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**PATTERNS OF THE FALL:  
ADAM AND EVE IN THE OLD ENGLISH *GENESIS A***

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No serious scholar would argue that an Old English poem deserves critical attention simply because it constitutes such a large percentage of the surviving corpus of OE poetry. Nonetheless, I find it curious, at least, that *Genesis A* should receive such scant critical attention at a time in which OE scholarship on many minor works has flourished. The reason for this neglect cannot be attributed to its fragmented state, moreover, for such is the condition of many OE poems. Nor can its religious subject-matter, out of fashion for many readers, be singled out, for most OE poetry has a distinctly Christian outlook and is similarly didactic. And studies—largely unpublished dissertations—have indisputably shown that Junius's appellation *Paraphrasis* does not adequately describe the poem.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, because of its length and less immediate appeal than *Genesis B* (which continues to receive regular scholarly attention), *Genesis A* is seldom taught to undergraduates and rarely to graduate students, further reducing its exposure to critical analysis.

Because of this neglect, a review of the scholarship on *Genesis A* is not an arduous task. In the only published extended study of the earlier *Genesis*, B.F. Huppé argues for the poem's underlying symbolic intent: "The theme of *Genesis A* is developed in an unusual manner, a manner which cannot be understood without references to the principles of Christian literature that were enunciated in the *De Doctrina*" (*Doctrine* 207). He reiterates this position

in his more recent *The Hero in the Earthly City* (31). Nina Boyd challenges his exegetical approach in "Doctrine and Criticism: A Reevaluation of *Genesis A*," and I have shown elsewhere how his exegetical imposition leads to distortions of the poem's very explicit themes (McKillop, "Critical Study" and "Offering"). Like Huppé, R.P. Creed explains the poem's ending with the offering of Isaac as symbolically fit for a poem which, as Laurence Michel had suggested earlier, opens with clear echoes of the *Preface* to the Mass (Creed 69-92, Michel 545-50).<sup>2</sup> John Gardner outlines the poem's rhetorical design and in *The Construction of Christian Poetry in Old English* (18-32) lists line numbers for some recurring words, but he provides no close analysis of the text. Similarly, Constance B. Heatt looks especially at verbs of dividing in her essay "Divisions: Theme and Structure of *Genesis A*," but her focus upon these words, though instructive, necessarily limits her analysis, for the poem exhibits many patterns of recurring diction, as Gardner aptly points out.

This essay will argue that *Genesis A* has been carefully structured by no mere paraphraser or mechanical versifier, for a close reading and comparison with his biblical source reveals a skillful artist. The poet adds, amplifies, deletes, or condenses in order to strengthen his theme, stated clearly at the outset:

US IS RIHT MICEL      ÐÆT we rodera weard,  
wereda wuldorcining,      wordum herigen,  
modum lufien.<sup>3</sup> (1-3a)

[It is very fitting for us that we should praise in words, love in our spirits, the Guardian of heavens, the Glory-King of hosts!]

The poet structures his entire poem by greatly heightening the contrast only implied in his biblical source between those who praise God and remain loyal, and those who turn from him in disobedience. Not part of the scriptural *Genesis* but common to patristic commentary,<sup>4</sup> the account of the Creation and Fall of the Angels is central to understanding the structure of *Genesis A*, for the response of the angels loyal to their Creator serves as a model of proper behaviour by which the lives of men on "middle-earth" may be judged. Expressed in terms of traditional heroic values, the angels' rewards include a hall in a spacious native-land, where Lord and retainers share in a bond of mutual trust and loyalty, and where the ideal life includes peace, protection, joy, light, warmth, and treasure-giving.<sup>5</sup>

The stories of the prelapsarian Adam and Eve, Abel (replaced by Seth after Cain murders Abel), Seth's genealogy leading to Noah, Shem and his

genealogy leading to Abraham, the earthly model *par excellence* of proper obedience and loyalty — all are constructed with heroic rhetoric and diction that reflect the heavenly archetype. Similarly, the diction employed to describe the Fall of Adam and Eve, Cain and his tribe, Ham, Nimrod, Pharaoh, the wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abimelech parallels that used in the archetypal Fall of Lucifer and the disloyal angels.<sup>6</sup> This essay will be restricted to a demonstration of how these patterns shape the episode involving the Creation and Fall of Adam and Eve, since space precludes a detailed analysis of the entire poem.

Heroic imagery dominates the introduction, which moves directly from the poet's exhorting his audience to praise God into the praise of the heavenly *comitatus* or *driht*. Portraying God as weard, frea, drihtnes and ordfruman, and his angels as his wereda, preatas, dugebum, and þegnas, the poet uses the traditional vocabulary of heroic poetry to create an imaginative and idealized picture of a perfect social order. Appropriately, heaven becomes the epitome of all halls and native-lands on "middle-earth," an extension of the contemporary world's highest values and aspirations. The diction describing heaven before Lucifer's troop of angel rebels, and again after its exile, represents all of the best features of the hall, a native-land and the *comitatus* relationship. Heaven, the wuldres eðel "native-land of glory" (83a), the eðelstaðolas "native-foundations" (94a) has the spaciousness that marks a desirable homeland. In traditional OE verse the words wid, sid and rum "wide, broad and roomy/spacious" commonly give positive connotations of good native-lands and kingdoms.

The heavenly homeland possesses heofenstolas "heavenly thrones" (8a), a setl "seat/throne" (86b), comparable to the gift-throne in the halls of earth. Heaven's sweghtorhtan seld "sky-bright hall" (95a) contains brymfæste "glory-firm" (15a) thanes, a noble duguð "band" that loyally praises its Lord, lives on friðe "in peace" (19b) and has gleam and dream "merriment and joy" (12b). The angelic troops enjoy great blæd "abundance/glory" (14b) and are swiðe gesælige "exceedingly prosperous/blessed" (18a). After the rebellious angels are cast into hell, heaven again has soð "truth" and sibb "harmony/unity" (78); the glories of the dreamhæbbendra "joy-possessing ones" (81b) increases. Constantly underscoring the abundance, richness, brightness, and joyful revelry in heaven, the narrator ends the second passage telling of the fallen angels with a series of words that exude the luxuriance of the heavenly eðel:

him on laste setl,  
wuldorspedum welig      wide stodan

gifum growende on godes rice,  
 beorht and geblædfæst. . . . (86b-89a)

[Behind them far and wide stood a seat/dwelling rich in glorious abundance,  
 growing with gifts in God's kingdom, bright and constantly fruitful. . . .]

Each of the words carries rich associations that have accumulated through traditional use both in *Genesis A* and in other heroic verse.

When the narrator describes the creation of the world using diction similar to the Creation of the Angels, he invites us to compare the earthly Paradise with the idealized picture of heaven. In almost every image the poet accentuates the parallel between heaven and Paradise, middle-earth itself inviting a comparison with the halls of heaven. After the first day, time departs ofer ti[m]ber sceacan / middangeardes "to hurry off over the timber/structure of middle-earth" (135b-36a).<sup>7</sup> The poet sustains the image to describe the separation of the seas from the sky. Both Mason's and especially Kennedy's translations lose the significance of the splendid image, however, by giving the neutral Latinate term *firmament* to the OE hyhtlic heofontimber "joyous heaven-timber" (146a).<sup>8</sup> But the poet clearly intends a more elaborate image, for he develops his metaphor fully:

|                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
|                  | holmas dælde            |
| waldend ure      | and geworhte þa         |
| roderas fæsten.  | þæt se rica ahof        |
| up from eorðan   | þurh his agen word,     |
| frea ælmihtig.   | flod wæs adæled         |
| under heahrodore | halgum mihtum,          |
| wæter of wætrum  | þam þe wuniað gyt       |
| under fæstenne   | folca hrofes. (146b-53) |

[Our Ruler separated the seas and then made the skies a fortification; the Warrior, the Lord Almighty, raised that up from the earth by his own word. The flood was divided beneath the lofty-sky by his holy might, water from waters, for those who still live under the stronghold of the people's roof.]

Even the diction used to describe the separation of the sea from the new "heaven-timber," the "stronghold of the people's roof," belongs to the imagery of the hall. Our Ruler holmas dælde "divided/distributed the seas" (146b); the flod wæs adæled "flood was divided/distributed" (150b). OE poetry regularly employs the verb dælan in the context of dividing or distributing treasure.<sup>9</sup>

The poet further emphasizes the relationship between the two creations by effectively employing parallel diction, both individual words and formulas. Paradise, like heaven, is rum, wide, and brade. It stands gifena gefylled /

fremum forðweardum "filled with gifts in continuous benefits" (209b-10a) that come, as in heaven, from the heavenly throne of the lifes brytta. In the pre-fallen world of Adam and Eve the Lord-thane relationship reflects the same joy and bliss that the first creation experiences.

Light imagery describing the new middle-earth further evokes the heroic pattern. The Guardian of the skies, the lifes leohtfruma "light-bringing leader of life" (175a) creates an Adam and Eve who wlitebeorht wæron on woruld cenned "were born radiant-bright into the world" (188). The description is apt, especially since the poet remarks that heo wæron englum gelice "They were like angels" (185b), an attribute not given them in the biblical Genesis, which tells only of their being created in God's image (Genesis 2:26-27).<sup>10</sup> Following their creation, God comes to look upon his weorca wlite "radiant works" (207a). Light distinctly emerges as a positive value, most closely associated with God, the source of light and life, and with the angels who sing his praise. The connection between light and life established firmly in verse 175a, lifes leohtfruma "the light-bringing leader of life," has been subtly suggested previously in lines 122 and 129, which set up the relationship by the metrical collocation of lifes brytta "distributor of life" with leoht "light" in the off-verse. In a brilliant variation of the conventional sinces brytta "distributor of treasure," the poet creates an effective metaphor for the Lord who distributes life in his newly fashioned hall of middle-earth.

In contrast to the heroic imagery of the native-land and hall, reflected also in the earthly Paradise, stands its complete opposite, the imagery of exile used to describe hell, the formless matter before the creation of the world, and the fallen world in which Adam and Eve must live after the Fall. Having nibes ofbyrsted "thirsted for strife" (32a) and "kindled" (weccean, 31a) wickedness, the rebellious angels receive the fires of hell, hearde niðas "severe afflictions" (38b). The play on the meaning of niþ ironically emphasizes the reversal of their plans to establish a ham and heahsetl "home and high throne" (33a) in the north.<sup>11</sup> In place of a desirable hall, they receive a wræcligne ham "wretched home" (37a) and witehus "torment house" (39a); instead of a heah "high" (33a) seat, they obtain a dwelling deop "deep" (40a) in hell. The grim irony continues with the word wræcligne (37a), which can also mean "strange/wonderful."<sup>12</sup> Paronomasia, reinforced by the metrical collocation of the words describing the fires of hell, occurs in consecutive lines in a dazzling display of the poet's love of word-play for rhetorical effect.<sup>13</sup> God fills hell with torture,

geondfolen fyre and færcyle,  
 rece and reade lege. heht þa geond þæt rædleas hof  
 weaxan witebrogan. (43–45a; emphasis added)

[utterly given up to fire and intense chill, with smoke and the red flame. Then he ordered the torment-terrors to increase throughout that unadvantageous dwelling.]

The metrical collocation between fyre and fær- and the play upon their similar sound, show forcefully that *this* fire will not provide the beneficial warmth of a normal hall. In the next line, too, the play on words between reade lege and rædleas, brought out by the alliteration and the primary stress of the B-type off-verse, demonstrates with bitter irony that *this* red flame will provide no advantage to the exiles.

The word rædleas also connects with the consistent pattern the poet establishes at the beginning of the rebellion. The faithless angels

noldan dreogan leng  
 heora selfra ræd, ac hie of siblufan  
 godes ahwurfon. (23b–25a)

[would not any longer live according to their own advantage/counsel, but they turned away from God's harmonious love.]

The word ræd implies both "counsel" and "advantage"; those who will not keep God's ræd work to their own *disadvantage*. Since Satan unræd ongan ærest fremman "first began to practise ill-counsel" (30), he brings upon himself the rædleas hof "unadvantageous dwelling," or to put it another way, "the dwelling for those who practise ill-counsel" (44b).<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the passage, the poet emphasizes that hell represents a lack of everything good and desirable. Leas "without/lacking," occurs in verses 40a, dreama leas "without joy"; 44b, rædleas hof; 51b, hygeleas "mindless"; and 67a, wærleas werod "pledge-less troop" (i.e., those who would not keep the covenant). In addition, God dreame benam / his feond, friðo and gefean ealle, / torhte tire "snatched away from his enemy peace and all joys, bright glory" (56b–58a); and he æðele bescyrede / his wiðerbrecan wuldor-gestealdum "sheared the noble glory-place away from his adversary" (63b–64). Whereas the rebel angels once dugebum wæron / swiðe gesælige "were exceedingly prosperous in good things" (17b–18a), God now strips them of sigore and gewælde, / dome and dugeðe "victory and power, glory and good things" (55b–56a). All the imagery for hell reveals its antithesis to the abundance, concord, light, revelry, and loyalty of the swegltorhtan seld "sky-bright hall" (95a) in the heavenly native-land. The imagery defines hell

in terms of deprivation and lack of fulfillment; theologically, hell represents life without the joys of God.<sup>15</sup>

Although the idea of the rebellion as a military *coup* has its basis in scripture and commentary,<sup>16</sup> the *Genesis*-poet's artistic expression of the conflict represents well the dramatic possibilities of OE rhetoric. Like Grendel in *Beowulf*, Satan plans to succeed in his mission, but the might of the divine hero quickly frustrates his expectations. Edward Irving, Jr.'s comments on the effective adversative construction in *Beowulf* also serve well to describe Satan's blocked aspirations in *Genesis A*:

One effect of such an emphasis on intention is to cast the whole struggle of Beowulf and Grendel into clear-cut terms of the direct conflict of willpower. Grendel's will . . . is furious, tremendous, terrifying, yet we see it ultimately blocked, deflected, and finally destroyed by the only force capable of meeting it, a will even stronger and more determined. When the struggle is seen in such terms, the actual physical encounter can be reduced to an almost symbolic minimum, a touching of hands, in order to make clear the moral nature of this conflict. (28)

The rebellious angels made a gielp micel "great boast" (25b) that they could dælan "distribute/give out" (26b) treasure near the Lord, that they agan wolde "would possess" (34b) a high seat in the north. Dælan, a word commonly employed in the context of treasure-giving, here points to the angels' arrogance, for the poet three lines earlier plays upon the word to describe the faithlessness of Lucifer, who dæl[de] on gedwilde "dealt in error" (23a).<sup>17</sup>

The image of distributing or literally "breaking" treasure from a high throne occurs also in the second account of the Fall of the Angels, again in a passage of defeated expectation:

cwædon þæt heo rice,      reðemode,  
 agan woldon      and swa eaðe meahtan.  
 him seo wen ge Leah      siððan waldend his,  
 heofona heahcning,      honda arærde  
 hehste wið þam herge.      ne mihton hygelease,  
mæne wið metode,      mægyn bryttigan  
 Ac him se mæra      mod getwæfde,  
 bælc forbigde. (47-54a; emphasis added)

[Savage-minded, they said that they would possess the kingdom, and easily could do so. Their expectation deceived them, after the Ruler, the High-King of the heavens raised up his hands, the Highest against that army. Nor could those mindless ones, the wicked against God, distribute (literally "break")

power; on the contrary, the illustrious One separated that purpose from them, bent down their pride.]

The rebels wish to “distribute power,” not treasure, as one expects with the usual formula,<sup>18</sup> but God blocks their expectations of easy victory merely by raising his hands. The metrical stress of the A-verse, combined with the collocation of the two words, emphasizes God’s power and mocks their vain boast: hehste wið þam herge “the Highest against that army” (51a). By his own might and firm strength (59b–60a), he seizes them with his hostile hands and breaks them in his embrace (61b–62). Like Beowulf’s fight against Grendel, God’s heroic victory proceeds, to use Irving’s words, from a mere “touching of hands.”

For their disloyalty, God gives the rebellious angels a reward far different from what they sought: the grim lean “grim reward” (46b) of exile; severe pain, sorrow, torment, and darkness as an æfterlean “after-reward” (76b) for their treachery. God exhibits all the righteous wrath of a hero striding into battle: he becomes yrre, wrað, gebolgen, styrne, gegremed and seizes Lucifer on wraðe.

The vigorous battle imagery emphasizes that all those who show excessive pride break the sibb “harmony” of God’s *comitatus*; by striving against him (46a, 77b) they can expect a similar fate, the punishment of exile in hell, away from the bliss of heaven. Satan and the rebellious angels, the arch werlogan “pledge-deceivers” (36b) epitomize every wærleas werod “faithless troop” (67a),<sup>19</sup> so that when the poet employs the words werloga and wærleas in other passages, he wants us to see the similarity of *all* acts of treachery and disobedience as a repetition of the first Fall. This parallelism suggests mythic time and space, in which the essence of the narrative lies in its imaging the primal story occurring *in illo tempore* — in Old English terms, on gear dagum “in former days.”<sup>20</sup>

The poet uses exile imagery once more to portray the chaos of the world before God imposes the order of Creation:

Ne wæs her þa giet      nymbe heolstersceado  
 wiht geworden      ac þes wida grund  
 stod deop and ðim,      drihtne fremde,  
idel and unnyt.      on þone eagum wlat  
 stiðfrihþ cining      and þa stowe beheold,  
dreama lease,      geseah deorc gesweorc  
 semian sinnihte,      sweart under roderum,  
wonn and weste      oð þæt þeos woruldgesceaft  
 þurh word gewearð      wuldorcyniges. (103–11; emphasis added)

[Nor was there anything come into being here yet except the covering shadow, but this wide earth stood deep and dim, alien to the Lord, empty and useless. The firm-minded King gazed upon it with his eyes and beheld that joyless place, saw the dark black cloud darken beneath the skies, remain suspended in continuous night, bleak and waste, until this world-creation came about through the Glory-King's word.]

From the brief statement of Genesis 1:2, *Terra autem erat inanis et vacua, et tenebrae erant super faciem abyssi* "the earth, moreover, was empty and void, and darkness was over the face of the abyss," the *Genesis*-poet fashions nine lines expressing the formlessness of the uncreated world in terms of exile imagery. The chaos is fremde "alien" to God; like hell, it lacks joy and is dark and deep. The rhyming of deorc and gesweorc "dark cloud" (108b) lends added emphasis to the utter darkness covering the land. The poet encloses the paragraph with an envelope pattern for more than mere rhetorical effect, since the ring-composition establishes the link between the power of God's word and creation itself. Like the superb paronomastic display in the opening six lines of the poem, the relationship between geworden (104a) at the beginning of the passage and word gewearð (111a) at the end emphasizes that God's Word is the very essence of Creation, that his Word suffices to bring Creation into being. Paronomasia occurs similarly between weard "Guardian" (144b, 163b) and word (149b, 158a), which again echoes the word-play in the introduction, lines 1-6a.<sup>21</sup> Although we have an account of only the first three days of Creation before a lacuna in the manuscript, enough remains to indicate the poet's skill in expanding his source beyond any mere paraphrase.

Words for pain and sorrow occur frequently in the passage that describes the Fall of Adam and Eve, thus preparing the way for the pronouncement of exile to follow. Rhetorically effective, the beginning of the Fall turns on parallel phrases, in what Adeline Bartlett terms an incremental pattern (59): Da com feran, 852a; Gewitan him þa gangan, 858a; and Da sona ongann, 862a. Similar to the shifting perspective in the famous passage of Grendel's attack on Heorot in *Beowulf*, 702b-21a, the focus here shifts from God's approach, to Adam and Eve's departure to hide, and back to God's calling out to the frightened pair. The poet achieves true pathos as he describes God's advance into Paradise:

wolde neosian      nergend usser,  
 bilwit fæder,      hwæt his bearn dyde.  
 wiste forworhte      þam he ær wlite sealde. (855-57)

[Our Saviour, the mild Father, would visit (to see) what his children did; he knew the wrong done by those to whom he had previously given radiance.]

The pathos differs from that in Genesis 3:8, which says that Adam and Eve hear God's voice as he walks in the garden in the cool of the evening, whereupon they hide. In the OE passage, the poet first focusses upon God's intention to "visit." With gentle irony, God anticipates the need for a "Saviour" and "merciful Father": Adam and Eve are his "children," and, like a parent, he knows already what they have done before he asks. Sadness underlies the poet's statement that God already perceives "the wrong done by those to whom he had previously given radiance," for the word ær "previously" indicates that their radiance, already dimmed, will be removed by the darkness of exile; we have formerly witnessed the Fall of the Angels, who were leohte belorene "deprived of light."

In Genesis 3:10, Adam tells God that he was afraid of his nakedness and therefore hid himself, but in *Genesis A*, Adam replies that he was wæda leasne "lacking in clothes" (867b). Both mean the same, but the different point of view emphasizes the new condition of the fallen couple by introducing the notion of their *lacking* something in a garden that abounds with everything they need. The word leasne immediately evokes the exile pattern and relates their Fall to the first Fall of the Angels. Adam says, "my guilt sceaðen is me sare, / frecne on ferhðe 'injures me painfully, fiercely to [my] spirit'" (869b-70a). Again, the poet elicits battle imagery to portray the Fall as an attack upon the very life of man.

The poet amplifies God's response to Adam with highly effective rhetoric, all the time maintaining the tender relationship of a loving but firm parent to his child:

saga me þæt, sunu min,      for hwon secest ðu  
sceade sceomiende?      þu sceonde æt me  
furðum ne anfenge,      ac gefean eallum. . . . (873-75)

[Tell me that, my son, why do you, being ashamed, seek the shade? You from the first received no shame from me, but all joys. . . .]

Not part of the biblical account, these lines emphasize God's role as the giver of only good things; shame has no part in the idyllic relationship that has existed between the Lord and his faithful children. The "shade," darkness, is collocated with "shame" in both verses of line 874, and even the almost mocking sound of the alliterating sibilants reinforces the feeling of God's annoyance. The adversative construction effectively places the metrical stress

on all the good things Adam has received, and ends the sentence fittingly with the emphasis upon God's kindness: ac gefean eallum.

The Bible expresses God's questioning of Eve tersely and with impersonal diction, whereas the *Genesis*-poet continues the parent-child relationship he established earlier with the word bearn "children" (85b). God calls Eve "daughter" rather than the impersonal "woman" of the Vulgate, and he regards Eve's actions both as the sin of greed (given the sufficiency of good things in Paradise) and as strife or battle. Eve's response in the poem receives far more elaboration than the matter-of-fact biblical statement *Quæ respondit: Serpens decepit me, et comedi* "Who replied, the serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:13). In *Genesis A*, the poet calls Eve æwiscmod "shameful-minded" (896a), and he continues his battle metaphor to describe the temptation and Fall:

"Me nædre beswac and me neodlice  
to forsceape scyhte and to scyldfrece,  
fah wurm þurh fægir word, oðþæt ic fracodlice  
feondræs gefremede, fæhðe geworhte  
and þa reafode, swa hit riht ne wæs,  
beam on bearwe and þa blæda æt." (897-902; emphasis added)

[The serpent, the shining/hostile snake deceived me through fair words and earnestly urged (literally, shot) me into misshapen (action) and to sinful greed, until I heinously performed the enemy-attack, worked a feud, and then plundered, as it was not right, the tree in the grove, and ate the fruit.]

Punning on the word fah "shining/hostile," the poet can emphasize how Eve was "deceived through fair words," and also show how the exterior guise belongs to an enemy.<sup>22</sup> The "hostile" serpent causes Eve to effect a fæhðe "feud," fah punning by the same sound in the first syllable of fæhðe "feud." With a possible and appropriate scatological pun on the word scyhte (v. scitan; n. scitte -an, f.), the poet views the serpent's earnest incitement metaphorically as a "shooting." Eve, moreover, describes her action in terms of the battle-attack of an enemy: she performs a feondræs "enemy-attack" when she *plunders* the tree. Like Adam, she states the source of her temptation and proceeds directly to accept the full blame for her action. The immediately penitent Adam and Eve of *Genesis A* compare more with the pair in *Genesis B* than with the biblical couple, who offer only excuses for their actions.

The curse upon the serpent and Adam and Eve's banishment from Paradise occupy approximately the same number of lines in the OE poem as in the biblical account. Imagery of exile and battle, common to both

versions, takes on added significance in the poem, however, since this imagery relates to previously established patterns. The poet once more plays upon the double meaning of fah as both "shining/ornamented" and "hostile" in describing God's curse upon the fagum wyrme (904b). God prophesies that Eve will have her revenge when she treads upon the serpent's fah "hostile" (913a) head "with her own feet"; the niwra gesceafta "newer creation" (889a) will eventually conquer, since the serpent must lie in wait at her heels for a tohtan niwre "newer battle" (914a). Intensifying the metaphor of the serpent's temptation as a battle (wrohte, 911a; orlegnið, 915a), the *Genesis*-poet blackens the description of the serpent even more than his source by calling him a lað leodsceaða "loathesome people-harmer" (917a) and his actions laðlice "hateful" (910b).

OE exile imagery especially suits the passages describing the proscriptions upon the serpent, Adam, and Eve. Banishment, of course, has its clear source in the biblical narrative, but its expression in *Genesis A* is peculiar to OE patterns of exile. Whereas the biblical Genesis states that the serpent must walk *super pectus* "on [his] chest" (Genesis 3:14), the OE poem adds that he will have to journey on the bradre eorðan / . . . feðleas "broad earth . . . footless" (907b-09a). The suffix -leas links the serpent's punishment to the exile pattern that, as we have seen, represents a *lack* of all the good things afforded by the heroic world. Ironically, the bradre eorðan can have no positive connotations for the serpent, since the spaciousness associated with a good eðel must represent hardship to one who must travel the wide siðas "wide paths" (905a) of exile on his chest, "footless."<sup>23</sup>

The curse on Eve, too, is expressed in terms of a deprivation of good things. To his source, the poet adds God's order, "wend be from wynne!" "Turn away from joy!" (919a). Even Eve's subjection to Adam participates in the exile pattern, for she will now be hearde genearwad "severely constrained" (921a) by the fear of a man. Narrowness and constraint represent the antithesis of the spaciousness and freedom that mark the heroic life of the prefallen world.<sup>24</sup> God tells Eve, "you will now hean browian / þinra dæda gedwild "suffer shame for the error of your deeds" (921b-22a). Her Fall links with the first Fall of the Angels, who similarly fall into gedwilde "error" (23a). Parallel diction links the two Falls: the prefallen angels, who enjoyed blæd micel "much prosperity" (14b), lose everything and come to know much woe, pain and sorrow; Eve now will experience sar micel "much pain" (924a) when she bears children.

Although the *Genesis*-poet does not include the direct statement of the Vulgate that the earth is *maledicta* "cursed" (Genesis 3:17) because of

Adam's deed, he does have God say, "þu scealt oðerne eðel secean, / wyn-leasran wic, and on wræc hweorfan" "You shall seek another homeland, a joyless dwelling, and turn away in exile" (927–28). Again, exile as a deprivation, as a separation from good things, indicates the Fallen world. Adam must leave as a nacod niedwædla neorxnawanges / dugeðum bedæled "naked needy person, separated from the good things of Paradise" (929–30a). Even the punishment of death is expressed as a separation. Instead of the biblical statement *quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris* "since you are dust and into dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19), God in *Genesis A* says, "þe is gedal witod / lices and sawle" "the separation of body and soul is ordained for you" (930b–31a). The perfect totality and harmony of Paradise, with prefallen man described previously as englum gelice "like the angels" (185b), become destroyed. The fallen world represents a lack of completeness; whereas Paradise imaged the fullness of life in heaven, the oðerne eðel "other native-land" to which Adam and Eve must journey is called a sorgfulre land, / eard and eðyl "sorrowful land, home and native-land" (961b–62a). In place of the abundant life in Paradise, filled with gifts, Adam and Eve must turn away on nearore lif "into a more constrained/narrower life" (944b).

The end result of the Fall is death, which the poet effectively equates with the very apple Adam eats:

"oð þæt þe to heortan hearde gripeð  
adl unliðe þe þu on æple ær  
selfa forswulge. forþon þu sweltan scealt." (936–38)

[until ungentle disease, which you yourself devoured in the apple, will grip you severely in the heart; therefore you shall die.]

Far from providing joy or a more complete life, the eating of the apple brings only adl unliðe "ungentle disease," namely death. The negative prefix un- (stressed because of the line's vocalic alliteration) emphasizes with grim litotes the severity of Adam and Eve's disobedience.

Instead of portraying the world in exile as bleak as it appears in the biblical narrative, the *Genesis*-poet reveals a loving God who has been a fæder æt frymðe "father from the beginning" (954a). In the OE *Genesis*, nine lines describe God's love as he provides a new home for his children. Like the description of the prelapsarian earth, created as a hyhtlic heofontimber "joyous heaven-timber" (146a) and as the folca hrofes "people's roof" (153b), these lines image once more the heroic pattern of the hall with its ornamented roof and ample riches. The exile from Paradise suggests, in part, a

new beginning. All the poet's additions to his source underscore his consistent attitude toward God as a loving father unwilling to abandon his child, beah be he him from swice "though had turned away from him" (954b).

Coming at the end of long passages dominated by exile imagery, the heroic imagery of the hall would move us toward regarding the earth beyond Eden as a kind of new Creation, were it not for the poet's immediate return to the exile pattern in the next four lines. In comparison with the first home in Paradise, this new land knows sorrow (961b); the negative prefix attached to the word unspedigran "less prosperous/blessed" (962b) further heightens the contrast between the two homes. By turning to the exile pattern, the *Genesis*-poet resolves the potential theological difficulties of presenting a too attractive punishment for the sinners, while retaining God's image as a loving father.

Each of the poem's genealogical lists and major episodes is shaped to image the archetypal pattern established by the first major episode in *Genesis A*, the Creation and Fall of the Angels. The poet's use of traditional heroic and exile imagery produces structural parallels that indicate a cyclical rather than merely linear concept of history. Far from being purely decorative or anachronistic, the imagery serves structurally and thematically to reinforce the narrator's consistent perspective towards scriptural story as a model for contemporary behaviour. By casting the major episodes in terms of a series of Creations and Falls, the *Genesis*-poet can use the structure only implicit in his biblical source to reinforce his explicit theme that "Our Lord" will continue to protect his faithful remnant and, contrarily, gain vengeance upon all who break the covenant.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Used by Junius in 1655, the term *paraphrase* is perpetuated by the poem's second editor, Thorpe, in *Cædmon's Metrical Paraphrase of Parts of the Holy Scriptures, in Anglo-Saxon* (1832). Krapp, editing the poem for *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (1931), writes: "For *Exodus* is not in intent merely a paraphrase of the second book of the Old Testament as *Genesis* is of the first" (xxvii). See unpublished dissertations by Hall (1973), McKill (1974), Remley (1990), McKinley (1991).

<sup>2</sup> See also McKill, "Offering."

<sup>3</sup> All OE citations are from Doane (1978) and will be referred to by line number only following the quotation; translations are my own.

<sup>4</sup> See Doane 227, Remley 17–19.

<sup>5</sup> See Lee 13–15.

<sup>6</sup> This pattern has also been noted by Gardner (18–35), but he merely lists recurring words and provides no detailed textual analysis. Remley notes Ælfric's association of the apocryphal account of the fall of the angels with that of Adam and Eve (89).

<sup>7</sup> Doane glosses ms. *tiber* as 'structure' (393). Krapp emends to *timber*, a reading clearly supported by ms. *heofontimber* 146a.

<sup>8</sup> Mason 144; Kennedy 11.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, *Beowulf* 80b–81a; Hieatt 243–51.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the non-biblical source, see Remley 66 and Doane 237.

<sup>11</sup> Although the idea of Satan's kingdom in the North has a biblical basis (Isaiah 14:12–15), the North has special significance in OE, as in the mystery plays, because it symbolically represents evil. See Salmon 303–11.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, *Psalter* 64:5; 70:18; 74:2; 76:9; 88:4; 92:6; 105:11; 118:18; 134:7; 135:19; 138:12; *Exodus* 3a; *Daniel* 269b.

<sup>13</sup> See Frank 218.

<sup>14</sup> Olsen's suggested glossing of *wrohtgeteme* as "crime troop," not "series of crimes" (45b) supports the overall military image of the passage.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Augustine's *The City of God*.

<sup>16</sup> Ælfric "Old and New" 18–20; "Sermo" 11–13.

<sup>17</sup> The manuscript reads *dæl*, which Krapp emends to *dwæl*. I prefer the emendation to *dælde*, which retains both the paronomasia with *gedwilde* and the parallel with verse 26b, *dælan meah-ton*. See also Doane 228.

<sup>18</sup> See *Beowulf* 35a, 352a, 607b, 1170a, 1487a, 1922b, 2071a, 2383b.

<sup>19</sup> *Wærloga* and *wærleas* regularly refer to the devil or to the damned in OE poetry: see *Juliana* 351a, 421a, 455a; *Christ* 1561b, 1613a; *Mazims* 1 161a; *Guthlac* 298a, 623a, 671b, 911; *Andreas* 71a, 108a, 1069a, 1297a. Lucas notes that "[a] recurrent motif in *Genesis A* is the *wær* 'covenant' or *treow* 'compact' . . . between God and the Israelites" (123), and he draws a distinction between loyalty (which he claims marks *Genesis B* and obedience, which distinguishes *Genesis A*). I would argue that obedience is simply an *expression* of loyalty.

<sup>20</sup> See Eliade 5. Leach writes: "For an historian, every event is unique in itself and two events which occur at different points in chronological time or at different places on the map can never in any sense be 'the same'. But in theological hermeneutic it is commonly assumed that an event reported as having occurred at time/place A can, in some sense, be predictive of another later event occurring at time/place B. Event B is felt to be somehow a *repetition* of Event A" (34).

<sup>21</sup> For an excellent discussion of the paronomasia in the Introduction to *Genesis A*, see Frank 211–15.

<sup>22</sup> In the apocryphal *Vita Adæ et Evæ*, for example, ix.1, Satan transforms himself into the brightness of angels and deceives Eve into leaving her penitence (II, 136).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the irony of the passage in *Christ and Satan*, lines 698–709, which describes how Satan must measure the spaciousness of hell with his hands.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Satan's lament in *Genesis B* over losing his spacious home, lines 356–68a.

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