plain and blood-covered cross in the prelude, and secondly and much more subtly and

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powerfully by the two figures of the heroic victorious warrior and the passive enduring cross. At the time when the poet wrote, the Church insisted on the co-existence of these two elements in Christ, divine supremacy and human suffering. . . . [There] also co-existed the two ideas of a divine victory and a sacrificial offering, though here not as the result of a carefully formulated orthodox doctrine. . . . The author of the Dream of the Rood, then, in emphasizing at once both triumph and suffering . . . reflected exactly the doctrinal pattern of thought of his time . . . .

And J. A. Burrow understands the poem largely in terms of contrast: the opening of the poem turns "on the sharply marked contrast between the natural and the supernatural"; the terms for Christ in the central crucifixion scene "express the contrast between 'humana natura' and 'dietas patris' . . ."; and in the last part of the poem where the dreamer becomes individualized, one finds "a deliberate contrast to these effects." "So the dreamer in the Old English poem moves from fear and sorrow to hope, and it is this simple emotional sequence which links the closing soliloquy with the opening vision and sets the tone of the central Crucifixion scene."

Although there are obviously many other critics of the poem who present interesting and intriguing views, I have emphasized the views of Woolf and Burrow because it seems to me that they suggest more clearly than others the general relationships in terms of which the poem as a whole can best be understood. The emphasis in both lies upon contrast. And when one pursues the contrasts far enough, one begins to see certain relationships among the
three principal actors in the poem: the dreamer, the cross, and Christ. Thus, for Woolf, there is a "semi-identification of the Cross with Christ [by which] the poet enables his hearers to share in an imaginative recreation of Christ's sufferings".\(^10\) And for Burrow, the cross has both a natural and a contrastive supernatural dimension. In the natural "persona of the Cross ... it functions throughout its account of the crucifixion as a representative of common humanity and consequently of the dreamer himself."\(^11\) But "in its second, non-natural persona it suffers with Christ ... .\(^12\) "Thus, the Cross, in its own narrative, functions doubly as a surrogate both for the dreamer and for Christ; and these two functions correspond to the double transcendental-natural image of the Cross established at the beginning of the poem."\(^13\) Similarly, for W. F. Bolton, "both Cross and dreamer progress from degradation to glory by suppressing earthly impulse and obeying spiritual duty,"\(^14\) and "In having volition, the Cross enters the moral world, and thereby becomes a parallel for both Christ ... and the Dreamer."\(^15\)

These parallels, identifications, and correspondences give intimations of more significant and profound relationships between cross, Christ, and dreamer which have, it seems to me, only been touched upon and not at all fully developed hitherto. I am convinced that The Dream of the
Rood, like the other poems considered in this study, is designed to teach. Thus, the pains of crucifixion, communicated to us most powerfully through the cross, which modern readers find the most significant point in the poem, achieve importance only in conjunction with the resurrection—the more theologically significant aspect of Christianity. And it is the resurrection, not the pains of crucifixion, which is the focal point of The Dream of the Rood. It is this toward which everything points and which the poem as a whole is designed to teach. The lesson works on several levels: Christ suffered, died, was buried, and rose to heaven; the cross suffers, is buried, and is resurrected; and just so man, the dreamer, suffers in this transitory life, is buried, and, through the grace of God and the power of the cross, can be raised to heaven—such, at any rate, is the hope expressed at the end of the poem. The poet very carefully equates the degradation (crucifixion) and the exaltation (resurrection) of Christ and the cross and indicates with equal care the possibility man has of sharing in this sequence of events that lies at the very heart of Christianity. The poem is triumphant not only through the victory of Christ and the cross over death, but also through the possibility of triumph and victory it presents to man. This is the lesson taught by the cross and the lesson implicit in the cross's narrative of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. It
insists upon what F. L. Utley has called "The cosmic identification of man and nature, Cross and Christ . . . ."\textsuperscript{16}

Although I will be concerned primarily with the way in which contrastive collocations function in the poem, it will also be my concern to show how these collocations contribute to establishing the parallels between the cross, Christ, and the dreamer. That is, I will discuss the way in which the contrastive collocations establish the didactic point of the poem as well as how they contribute power and vitality to the way in which that point is articulated. To do so, and purely as a matter of convenience, I will discuss the poem in five sections: the vision (ll. 1–27), the crucifixion (ll. 28–56), the deposition and burial (ll. 57–78), the homily (ll. 79–121) and the dreamer's response (ll. 122–156) which includes the troublesome Harrowing of Hell (ll. 148b–156).

The poem begins with a statement squarely placing The Dream of the Rood with the well-established tradition of medieval dream-visions. But more importantly, the poet emphasizes in a series of contrastive collocations the two extremes which lie at the heart of the poem: degradation and glory, natural and supernatural, sinful man and angelic purity—in a phrase, crucifixion and resurrection.

Hwaet! Ic swefna cyst secgan wylle,
hwæt me gemaette to midre nihte,
syððan reordberend reste wunedon!
Puhte me ōæt ic gesawe syllicre treow
on lyft laedan, leohete bewunden,
beama beorhtost. Eall ðaet beacen waes
begoten mid golde. Gimmas stodon
faegere aet foldan sceatum, swylce ðaer fife waeron
uppe on ðam eaxlegespanne. Beheoldon ðaer engel
dryhtnes ealle,
faegere ðurh forðgesceafet. Ne waes ðaer huru fracodes
geliala,
ac hine ðaer beheoldon halige gastas,
men ofer moldan, ond eall ðeos maere gesceafet.
Syllic waes se sigebeam, ond ic synnum fah,
forwunded mid wommum. Geseah ic wuldres treow,
waedum geweorðode, wynnum scinan,
gegyred mid golde; gimmas haefdon
bewrigene weorðlice wealdendes treow.
Hwædre ic ðurh ðaet gold ongytan meahte
earmra aergewin, ðaet hit aerest ongan
swaetan on ða swiðran healfe. Eall ic waes mid sorgum
gedrefed,
forht ic waes for ðaere faegran gesyhðe. Geseah ic
ðaet fuse beacen
wendan waedum ond bleom; hwilum hit waes mid waetan
bestemed,
beswyled mid swates gange, hwilum mid since gegyrwed.
Hwædre ic ðaer licgende lange hwile
beheold hreowcærig haelendes treow,
ocðaet ic gehyrde ðaet hit hleoðrode.
Ongan ða word sprecan wudu selesta . . . .18
(11. 1-27)
Lo! I will tell the best of dreams which I dreamed
in the middle of the night when men lay asleep.
It seemed to me that I saw a (more) wondrous tree
borne into the air, wound about by light, brightest
of crosses. All that sign was covered with gold.
Beautiful gems stood (out) at the surface of the
earth; also five were there upon the cross beam. All the angel[s] of the Lord, fair by creation, looked there. Certainly in that place was not the cross of a malefactor, but holy spirits gazed on it there, men upon the earth and all this glorious creation. Wondrous was the tree of victory, and I guilty of sins, wounded with impurities. I saw the glorious tree adorned with garments, shining [lit. to shine] with joy, adorned with gold; gems had nobly covered the ruler's tree. However, I could perceive through the gold the former strife of wretched men, that it [the cross] formerly began to bleed [i.e., that it had once bled] on the right side. I was all afflicted with sorrows; I was afraid because of the fair sight. I saw that changeful sign alter in garments and color; at times it was wet with moisture, drenched with the flowing of blood, at times adorned with treasure. And I, the sorrowful one, lying there for a long time, gazed at the saviour's cross, until I heard that it spoke. The noblest piece of wood began to speak the words . . . .

Certainly, as Burrow points out, "The gap between the dreamer and the cross, at this point in the poem, is absolute," and the distance between them is emphasized in the series of contrastive collocations. The dream itself is implicitly contrastive, reflecting St. Paul's dictum *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat*. Similarly, the striking chiaroscuro obtained by the contrast of pitchy darkness (*to midre nihte, 1. 2*) with the brilliantly illuminated cross (*leohte bewunden, 1. 5*) can only best be appreciated in a non-electronic culture.
But the significant distance between cross and dreamer is established only when the poet focuses on the cross itself. The poet does this subtly by making the dreamer aware that the cross is an object of veneration both of angels (engel dryhtnes ealle, l. 9b, and halige gastas, l. 11b) and of men (men ofer moldan, l. 12a) as well as of all this glorious creation (eall ðeós maere gesceafte, l. 12b). This, taken with the assertion that the object of adoration is not a malefactor's cross but, implicitly, the cross upon which the ruler of the world suffered and died for men, helps establish the two extreme poles, the dichotomy that pervades the opening of the poem and which Burrow, for one, calls the natural and the supernatural\(^{27}\) (terms that are acceptable so long as by them one understands the whole mundane and divine realms). The dreamer himself best articulates his own distance from the divine and adherence to the earthly in the double contrastive collocation that is arranged chiasmatically in ll. 13-14: sylyc (wondrous) and sigebeam (tree of victory) are set against ic synnum fah (I, guilty of sins) in l. 13; and wommum (impurities) is set against wuldres (glorious) in l. 14. Later, at l. 25, the same awareness recurs: hrewcearig (the sorrowful one, i.e., the dreamer) is set against haelendes treow (the saviour's tree).

However, the most remarkable contrast in these opening lines, that which has most attracted the attention of
critics, involves the dual manifestation of the cross itself. The cross not only appears as the divine (superna
tural) sign—the glorious tree, gorgeously adorned and
covered with light—but also as the mundane (natural)
"gallows," covered with blood, upon which Christ was cruci-
fied. The poet emphasizes the dual nature of the cross
first by conjoining the two contrasting descriptions of
the cross (glorious in ll. 14b-17 and bloody in ll. 18-20a)
and then in the contrastive collocation of swaetes (blood)
and since (treasure) in l. 25. The hwilum . . . hwilum
construction enforces the contrast. By depicting the
cross in this way, the poet allows the cross to modulate
between the two realma, mundane and divine, already estab-
lished. Most important, the changeable cross epitomizes
the process of the dreamer's salvation, for as the cross
changes from blood-drenched tree to glorious and ascendant
cross of victory, so the dreamer can move from sinful man
to a place in his heavenly home (l. 148a). Quite appro-
priately, the dreamer's response to the changeful cross at
this point is fear: he is afflicted with sorrow (l. 20b)
because he realizes that he is guilty of sins (l. 13b) and
consequently he is afraid because of the fair sight of the
cross (l. 21a). But at the end of the poem, when he under-
stands more fully the significance of the cross and its dual
manifestation and how it all pertains to him as sinful man,
his response will be one of joy.
The cross begins to speak quite suddenly. There is a bit of the riddle tradition lying behind the cross's recounting its own history, and the poet has skillfully manipulated this tradition so that, while it may evoke the delight of recognition from his listeners, it also establishes the tensions (voiced in terms of significant contrasts) that dominate the crucifixion scene and contribute to its powerful effects. It is well known that the cross finds itself in a cruel and typically medieval dilemma: it must participate in and neither avenge nor hinder the death of its lord. (The poet through his language has established the Christ-cross relationship as one of lord and thane.) To be sure, a great deal of the majesty of Christ's sacrifice and suffering on the cross is communicated through the cross itself and its well-known reluctance to perform its crucial role. But, to my mind, the poet dramatizes the awesome terror of Christ's sacrifice in a series of contrasts and contrastive collocations that move (not without some fearful irony) from the seemingly innocent and unavoidable to the catastrophic and inevitable.

"Đaet waes geara iu, (ic ọaet gyta geman),
ọaet ic waes aheawen holtes on ende,
astyred of stefne minum. Genaman me ọaer strange feondas,
geworhton him ọaer to waefersyne, heton me heora wergas hebban."
Baeron me ðaer beornas on eaxlum, oððaet hie me on beorg aseetton, gefaestnodon me ðaer feondas genoge. Geseah ic ða frean mancynnes efstan elne mycle ðaet hie me wolde on gestigan. Þaer ic ða ne dorste ofer dryhtnes word bugan oððe berstan, ða ic bifian geseah eorðan sceatas. Ealle ic mihte feondas gefyllan, hwæðre ic fæste stod. Ongyrede hine ða geong haeleð, (ðaet waes godael-mihtig), strang ond stiðmod. Gestah he on gealgan heanne, modig on manigra gesyðe, ðe he wolde mancyn lysan. Bifode ic ða me se beorn ymbclypte. Ne dorste ic hwæðre bugan to eorðan, feallan to foldan sceatum, ac ic sceolde fæste standan.

Rod waes ic araered. Ahofic ricne cyning, heofona hlaforð, hyldan me ne dorste. Purhdrifan hie me mid deorcan naeglum. On me syndon ða dolg gesiene, opene inwidhlemmas. Ne dorste ic hira naenigum sceððan. Bysmeredon hie unc butu aetgaedere. Ball ic waes mid blode bestemed, begoten of ðaes guman sidan, siððan he haefde his gast onsended.

Feala ic on ðam beorge gebiden haebbe wraðra wyrdæ. Geseah ic weruda god ðearle ðenian. Þystro haefdon bewrigen mid wolcnum. wealdendes hraew, scirne sciman; sceadu forðeode, wann under wolcnum. Weop eal gesceæft, cwiðdon cyninges fyll. Crist waes on roðe.

(11. 28-56)
That was very long ago—I remember it yet—that I was hewn down at the edge of the forest, carried away from my stem. Strong enemies took me to that place, there fashioned [me] as a spectacle for them, commanded me to raise up their criminals. Then men carried me on [their] shoulders, until they set me on a hill; many enemies fastened me there. Then I saw the lord of mankind hasten with great courage so that he would ascend me. Then, in that place I dared not—against the word of the Lord—bow or break when I saw the surfaces of the earth tremble. I could have felled all the enemies, however I stood fast. The young hero unclothed himself (it was God almighty), resolute and steadfast. He mounted on the abject cross, brave in the sight of many, for he would redeem mankind. I trembled when the hero embraced me. Nevertheless, I dared not bow to earth, fall to the surfaces of the earth, but I had to stand fast. As a cross was I raised. I raised up a powerful king, lord of heavens; I dared not bend down. They pierced me through with dark nails. The wounds are still visible on me, open malicious wounds. I did not dare injure any of them. They besmirched us both together. I was all wet with blood, drenched from the side of the man, after he had given up [sent forth] his spirit. I have endured many cruel events on the hill. I saw the lord of hosts cruelly stretched out. Darkness had covered with clouds the lord's corpse, the bright radiance; a shadow went forth, dark beneath the clouds. All creation wept, bewailed the death of the king. Christ was on the cross.

The cross begins by relating his own experience—one which reflects, in small, the larger concerns of the poem. Just
as Christ is degraded (crucified) before he is glorified (resurrected), so the cross is made to suffer the pains of crucifixion before he is glorified above all the wood of the world (the Invention, ll. 75b-94). The process—one is first brought low (in human terms, one is made aware of his sins, as the dreamer is) and then one is raised up (made aware of the possibilities of God's grace, as the dreamer is at the end)—is reflected on three levels in the poem: the experience of the cross itself, the narrated experience of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, and the projected possibility of a similar experience for the dreamer. Here, and in the next two sections of the poem, one sees how the experience of the cross parallels that of Christ. The cross is cut down (aheawen, l. 29a) so that it may be raised up, set on a hill (hie me on beorg asetton, l. 32b), and fastened (gefaestnodon, l. 33a). The cross is raised up so that it may raise up criminals (wergas hebban, l. 31b). Instead, it must raise up the Lord of mankind (frean mancynnes, l. 33b).

At this point, the poet increases the personification of the cross by giving it volition, a fact which allows it to parallel in action the dreamer and Christ. But the important thing to note is the tension between the cross's desire and the will of God and how this ironically involves the cross's previous experience. The cross wants
to bow down or break (bugan oððe berstan, l. 36a) when it sees the earth tremble (ll. 36b-37a) and Christ approaching to mount it, but it dare not go against the word of God (l. 35b). Just as its enemies once felled it at the edge of the forest, so now it could have felled its enemies and the "enemies" of Christ (ll. 37b-38a), but it dare not, and instead of felling the enemies, it stood fast (l. 38b). The tension is emphasized by the contrastive collocation of gefyllan (to fell) and faeste stod (stood fast) in l. 38. While Christ, in the poet's attempt to underscore the willingness of Christ's sacrifice, is resolute and steadfast (strang ond stiðmod, l. 40a), the cross is abject (heanne, l. 40b). And although the cross trembles when Christ embraces it, it dare not bow to earth (l. 42). In l. 43, once again, the poet contrastively collocates feallan (to fall) with faeste standan (to stand fast), but here it is the cross itself and not the enemies of Christ which is associated with being felled or falling to earth—an important play on words in the poem. Instead of falling to earth, the cross is raised up (Rod waes ic araered, l. 44a), and it raises up a powerful king (Ahof ic ríce cyning, l. 44b); it dare not bend down (hyldan me ne dorste, l. 45b). Of course this complex play on bending down and raising up reflects the theological heart of the poem, the inter-balance between crucifixion and resurrection. The enemies injure the cross (Purhdrifan hi me
mid deorcan naeglum, l. 46a), but the cross dare not injure any of them (Ne dorste ic hira naenigum sceódan, l. 47b), a dramatic return through variation to the cross's earlier refusal to harm Christ's enemies at ll. 37b-38. Both Christ and the cross achieve an identification in pain when "they [the enemies] besmirched us both together" (Bysmeredon hie unc butu aetgaedere, l. 48a) and both are drenched in blood. And the passage closes on the beautiful chiaroscuro, implicitly contrastive, that sets the radiance of Christ's body against the darkness of the world (ll. 52b-55a). 38

The next section of the poem (ll. 57-77), which describes the separate burials of Christ and the cross and ends with the Invention of the cross, probably by St. Helena, 39 must be taken in conjunction with the previous section describing the crucifixion. Together the two sections (ll. 28-56 and 57-77) describe the primal movement of the poem established by the changeful cross and the distance between dreamer and cross in the opening lines of the poem. This, of course, is the movement from the earthly to the divine, from the red cross of the crucifixion to the eternal cross of the world which signifies Christ's triumph, and from sinful man to saved one. That movement, I think, is epitomized in the delicate play between raising and felling that all but dominates the crucifixion scene as related by the cross. The kinds
of paradoxes involved in that moment, other than those stemming from the thane-lord relationship, could only have intrigued a medieval audience and contributed to their enjoyment of the poem: (1) both in bowing to Christ (what the cross wanted to do but could not) and in raising him up (the command of God) the cross reveals his recognition of Christ's lordship; and (2) in raising Christ (the command of God), the cross contributes to the death of his and all the world's lord, but in falling and refusing to raise Christ (the desire of the cross), the cross could preserve his lord by not allowing Christ to redeem mankind. The emotional and theological problems are very complex; the poet reveals them by his concern with raising (rising) and felling (falling).

The identification or, more properly, similarity between Christ and his surrogate, the cross, implicitly established when both were besmirched by the blood from the side of the man (ll. 48-49), is continued and played upon in the next section of the poem.

Hwaeðere ðaer fæse fecran cwoman
to ðam æðelinge. Ìc ðaet eall beheold.
Sare ìc waes mid sorgum gedrefed, hnaeg ìc hwaeðre
ðam secgum to handa,
eaðmod elne mycle. Genamon hie ðaer aelmihtigne god,
ahofon hine of ðam hefian wite. Forleton me ða hilde-
rincas
standan steame bedrifenne; eall ìc waes mid straelum
forwundod.
Aledon hie ðæer limwerigne, gestodon him æt his lices heafðum, beheoldon hie ðæer heofenes dryhten, ond he hine ðæer hwile reste, meðe æfter ðam miclan gewinne. Óngunnون him ða moldern wyrcan beornas on banan gesy hôe; curfôn hie ðæet of beorhtan stane, gesetton hie ðæeron sigora wealdend. Óngunnون him ða sorhleoð galan earme on ða æefentide, ða hie woldon eft siċian, meðe fram ðam maeran ðœodne. Reste he ðæer maete weorðe.

Hwæôere we ðæa greetende gode hwile stodon on staðole, syðan steån up gewat hilderince. Hraew colode, faeger feorgbold. Pa us man fyllan ongan ealle to eorðan. Paet waes egeslic wyrd! Bedealf us man on deopan seaðe. Hwæôre me ðæer dryhtnes ðegnas, freondas gefrunon, ond gyredon me golde ond seolfre. (ll. 57-77)

However, eager ones came there from afar to the prince. I beheld all that. Grieviously I was troubled with sorrows, and I bowed down to the men's hands, very much humble. There they took almighty God, raised him up [i.e., removed him] from the heavy torture. The warriors left me to stand covered with blood; I was all wounded with arrows. They laid there the limb-weary [one], stood at the head of his body; they beheld there the lord of heaven, and he there rested a while, weary after the great contest. Then they began to fashion for him a sepulchre, the men in the slayer's [i.e., the cross's] sight; they
carved it from bright stone, they set therein the lord of victories. Then they began to sing a dirge to him, wretched in the even-tide; then they wanted to depart again, weary from the illustrious prince. He rested there alone. However, we stood in position there weeping for a long time after the voice of warriors departed away. The corpse, the fair life-house, cooled. Then one began to fell us all to the earth. That was a dreadful experience! One buried us in a deep pit. However, thanes of the lord, friends, heard of me [i.e., found me] in that place and adorned me with gold and silver.

Although the passage emphasizes the parallels between Christ and the cross, it also echoes, in the relation between the two, the earlier relationship between cross and the dreamer. In the first section of the poem, the dreamer revealed his sense of his inadequacy and sinfulness by insisting upon his own guilt (synnum fah, guilty of sins, 1. 13b) and the way in which he was afraid (1. 21a) and afflicted with sorrow (Eall ic waes mid sorgum gedrefed, 1. 20b) in the presence of the cross. Just so, at the Deposition of Christ from the cross, the cross echoes the dreamer's words and places himself in the same relation to Christ that the dreamer had earlier maintained in relation to him: Sare ic waes mid sorgum gedrefed (1. 59a).

But the parallels between Christ and cross are more significant. Instead of strong enemies (strange feondas, 1. 30b) coming to bring the cross to pain, eager ones (fuse, 1. 57a) come to relieve Christ of pain. When the
cross assists in the Deposition, it bows down (hnag, l. 59b) to deliver Christ into the hands of his friends, and Christ is raised up from his heavy torture (ahofon hine of ðam hefian wite, l. 61a; the verb is the same one used to indicate the raising up at the crucifixion: Ahof ic ricne cyning, l. 44b). The poet indicates the way in which the friends of Christ take him from the cross (Genamon hie ðaer aelmihtigne god, l. 60b) in phrasing that echoes the way in which the cross was taken from the forest (Genaman me ðaer strange feondas, l. 30b). The bloody cross must stand (l. 62a) while the bloody and limb-weary Christ is laid (l. 63a) on the ground; his retainers stand (l. 63b) at the head of his body. They carve a sepulchre (l. 65b) out of bright stone for Christ and then depart while the cross, which stood in place (l. 71a) weeping and watching, is felled (fyllan, l. 73b) to earth and cast into a deep pit (l. 75a).

The point of these similarities and parallels, even taking into account the important differences, is to establish a pattern of events which implicitly indicates possible paths for sinning man to follow. Thus, for Christ it is crucifixion and resurrection; for the cross it is suffering the pain and degradation of crucifixion and then being glorified above all the wood of the world; and for man it is life in this transitory world and then salvation through the power and grace of God. It is altogether
fitting that the double burial (of Christ and the cross) should be followed by the Invention and glorification of the cross which parallels the resurrection of Christ here implicit and later made explicit. Only at the end of the poem does the dreamer realize that, in spite of his own sense of his sins, his salvation fits into the pattern previously revealed by Christ and the cross.

The homily, which the cross now delivers, stems directly from the glorification of the cross that ended the burial scene. Although the homily begins as an apologia for the cross, the cross enjoins the dreamer to use his newly acquired understanding to promote its cult. What follows then is a disquisition on the resurrection and the Last Judgment and the capacity of the cross to help even the sinful man who trusts in it. It is a carefully prepared homily that points at the last section of the poem where the dreamer realizes that his earlier fear is unfounded, for with the power of the cross and through the grace of God, salvation can be his.

Nu ðu miht gehyran, haeleð min se leøfa,
ðæt ic bealuwara weorc gebiden haebbe,
sarra sorga. Is nu sael cumen
ðæt me weorðiað wide ond side
menn ofer moldan, ond eall ðeos maere gesceaf, gebiddað him to ðyssum beacne. On me bearn godes ðrowode hwile. Forðan ic ðrymfaest nu
hlifige under heofenum, ond ic helan maeg
eaeghwylcne anra, ðara ðe him bið egesa to me. Iu ic waes geworden wita heardost,
leodum laðost, aerðan ic him lifes weg 
rihtne gerymde, recordberendum.
Hwaet, me ða geweorðode wuldres ealdor ofer holmwyðu, heofonrices weard!
Swylce swa he his modor eac, Marian sylfe, 
aelmihtí̃g god for ealle menn 
geweorðode ofer eall wifa cynn.
Nu ic ðe hate, haeleð min se leofa, 
ðæt ðu ðas gesyhðe secge mannum, 
onwreoh wordum ðæt hit is wuldres beam, 
se ðe aelmihtí̃g god on ðrowode 
for mancynnes manegum synnum 
on Adomes ealdgeýrhtum.
Deað he ðæer byrigde, hwæðere eft dryhten aras 
mid his miðlan mihte mannum to helpe.
He ða on heofenæs astag. Hider eft fundað 
on ðysne midðangeard mancynn secan 
on domdaeg drýhten sylfa, 
aelmihtí̃g god, ond his englas mid, 
ðæt he ðonne wile deman, se ah domes geweald, 
anra gehwylcum swa he him aerur her 
on ðyssum laenum life geearnað.
Ne mæg ðæer ænig unforht wesan 
for ðam worde ðe se wealdend cwþð.
Frinæð he for ðære maenige hwæer se man sie, 
se ðe for dryhtnes naman deaðes wolde 
biteres onbyrigan, swa he aer on ðam beame dyðe. 
Ac hie ðonne forhtiað, ond fea ðencað 
hwaet hie to Criste cweðan onginnen. 
Ne ðearf ðæer ðonne ænig anforht wesan 
ðe him aer in breostum bereð beaca selest, 
ac ðurh ða rode sceal rice gesecan 
of eorðwege æghwylc sawl, 
se ðe mid wealdende wunian ðenceð." 

(11. 78-121)
Now you are able to hear, my loved man, that I had to endure the work of wicked men, painful sorrows. Now the time is come that far and wide men over the earth and all this glorious creation honor me, pray to this sign. On me the Son of God suffered a while. Therefore now I, glorious, tower under the heavens, and I am able to heal any man who is in awe of me. Long ago I became the hardest of torments, most hateful to people, before I opened up to them, to men, the right way of life. Lo, then the prince of glory, the Lord of heaven's kingdom honored me beyond [or above] the trees of the forest. Even as he, almighty God, also honored his mother, Mary herself, before all men above all the race of women. Now I bid you, my loved man, that you declare to men, reveal by words, this vision, that it is the glorious tree on which the almighty God suffered for mankind's many sins and Adam's old deeds. There he tasted death; however, afterwards the Lord arose with his great power, to help men. He then ascended into heavens. Hither again the Lord himself, almighty God, and his angels with him will come again into this earth to seek mankind on the Day of Judgment; for he, who possesses the power of judgment, then will judge each one as he himself formerly deserves in this transitory life. No man can be unafraid there before the word that the Lord speaks. He will ask before the multitude where the man may be who would taste of bitter death for the Lord's name as he did formerly on the cross. But they will then be afraid and think a little what they begin to say to Christ. Then no one need be afraid there who formerly bears the best of signs in his breasts, but each soul, which thinks to dwell with the Lord, shall seek the kingdom [far] from earth through the cross.
The apologia (ic bealuwara weorc gebiden haebbe, I had to endure the work of wicked men, l. 79), which refers back to the events of the crucifixion, quickly becomes part of the argument to promote the cult of the cross. The poet carefully allows the cross to contrast its present glory with its past degradation in a passage which evokes the dual vision of the bloody cross of the crucifixion and the gemmed cross of glory first articulated by the dreamer in ll. 18-23. The contrast between past and present is emphasized by nu (now, ll. 80 and 84) and iu (years ago, l. 87):  

*Is nu sael cumen / ðaet me weorðiað . . . / men ofer moldan, Now the time is come that men over the earth honor me, ll. 80-81a)*\(^{48}\); *Forðon ic ðrymfaest nu / hlifige under heofenum, (Therefore I, glorious, now tower beneath the heavens, ll. 84b-85a)*; both these statements, which reflect the present glory of the cross, are set against the statement which reflects the previous degradation of the cross:  

*Iu ic waes geworden wita heardost / leodum laðost (Years ago I became the hardest of torments, most hateful to people, ll. 87-88a). The contrast is epitomized in the next few lines (ll. 90-94) where the cross insists that Christ honored him with his death just as he honored Mary with his birth.

Now that the cross has established beyond doubt (both through the way in which it told the story of the crucifixion and through its comparison with the Virgin) its
validity and importance as an object of worship, it can indicate in the homily its powerful role at the Last Judgment. The cross connects its glorification to the crucifixion (hit is wuldres beam / se ðe ælmihtig god on ðrowode, it is the glorious cross on which almighty God suffered, ll. 97b-98), and, in a pair of careful contrasts that may well reflect the falling and rising movement expressed earlier, moves from the resurrection (Deað he ðaer byrigde, hwæðere eft dryhten aras, There he tasted death, however afterwards the Lord arose, l. 101) to the Last Judgment (He ða on heofenas astag. Hider eft fundað, He then ascended into heavens. Hither again [he] will come, l. 103). All men, the cross insists, must be afraid (l. 110) before Christ at the Last Judgment (as the dreamer was afraid before the cross at the beginning of the poem, l. 21), for Christ will implicitly compare man's willingness to suffer and die in the Lord's name with his own painful crucifixion for the sake of man.

Frínewæsæ he for ðæære maenige hwaer se man sie, se ðe for dryhtnes namen deaðes wolde biteres onbyrigan, swa he aer on ðam beame dyde.

(11. 112-114)

He will ask before the multitude where the man may be who would taste of bitter death for the Lord's name as he did formerly on the cross.

The comparison of Christ and man is made explicit by the similar language used to describe the death of both: Deað he ðaer byrigde (There he [Christ] tasted death, l. 101a)
and deaðes wolde / biteres onbyrigan (would taste bitter death, ll. 113b-114a). And the cross closes both the homily and the vision by contrasting the responses (to Christ's question at the Last Judgment) of those who do not and those who do trust in the cross and, through the cross, in Christ and of those who do and who do not bear the sign of the cross upon their breast: the unjust shall be afraid (l. 115a) while the just need have no fear (l. 117). 49

With this admonition and with this hope the vision of the cross ends, and we return to the fictive here and now of the dreamer with which the poem began. But it is a new dreamer, one who has changed and grown in wisdom as a result of his dream experience. He no longer looks upon the cross as a frightening vision that makes him intensely aware of his own sins; rather, he turns to the cross as an instrument of his salvation, the joy of his life. He has learned through the history of the cross that he too, like the cross itself, can move from this mundane life, this transitory world, to the joy and brilliant bliss of a heavenly home. He who is aware of his sins, who is, metaphorically, "down," can still achieve salvation and rise to a place in heaven, following the pattern revealed by the cross.

Gebaed ic me ða to ðan beame bliðe mode,
elne mycle, ðaer ic ana waes
maete werede. Waes modsefa
Then I prayed to the cross in a blithe spirit, eagerly, there (where) I was alone with little
company. My mind was impelled to depart, endured many times of weariness of spirit. Now the joy of life to me is that I am able to seek, fully to honor, the victorious cross alone more often than all men. To me the desire for that is great in [my] spirit, and my [hope of] protection is [turned] right to the cross. I do not possess many powerful friends on earth, but they went forth hence from worldly joys, sought the king of the world; (they) live now in heavens with the Father, dwell in glory, and I hope each day for the time when the Lord's cross, which I formerly beheld here on earth, shall fetch me from this transitory life and then will bring me where (there) is great happiness, joy in heavens, where the people of God are placed at a feast where (there) is perpetual happiness, and then will place me where I can thereafter dwell in glory, fully partake of joy with the saints. May the Lord, he who formerly suffered here on earth on the gallows tree for the sins of men, be a friend to me. He redeemed us and gave us life, a heavenly home. Joy was renewed, with blessings and with joy for those who endured the burning [in Hell]. The Son was victorious on the journey [i.e., the Harrowing of Hell], mighty and successful, when he came with multitudes, the company of spirits, into God's kingdom, the Lord almighty, to the joy of the angels and all the saints who formerly lived in glory in heavens, when their lord, almighty God, came where his home was.

Surely there are significant comparisons and contrasts here. The most clear, perhaps, is that between the dreamer's former protectors—his earthly friends who are now in heaven—and his new hope for eternal protection
(mundbyrd, l. 130b), the cross—a contrast that echoes the dichotomy between mundane and divine established at the beginning of the poem by the dual nature of the cross. The same theme, of course, also appears in different terms when the dreamer voices his hope for a heavenly home in preference to this transitory life (laenan life, l. 138).

But the larger significance of these closing passages lies in the hope of salvation to which the dreamer adheres. Just as Christ was crucified and resurrected, and just as the cross was hewn down and raised up, degraded for the part it played in the crucifixion and exalted afterward, so man, in the guise of the dreamer realizes at the end of the poem that God's love is almighty and, even though he is guilty of sins, through the efficacious power of the cross and God's love he may yet be exalted and saved. This is the point the cross drives home by narrating the crucifixion and resurrection and the part it plays in man's salvation. And this is also the point of the way in which the cross narrated its story—the emphasis upon falling and rising, the identification in movement of Christ and the cross. Thus, I find the end of the poem which refers to the Harrowing of Hell, particularly relevant and appropriate to the poem as a whole. It is perfectly in keeping with the major movement in the poem (the movement from the mundane to the divine, from falling to rising) that epitomizes the theological truth which the poem
teaches. In allowing himself to be crucified for the sake of man and in harrowing Hell to bring eternal joy to those unfortunate enough to have lived before Christianity, Christ shows the power of his eternal and abiding love.

2. Rosemary Woolf, "Doctrinal Influences on The Dream of the Rood," Med. Aev., XXVII (1958), 137-153. For similar approaches and different conclusions, see H. R. Patch, "The Liturgical Influence in the Dream of the Rood," PMLA, XXIV (1919), 233-257, who argues that "in the Dream of the Rood there are several clear allusions to the liturgy; even the phrases at times seem to be borrowed, especially from the hymn Pange lingua . . ." (p. 256); and Sister Anna Mercedes Courtney, S. C., "The Dream of the Rood: A Doctrinal Commentary," DA, XXIV (1963), 738-739, who argues that the poem can best be understood "in the light of Augustine's suggestions for instructing the unlettered. He advised that the story of salvation be presented first as a tale, the narratio, and that the individual's response be then strengthened by a sermon, the exhortatio. In The Dream of the Rood the speaking cross, after having told its story, preaches to a receptive visionary who stands for each individual Christian. The poem concludes with the visionary's response to the exhortatio of the cross" (p. 739).


5. Ibid., p. 131.

6. Ibid., p. 129.

7. Ibid., p. 131.

8. Ibid., p. 133.

9. The most important of these, aside from those mentioned in note 2 above, are W. O. Stevens, The Cross in the Life and Literature of the Anglo-Saxons (Yale Studies in English, No. 23, 1904); A. S. Cook, ed., The Dream of the Rood (Oxford, 1905); a seminal article by Margaret Schlauch, "The 'Dream of the Rood' as Prosopopoeia," in Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown (New York, 215


12. Ibid., p. 126.

13. Ibid., p. 127.


17. Dickins and Ross, op. cit., p. 21, are quite right in insisting that "The line as it stands in the MS is metrically and grammatically unsatisfactory . . . " But their suggested emendation, engel dryhtnes ealle to engel-dryhte ("'hosts' or perhaps 'Orders of angels,'") is equally unsatisfactory. Both the verb (Beheoldon) and the sense demand a plural for engel. Thus I have rendered the singular engel as a plural. See Cook's note to this line in his edition, op. cit., p. 15, for suggestions on why the MS form is singular.


19. There may well be some delicate irony here. Reordberend literally means "one gifted with speech." The point, of course, is that the ones gifted with speech are asleep and the cross, not normally considered gifted with speech, speaks.

20. Klaeber, in his review of Cook's edition of the poem, Anglia Beiblatt, XVII (1906), p. 102, points out that "syllicre treow need not be called into question, for the absolute use of the comparative is sufficiently established."
21. W. O. Stevens, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 73: "All through Anglo-Saxon literature, the cross is constantly referred to as shining brightly, especially when it figures in visions; this may be due to the famous vision of Constantine, or to the presence of gorgeously adorned crosses in church, probably both."

22. It is Patch's opinion, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 246, that "The five . . . were very likely those of the Celtic cross, grouped in a quincunx at the juncture of the beams."

23. Bosworth-Toller, s.v. forgesceaf, provides two possible readings: (1) the created things, creation, world; and (2) the future world, state, condition. Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, revised by C. T. Onions, 14th ed. (Oxford, 1959), p. 219, prefers "through the future, in eternity"; Cook, in his edition, *op. cit.*, p. 15, prefers to translate "by 'creation'; the angels were 'created fair'"; and Dickins and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 22, prefer "beautiful in virtue of an ancient decree." Although it is possible to consider the angels fair by [their association with] the future world (i.e., heaven), I have retained the more conservative translation.

24. Precisely what is meant here is not clear. W. O. Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 74, believes it "may be a recollection of the veiling of the rood on Good Friday . . . ." Cook, in his edition, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18, argues for a streamer of purple cloth richly embroidered with precious stones.


27. See above, p. 187. Burrow's statement applies primarily to the double nature of the cross. In preferring divine and mundane to Burrow's terms, I mean to suggest a wider, more inclusive signification for the terms. It is not just the cross itself, but the entire opening of the poem that establishes the extremes of natural and supernatural. The angels of the Lord belong clearly to the supernatural realm; the dreamer belongs entirely to the natural realm; the cross, as the rest of the passage shows, modulates between the two and partakes of both. It
is not until the very end of the poem that the dreamer realizes the possibilities of his partaking of the supernatural also and, like the cross, moving from the mundane to the eternality of the heavenly feast (1. 141a).


29. See Robert Diamond, op. cit. (note 9).

30. Since the word ðæer is used four times in as many lines (30b, 31a, 32a, 33a), its precise meaning is open to doubt. It is the opinion of Dickins and Ross, op. cit., p. 24, that "ðæer in l. 32 can only be an early use of the word there in the sense 'at that juncture; at that; on that occasion; then' ... This too is probably the sense of ðæer in the preceding line, for it is clear that the Cross became a spectacle when it was used for crucifying and not when it was in the forest." See also Burrow, op. cit., p. 126, who agrees with Dickins and Ross and suggests "The repetition of ðæer ... seems rather intended to suggest the confused telescoping of events at this point."

31. Or, possibly, "very much." Cf. l. 60a and note 42.


33. For the differences in the way the crucifixion is presented in The Dream of the Rood and in the Gospels, as well as for a discussion of the particular traditions followed by the poet here, see Woolf, op. cit., pp. 144-147.


35. There are some problems with this passage, but they are not crucial, it seems to me. One problem concerns forðeode: "authorities are divided as to whether this word is a compound of forð and eode or of for and ðeode, 'went forth' or 'overcame.' ... The alternative renderings are 'darkness had obscured the Ruler's corpse, the bright ray; shadow came forth' and 'darkness had obscured the Ruler's corpse; shadow overcame the bright ray.' I adopt the former reading" (Wyatt, op. cit., p. 272). A second problem, concomitant upon one understanding of forðeode, is whether scirne sciman (bright radiance, 1. 54a) is the object of forðeode (so Wardale, op. cit., p. 178) or a variation of wealdendes hraew (so Cook, op. cit., p. 31)
in the previous line. Following Wyatt and Cook, I prefer to read scirne sciman as a variation of wealdendes hraew and to understand forðeode as "went forth."

36. C. Schaar does not find the experience of the cross to be as significant as I do. In arguing against any consideration of The Dream of the Rood as a lyrical poem, Schaar insists that "The emotional element is restrained to a few points . . . . Otherwise the subjective ingredient, the experience of the Cross, is a mere setting for the description of the Crucifixion and the Passion, which are the main themes of the poem" (op. cit., p. 136). I, of course, argue that the experience of the cross is part and parcel of the poem's larger concerns.

37. This is also Bolton's point. See above, p. 188.

38. Quite possibly there is a further subtle contrast here between the cross and Christ. Earlier, the cross was gorgeously adorned with gold and gems, "covered nobly" (bewrigene weorðlice, l. 17a); here, however, the bright radiance of Christ's body is "covered with clouds" (bewrigen mid wolcnum, l. 53a).


40. Bolton, "Connectives," op. cit. (note 14), p. 262, remarks that "here the story of degradation changes, and thereafter increasingly becomes one of glorification . . . ."

41. Wyatt, op. cit. (note 32), accepts fuse as "eager ones," the subject of cwoman, and refers to Cook's identification of these as Joseph and Nicodemus. "But feorran suggests another meaning, and I can only interpret fuse as 'eager angels'" (pp. 272-273). Wardale, op. cit. (note 9), p. 178, on the other hand, understands fuse as an adverb and translates: "However there came eagerly from afar nobles to the one in His solitude." See also G. Stern, op. cit. (note 25), p. 165, who argues that "When the goal or purpose of a movement or action is indicated, fus appears to mean 'hurrying or tending towards' or 'eager for' that which is mentioned."

42. Elne mycel presents some problems here. The phrase can mean "with great courage" as it does in l. 34a where it describes the way in which Christ hastens (efstan) to the cross. But that meaning seems incompatible with eaþ-mod (humble) here in l. 60: humble with great courage. R. K. Gordon, op. cit. (note 25), p. 236, may have surmounted the difficulty by translating: "yet I bowed to
the hands of men in humbleness with great zeal." Yet *elne mycel* can also mean "very much" (cf. Dickins and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 43), and although I would prefer to translate "with great humility," I have kept the more literal and ungrammatical "very much humble."

43. Wyatt, *op. cit.*, p. 273, understands him here as a reflexive dative which is, of course, quite possible.

44. Kemp Malone, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 78, attributes more significance to this part of the poem than is warranted, I think, when he says "the practical point and purpose of the dream comes out" as the cross urges the dreamer to promote its cult.

45. On the healing and curative powers of the cross, see W. O. Stevens, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 11, 30-32 et passim. Parenthetically, it might be added that Stevens translates this half-line as "All those who do me reverence" (p. 72). Other translations may be found in Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 219, and Wyatt, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

46. Dickins and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 32, understand *aer* (formerly) to mean "before the Day of Judgment."

47. "This might mean 'on his breast' and refer to an actual cross, or 'in his breast' and be metaphorical. The latter seems the more probable" (Dickins and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 33).

48. There is a further echo of the beginning of the vision in l. 82 which repeats exactly l. 12 and indicates that the time has indeed come for the cross to be honored—something that the dreamer saw at the beginning of the poem.

49. Schaar, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 136, remarks in passing that these lines discuss "the terror of the unjust, the calm of the righteous."

50. The phrase *maete werede* (l. 124a) is a litotes for "alone" as its grammatical position, which indicates that it is a variation of *ana*, shows. The phrase is used almost formulaically in this poem: when Christ is in the tomb, he is said to be resting there *maete werede* (l. 69b).

51. *Langunghwile* is a hapax. See Dickins and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 33; W. O. Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 73; and Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 43, for alternate readings.

52. Dickins and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 33, provide this reading.
53. It is Cook's opinion, op. cit., pp. liv-lv, that the conclusion is malapropos: "The conclusion, as has been observed, is in quite a different manner, and seems alien to the prevailing sentiment of the poem. It is cool and objective in tone, and has no necessary and vital relation to what has preceded. Pending further elucidation, we can only conclude that it has either come here by accident, or that the poet's judgement was at fault. The poem should have ended with 148a, or perhaps better with 146."
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