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THE GAWAIN PUZZLE

A STUDY OF MS. COTTON NERO A. X.

A DISSERTATION

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BY

HELEN JANNE GOLDBECK

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THE GAWAIN PUZZLE

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green
Knight--because these poems exist together in the same manu-
script, and because they are of consistently high literary
quality, the question arises as to how they came together.
Are they related by more than just proximity, the whim of
some copyist? Since the late nineteenth century, when the
poems began to be discussed, a feeling has existed that they
must be linked together in some more meaningful way. In pur-
suit of that feeling, scholars have compiled an impressive
array of similarities and correspondences among the poems,
and most have concluded that the poems are by a single author.
There is an echo of authority in D. S. Brewer's recent state-
ment, "If . . . [the poems] were written by more than one
poet, these poets were astonishingly close in temper of mind,
besides being very close in place and time."[1] The key word
here is "astonishingly." As a matter of fact, the authority

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[1] "The Gawain-Poet; A General Appreciation of Four
Poems," EC, 17 (1967), 130.

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has attained such a medieval preeminence that Mabel Day, in
her introduction to Sir Israel Gollancz's reedition of <u>Sir
Gawain and the Green Knight</u>, can resolve the authorial ques-
tion simply by saying of the poems that it is "generally
admitted that they are by the same author."[2] The word "ad-
mitted" may be considered in the same light as Brewer's
"astonishingly." It is best, however, to look again at the
evidence drawing the poems together. Out of a vast body of
work, I have tried to select only the most significant of
representative criticism.

The basic similarity among the poems lies in the dia-
lect they share. When Richard Morris edited <u>Pearl</u>, <u>Cleanness</u>,
and <u>Patience</u> for the EETS, he assumed a common authorship of
the basis of dialect alone.[3] His identification of the poem
as West-Midland has become a literary commonplace.[4] This
test, of course, includes Sir Gawain, as Tolkien and Gordon
have noted in their edition of that poem.[5] Thus, Charles
Moorman speaks of the four poems' strongly localized dialect

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[2]<u>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</u> (London: Oxford
University Press, 1940), p. x.

[3]<u>Early English Alliterative Poems</u> (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1869), introduction.

[4]The description of the dialect has been augmented
by various critics; of particular interest for this study is
J. A. Oakden's <u>Alliterative Poetry in Middle English</u> (Man-
chester: Manchester University Press, 1930), I, 6-86.

[5]<u>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</u> (Oxford: Clarendon
Press, 1925), p. xviii.

and "highly individualistic word forms."[6]

Within their dialectal kinship, the poems have been shown to possess various verbal, stylistic, and thematic parallels. In an early study, Sir Israel Gollancz avers that the manuscript's single authorship can be demonstrated by "tests of vocabulary, richness of expression, rhythm, descriptive power, spirit and tone, and delight in nature, more especially when agitated by storm and tempest."[7] More explicitly, Robert J. Menner has compiled a number of stylistic mannerisms that have subsequently been heavily relied upon. He lists repetitive or similar lines in two or more of the poems, and in all of them finds use of an absolute construction attached to a sentence by "and," (e.g. CL 1219, SG 53)[8] as well as periphrasis in the form of a relative clause for the word "God" or "Lord."[9]

John W. Clark has objected that this latter test proves nothing, since the periphrases are concentrated primarily in Patience and Cleanness, with a few occurring in Sir Gawain and

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[6]The Pearl-Poet (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1968), p. 31.

[7]"Pearl, Cleanness, Patience and Sir Gawayne," Cambridge History of English Literature, ed., A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), I, 362.

[8]Here in referring to line numbers, and in the analysis of later chapters, these abbreviations will be used: Pearl - PE, Sir Gawain - SG, Patience - PA, Cleanness - CL.

[9]Purity, A Middle English Poem (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), introduction.

none at all in _Pearl_. Moreover, he noted that the three

different kinds of phrases, differentiated by their headwords,

are not proportionally distributed among the poems.[10] But he

can be answered, I think, in two ways. First, the incidence

of this type of periphrasis corresponds to the degree of puri-

ty in which the alliterative tradition exists in each poem.

The technique may, then, be considered part of a particular

style. These phrases also seem to indicate an anthropomorphic

conception of God. As A. C. Spearing has noted, God appears

particularly humanized in _Cleanness_ and _Patience_.[11] Thus, the

use of the periphrasis may show a contrast between a literal

and a more mystical picture of God. I wonder further, if the

ideas of a judging God may not also be involved here; that is,

the periphrases would appear more regularly in connection with

a fearsome deity, by reason of their sonorous and weighty

effect.

J. P. Oakden affirms and augments Menner's evidence

as well as that of Morris. Oakden's work is a landmark of

careful and inclusive analysis. He believes it is metrical

patterning specifically that "plainly indicates the common

authorship of the three poems" (SG, CL, and PA) as he be-

lieves this to be the most trustworthy test for an individual

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[10] "Paraphrases for 'God' in the Poems Attributed to
the _Gawain-Poet_," _MLN_, 65 (1960), 232-6.

[11] _The Gawain-Poet: A Critical Suudy_ (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 33.

style. However, he finds concurring evidence among all four poems in the prominent use of substantial adjectives, a particular penchant for archaisms, an invariable taste for short similes, and consistent patterns of alliterating sounds.[12]

Menner and Oakden together contribute the major technical arguments for common authorship. Two lesser studies should be mentioned, however. In an unpublished thesis, Esther Agnew Robinson argues for a single poet on the grounds of several tests, mainly of vocabulary and phraseology.[13] Her work, while extensive, is generally inconclusive, lacking depth, its tone perhaps best illustrated by her remark concerning grouping of lines, "In no poem that we have investigated in this discussion does the poet always remain consistent. Cannot one consider this inconsistency throughout a linking factor?"[14] Arguing from what is not there seems to lack a certain cogency. The main value of this thesis lies in the number of tests applied and the statistics made available to following investigators.

John Dale Ebbs, in a briefer work, posits common authorship upon three characteristics of the poems: the use of similar lines framing the structure of the poems, identical

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[12]*Alliterative Poetry in Middle English* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930 and 1935), 2 Vols.

[13]"A Study to Test the Common Authorship of *Pearl*, *Patience*, *Cleanness* and *Syr Gawayne and the Green Knight*," Diss., University of Oklahoma, 1939.

[14]Robinson, p. 24.

phrasing in lines calling the audience to attention, and ex-
pressions of the poet's inability to describe or narrate sat-
isfactorily.[15]

Equally important as the arguments based on stylistic
mannerisms are those stemming from a sense of unity of view-
point among the poems. As early as 1883, Bernhard Ten Brink
called attention to the sharing by all four works of a double
theme--innocence and submission to the divine will.[16] E. V.
Gordon expands on this idea in his edition of Pearl, envision-
ing Pearl and Sir Gawain as putting to the test the virtues
presented in Cleanness and Patience.[17] This thematic rela-
tionship will be seen to have special significance in regard
to my own view of these poems, though I do not finally agree
with Gordon's chronological order for the four.

Charles Moorman returns to Ten Brink's second theme
as the poems' unifying and controlling concept. He finds a
moralistic poet, always counseling humble acceptance of God's
will in the face of the "trial of life."[18] In D. S. Brewer's
view, the mark of a single hand can be found in a prevailing
spirit of affirmation, in the general pattern, repeated in

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[15]"Stylistic Mannerisms of the Gawain-Poet," JEGP,
57 (1958), 522-525.

[16]Early English Literature, trans. Horace Kennedy
(New York: H. Holt and Co., 1883), I, Book 4, 350.

[17]Pearl (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953),
p. xliv.

[18]The Pearl-Poet, p. 32.

each poem, of selfish desire met and overcome.[19] A similar
conflict lies at the basis of A. C. Spearing's contention
that a confrontation of human with divine and omnipotent val-
ues informs each of the poems. Spearing, however, would have
the poet less optimistically confident than would Brewer.[20]

Finally, there is the ubiquitous pearl imagery to
serve as a linking factor among the four poems. Generally,
the pearl symbol is mentioned only as one of several quali-
ties supporting the idea of a common authorship. Emile Pons,
however, finds in the pearl alone enough evidence of the con-
trolling symbolism of a single mind.[21]

The sheer weight of this evidence seems unequivocally
to offer solid proof of a unique author for the entire manu-
script. Absolute homogeneity, obviously, cannot be demanded
of any artist in his various works. There remain, however,
unanswered questions and troubling differences not to be ac-
counted for simply as the vagaries of a creative mind. The
problem cannot be considered solved. Menner's, Oakden's and
Robinson's results show a high percentage of similarities be-
tween Cleanness and Sir Gawain not evident between any other
two poems. Cleanness and Sir Gawain share an especially large

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[19]"The Gawain-Poet . . .," p. 131.

[20]The Gawain Poet, p. 29.

[21]Sire Gauvain et le Chevalier Vert: Poeme Anglais
du xiv Siecle (Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1946), p. 51.

number of identical or closely similar phrases.[22] Day accounts for this singularity by assuming that the poet reread Cleanness before working upon a similar theme in Sir Gawain. She discounts the idea of the poems' proximity in time as a result of the different proportions in which they commend purity and loyalty.[23] But, considering the arguments in favor of a closely interrelated thematic structure, it seems unlikely that the poet would borrow heavily from himself only this once on account of theme. Or, if Cleanness and Sir Gawain were written in close enough succession for the borrowing to be due to mental carry-over, there remains the matter of great difference in style and tone to be accounted for. How did the poet manage to complicate his technique so completely in a short enough length of time for him to create in these two poems a verbal similarity not found in, say, Cleanness and Patience? It should be noted that no one has postulated an order of construction in which Cleanness and Sir Gawain are followed by Patience and Pearl, explaining the heavy borrowing as a characteristic of the poet's initial style, decreasing as his skill grew. But this, after all, would wreck the established theories of the poems' sequence.

The most generally accepted order assigns priority to

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[22]Menner, Purity, pp. xv-xvi.

[23]Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, ed. Sir. I. Gollancz, p. xi.

<u>Patience</u> and <u>Cleanness</u>, followed by <u>Pearl</u> and <u>Sir Gawain</u>.
The poems move, according to this theory, from simple to com-
plex form, from loose to more tightly interrelated construc-
tion, revealing a definite mastery of material and tradition.[24]
Menner suggests a rather elaborate system of reworking on the
poet's part, as he supposes the artist to have moved from a
concrete to a more metaphoric use of sources and words.[25]
Thematically, Spearing views this order as presenting a pro-
gressively more remote, more ambiguous concept of the non-
human power man must confront.[26] Gordon's idea of thematic
resemblance, already mentioned, also supports this chrono-
logical sequence.

But there are those who read the poems in a precisely
opposite manner. The movement here is toward simplification
rather than complexity, whether the poet is explaining a ser-
ies of spiritual crises in his life, or elucidating virtues
progressively more clearly. This is the ordering assumed by
those who wish to extract from these poems a biography for
the poet--a tenuous affair, at best. Essentially, this is
the order followed by Gollancz, who would have the poems com-
posed in the order in which they appear in the manuscript.

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[24]Moorman, <u>The Pearl-Poet</u>, p. 31.

[25]<u>Purity</u>, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi.

[26]<u>The Gawain-Poet</u>, p. 30.

Mastery of form and technical skill results in <u>Patience</u>'s

terseness of expression. This theory makes the position of

<u>Sir Gawain</u> in the manuscript problematical. Gollancz sug-

gests that it may be the earliest of the poems.[27]

The fact that both these sequences are equally pos-

sible is troubling in itself, for the meaning of the poems

depends in some measure, at least, on the relationship(s)

between them. Then, too, neither of the suggested orders is

entirely satisfactory, even if considered in isolation.

<u>Pearl</u>, <u>Cleanness</u>, and <u>Patience</u> resemble one another in their

use of biblical source material and in their religious nature.

However, <u>Sir Gawain</u>, <u>Cleanness</u>, and <u>Patience</u> are obviously

close in their use of alliterative style. Trying to reconcile

the two types of similarity can lead to the sort of embarrass-

ment Menner experiences over <u>Pearl</u>. His order runs, <u>Patience</u>,

<u>Cleanness</u>, (<u>Pearl</u>?), <u>Sir Gawain</u>.[28]

There is, too, a difference of tone to be taken into

account. <u>Patience</u> and <u>Cleanness</u> are nearly always considered

"obviously connected."[29] They are both homilies, they are

both strictly alliterative, they both deal exclusively with

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[27]<u>Patience: An Alliterative Version of Jonah by the
Poet of the Pearl</u>, 2nd edition (London: Oxford University
Press, 1924), p. 5.

[28]<u>Purity</u>, p. xxxviii.

[29]Day, <u>Sir Gawain</u>, p. x.

biblical narrative. Pons reads them as having a monotonous,
stylistically unequal effect resulting from an epic tone and
alternation of "vigeur rétive et de docilité un peu molle."[30]
Differences exist, though, even between these "companion
poems."[31] Oakden, in particular, notices the greater empha-
sis in Patience upon God's mercy and magnanimity as well as
upon human sympathy. Cleanness is more severe, stressing
God's justice.[32]

Between the richly textured Pearl and Sir Gawain there
are tonal differences, too, as well as a diversity between
these two poems and the more austere Cleanness and Patience.
In Pons' words, "L'exquise beauté de Pearl ne ressemble à peu
près jamais au charme plus concut ou plus vif de SGGK, meme
dans le subtil et délicat debat théologique."[33] This dispari-
ty between the romance type of Sir Gawain and the theological
lyricism of Pearl is strong enough to lead William Henry Scho-
field to believe that there must be two poets involved.[34]

In addition to these issues, the manuscript presents

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[30]Sire Gauvain et le Chevalier Vert, p. 57.

[31]Gollancz, Patience, p. 5.

[32]Alliterative Poetry in Middle English, II, 47.

[33]Sire Gauvain et le Chevalier Vert, p. 56.

[34]"Symbolism, Allegory, and Autobiography in The
Pearl," PMLA, 24 (1909), note to p. 667.

certain questions of credibility. It seems unusual that an
age of anonymous artists and widespread unacknowledged borrow-
ing among writers would carefully preserve these four poems
intact simply as the work of one poet. Idea was always pre-
dominant over personality. For the poems to have remained
together a more sufficient reason is needed. To see the pearl
metaphor as that reason is almost as tenuous as indulging in
biographical conjecture. The pearl image is central to only
one of the four poems and does not appear at all in _Patience_.
Furthermore, the pearl was not an uncommon symbol for that
age. "Pearls were a symbol of purity that especially appealed
to the imagination of the Middle Ages (and notably of the
fourteenth century) . . . ."[35] If the pearl is used as cri-
terion, any number of works might have been included with or
substituted for these four.

The perfect symmetry of these poems, if considered
sequentially, is also puzzling. For the author to have pro-
duced two relatively simple homilectic poems and two more com-
plex, ambiguous poems, in whatever order, seems too coinci-
dental to be true, particularly considering the somewhat
haphazard transmission of medieval works to our day. The
development of a poet's skill does not generally measure it-
self in neat doublets. Again, something more sufficient is

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[35]Gordon, _Pearl_, p. xii.

demanded than a one, two, three, four type of restoration of the manuscript's internal relationship.

Beginning, then, with the same feeling or desire for unity among the poems that so many critics have exhibited, supported by their investigations, I wish to go further, to attempt a new synthesis of the poems, one that will answer the question, fill in the omissions. The key to the puzzle has been given unknowingly by Gollancz, who noticed that there are definite relationships between Cleanness and Sir Gawain on the one hand, and Patience and Pearl on the other. This, plus the often stated connection between Patience and Cleanness and between Sir Gawain and Pearl, leads me to believe that the relationship among the four may be defined not sequentially, but architecturally. There may be not four poems, but two, Cleanness/Gawain and Patience/Pearl, connected in the same manner as those cathedral sculptures of New Testament figures standing above their Old Testament prototypes.[36]

Such presentation of types is a commonplace of the Middle Ages. The Old Testament was considered valuable and significant primarily in relation to the New Testament.[37]

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[36]It is a beautiful coincidence that it was West-Midland architecture that first connected cathedral sculpture into a religious scheme where Old Testament events become types of the New Testament. (Arthur Gardner, English Medieval Sculpture [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951].)

[37]Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image, tr. Dora Nussey (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 133.

The figures of the Old Testament stories are foreshadowings
of the miraculous events of the New Testament; without the
culmination in the life of Christ they would have no purpose
for being. The New Testament, in turn, is a fulfillment and
at the same time an expansion of the Old. The juxtaposition
of these types serves to impress on the viewer the deep under-
lying harmony of all of history.[38] History is planned.

Given the strong feeling for order that is character-
istic of the medieval period[39] and the familiarity of the use
of these prefiguring types, it is quite probable that an artist
would use such a scheme to give order and meaning to his
poetry. The Old Testament poems set the theme, establish the
pattern of what will be; the more contemporary poems furnish
the fulfillment of that prophecy. The two halves of each poem
will have their full significance only in relation to one
another. Here we return to Gollancz's idea that SG and PE
test the contentions of CL and PA. Without being New Testa-
ment poems in the sense of scriptural allegory, both SG and
PE fulfill and complete the messages of CL and PA. Both his-
tory and nature were regarded by the medieval man as vast
symbols of God's purpose.[40] The poet shows in these poems
that even contemporary events have their eternal, symbolic

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[38]Mâle, p. 132.

[39]Mâle, p. 1.

[40]Mâle, p. 15.

value.

This reading of the poems satisfies both the condition of common authorship and that of a reasonable purpose for the four poems' continued existence together. In this relationship to one another they assume a meaningful order, and if my supposition is correct, that order was broken into four separate poems only due to copyist's faulty reading.

CHAPTER II

THE WORLDS OF CLEANNESS/GAWAIN AND PATIENCE/PEARL

If CL/SG and PA/PE are indeed two complex poems rather
than four simpler works, we should expect to find within each
major work a common intention, an identical theme, a consist-
ent view of the world that culminates in a unified image of
each poem as a whole. The metaphor of Old and New Testament
types developed in the first chapter must apply; the second
half of each poem must be an application of the events of the
first half, a fulfillment of expectation without sacrificing
the variety of a new experience. The expectations and in-
fluences of the first part will be worked out in a new context.
That "harmony" of world view that exists in Old Testament/New
Testament parallels will be established.

In the case of CL/SG we find the necessary similarities
of theme and intention in the fact that both poems in the com-
plex deal with man as a social being; both treat the virtues
of cleanness and "trawþe" as central to the meaning of the
poem. CL and SG share a concept of God, of man, and of man's
capacities for decision making and for discovery. Finally,
they share an identical conception of time. It is from this
treatment of time that the image of the whole poem is drawn,

the figure of a spiral that corresponds to the central reality of the poem CL/SG.

Between the two parts of the poem there is also a certain element of contrast that emphasizes the diversity possible within their basic similarity, that allows SG to emerge as the test of the God-given rules of CL. In terms of the metaphor of types the moral values of CL are translated into the active life of Gawain as the New Testament proves, yet extends and varies the Old Testament.

The protagonist of CL and of SG is man as social being, in his dealings with other men under God's law. All the situations examined in either poem are socially oriented, even to the point in CL of showing the whole world judged collectively. CL is full of cities and social gatherings; feasts abound. Abraham meets and entertains God at a meal. God Himself is likened to a lord at a feast. Marriage is praised, an ordained part of life on earth and a "clean" condition far removed from the excesses of the people of Sodom. The preeminently social sacrament of marriage, too, is equally far removed from the celibacy enjoined on those seeking a more perfect union with God. There is no reference to the "other order" of virginity. Thus, in CL, social order is celebrated; there is a regard for proper place, evidenced for instance in meticulous seating arrangements at a feast, and for courtesy, which virtue requires society for its practice.

These same concerns are an integral part of SG. Ga-

wain himself is clearly set in social surroundings that stand

in active relationship to his character and actions.[1] He is

first mentioned among his peers, not superior to them. He

acts as a member of the court, a vassal serving the king with

the consent of his peers.[2] Everyone about Gawain recognizes

that his proper place is among other men,whether it be his

friends at Arthur's court,[3]

> And sayde soþly al same segges til oþer,
> Carande for þat comly: 'Bi Kryst, hit is scaþe
> Þat þou, leude, schal be lost, þat art of lyf noble!
> To fynde hys fere vpon folde, in fayth, is not eþe.
> Warloker to have wroʒt had more wyt bene,
> And haf dyʒt ʒonder dere a duk to haus worþed;
> > SG 673-678.

or Bercilak's retinue,

> And vche segge as soré to seuer with hym þere
> As þay hade wonde worþyly with þat wlonk euer.
> > SG 1987-1988.

Even Gawain's inclusion among men who cannot afford "mayn

drynk" and are therefore affected by it seems to come from

the poet's impulse to see him as a man among men.[4] SG is

full of that same celebration of social living that appears

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[1]Hans Schnyder, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: An
Essay in Interpretation (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1961), p. 36.

[2]John Anthony Burrow, A Reading of Sir Gawain and the
Green Knight (London: Routledge, 1965), p. 11.

[3]This and all further references to SG are taken from
the Tolkien and Gordon edition of the poem, previously cited.

[4]Burrow, pp. 32-33.

in CL. Gawain passes from court to court, from festivity to
festivity, praying in the wilderness for relief from his soli-
tude. The audience is shown gatherings of men at feasts, at
games, at religious service, on the hunt.

As in CL, too, courtesy is a primary aspect of social
living in SG. Gawain is famed for courtesy. He understands
and can practice with equal ease the intricacies of courtly
love dialogue and the formal patterns of court etiquette. In
any social situation Gawain always responds correctly; he
knows what to do.

Indeed, the very function of a knight is social. He
is to protect the weak, hold fast to his loyal service to his
lord and his integrity among his peers. Courtesy is the
social directive that governs a knight's behavior--courtesy,
that protean concept that defines social acceptability and
links grace to the necessities of existence. As Gawain dis-
covers, too, a knight's social reputation is his identity.[5]

The characters of CL and SG are all deeply involved
in the exposition of the virtues of cleanness and "trawþe"
and their corresponding vices. This moral concern forms the
predominant theme of both poems, further reinforcing their
close relationship. Obviously, the lesson of cleanness and
uncleanness is dominant in CL. Though God hates all evils,

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[5]Larry D. Benson, Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and
the Green Knight (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1965),
p. 221.

the poet says, He most hates unchastity in all its forms, the

sins of self-abasement.[6]

>. . . alle illez he hates as helle þat stynkkez;
>Bot non nuyez hym, on naȝt ne never upon dayez,
>As harlottrye unhonest, heþyng of selven;
>Þat schamez for no schrewedschyp schent mot he worþe!
>   CL 577-580.

"Fylþe of þe flesch" is most heavily avenged.

>Bot never ȝet in no boke breved I herde
>Þat ever he wrek so wyþerly on werk þat he made,
>Ne venged for no vilte of vice ne synne,
>Ne so hastyfly watz hot for hatel of his wylle,
>Ne never so sodenly soȝt unsoundely to wenge,
>As for fylþe of þe flesch þat foles han used.
>For, as I fynde, þer he forȝet alle his fre þewez,
>And wex wod to þe wrache for wrath at his hert.
>   CL 197-204.

Belshazzar's undoing is not attributed to his worship of false

gods, but to riotous behavior, mishandling of God's vessels

(perhaps an emblem of the body as vessel) among his licent-

ious court. Only the people who refrain from soiling them-

selves escape doom, people like Lot and Noah.

In CL, too, there is an underlying link between

purity and "trawþe" or loyalty, in this case to God.[7] To

keep oneself pure is to keep faith with God, to follow His

law. In its fuller context, however, "trawþe" can be loyal-

ty, integrity in any situation; often it is simply honesty.

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[6]All references to CL are from Menner's edition, pre-
viously cited.

[7]S. S. Hussey, "Sir Gawain and Romance Writing," SN,
40 (1968), 172.

For the sin of "mistrawþe" there is punishment, but always

with the possibility of forgiveness. Lot's wife gets two

chances; Sarah's lie draws only a gentle rebuke. Even Luci-

fer's sin could have been forgiven had he humbled himself.

> þis hit watz a brem brest and a byge wrache;
> And ȝet wrathed not þe Wyȝ, ne þe wrech saȝtled,
> Ne never wolde for wylfulnes his worþy God knawe,
> Ne pray hym for no pite, so proud watz his wylle.
> Forþy þaȝ þe rape were rank, þe rawþe watz lyttel;
>   CL 229-233.

This sin of "mistrawþe" can be called the sin of self-

exaltation. The difference in the punishments meted to self-

exaltation and self-abasement can be seen in the very dif-

ferent fates of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

Gawain is tested in precisely these two areas of

cleanness and "trawþe."[8] The focus of SG thus echoes that

of CL. The benediction of CL might serve as Gawain's motto,

> þat we gon gay in oure gere þat grace he uus sende,
> þat we may serve in his syȝt þer solace never blynnez.
>   CL 1811-1182.

Its application is particularly evident in Gawain's arming;

the bit of "gere" that is his shield illustrates both quali-

ties of service and of cleanness. But in SG the subtheme of

"trawþe" becomes dominant, while the theme of cleanness,

though furnishing part of Gawain's test, is not so crucial.

Thus, Gawain's actions are an example of CL's contentions

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[8]Menner, _Purity_, p. xlvii.

the poet says, He most hates unchastity in all its forms, the

sins of self-abasement.[6]

> . . . alle illez he hates as helle þat stynkkez;
> Bot non nuyez hym, on naȝt ne never upon dayez,
> As harlottrye unhonest, heþyng of selven;
> Þat schamez for no schrewedschyp schent mot he worþe!
> CL 577-580.

"Fylþe of þe flesch" is most heavily avenged.

> Bot never ȝet in no boke breved I herde
> Þat ever he wrek so wyþerly on werk þat he made,
> Ne venged for no vilte of vice ne synne,
> Ne so hastyfly watz hot for hatel of his wylle,
> Ne never so sodenly soȝt unsoundely to wenge,
> As for fylþe of þe flesch þat foles han used.
> For, as I fynde, þer he forȝet alle his fre þewez,
> And wex wod to þe wrache for wrath at his hert.
> CL 197-204.

Belshazzar's undoing is not attributed to his worship of false

gods, but to riotous behavior, mishandling of God's vessels

(perhaps an emblem of the body as vessel) among his licent-

ious court. Only the people who refrain from soiling them-

selves escape doom, people like Lot and Noah.

In CL, too, there is an underlying link between

purity and "trawþe" or loyalty, in this case to God.[7] To

keep oneself pure is to keep faith with God, to follow His

law. In its fuller context, however, "trawþe" can be loyal-

ty, integrity in any situation; often it is simply honesty.

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[6]All references to CL are from Menner's edition, pre-
viously cited.

[7]S. S. Hussey, "Sir Gawain and Romance Writing," _SN_,
40 (1968), 172.

For the sin of "mistrawþe" there is punishment, but always

with the possibility of forgiveness. Lot's wife gets two

chances; Sarah's lie draws only a gentle rebuke. Even Luci-

fer's sin could have been forgiven had he humbled himself.

> þis hit watz a brem brest and a byge wrache;
> And ȝet wrathed not þe Wyȝ, ne þe wrech saȝtled,
> Ne never wolde for wylfulnes his worþy God knawe,
> Ne pray hym for no pite, so proud watz his wylle.
> Forþy þaȝ þe rape were rank, þe rawþe watz lyttel;
>   CL 229-233.

This sin of "mistrawþe" can be called the sin of self-

exaltation. The diffe▇   ▇shments meted to self-

exaltation and self-▇   ▇in the very dif-

ferent fates of Neþ▇   ▇ar.

     Gawain is ▇   ▇two areas of

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though furnishing part of Gawain's test, is not so crucial.

Thus, Gawain's actions are an example of CL's contentions

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[8]Menner, _Purity_, p. xlvii.

without being a complete fulfillment of its warnings. CL both foreshadows SG and varies from it. Here is an example of that typological extension and variation that is characteristic of CL/SG. This sort of transformation from one component poem to the other will appear often enough to be considered an integral aspect of the poem's thematic development.

At the beginning of SG, Gawain is presented as a man "voyded of vylany," adorned with virtue. His cleanness corresponds to that virtue as it appears in CL. He is courteous; his speech with the Lady is "clene carp," conversation free from filth. His behavior at feasts contrasts sharply with that of the ragged guest or the celebrants at Belshazzar's feast. Gawain does not misuse his body. Even on the day that he is most in danger of falling into carnal sin, he comes safely through. He respects the marriage bond and does not engage in sexual activity with the wife of his host. Even his person is clean and comely. Had Gawain not been faithful in cleanness, undoubtedly his end would have been as sure and relentless as any doom meted to the sinners of CL. But Gawain does not consider himself of such small value that he sins in self-abasement. Rather, he thinks that he is of too great value to be lost.

The testing of "trawþe" is of primary importance to Gawain, for this quality is the ground of all his search, the reason that he seeks out his adventure in the first place. He must keep his word to meet the Green Knight.

"Gawain has almost all the qualities of a knight of the Grail, but what he is _explicitly_ seeking relates only to the more mundane of these qualities--loyalty and endurance--not to chastity or spiritual intensity."[9] Gawain fails in "trawþe" when he conceals the belt from his host. His sin, like that of Lucifer or of Adam, is a failure to retain loyalties and standards to which he had been committed. Gawain does not put his "social" commitments first. He lies to Bercilak as a result of an urge toward the private self, a desire for survival that he cannot control. This is a sin of self-exaltation.

This tendency to value himself is inherent in Gawain's very nature. The ideal of the perfect knight contains a touch of worldly vanity. This perfection is rewarded by prestige and reputation in this world, producing earthly immortality or fame.[10] Gawain himself is well aware of his reputation; he struggles to maintain it in conversation with the Lady; he sternly repudiates the invitation to cowardice (in the presence of a witness) offered him by his guide to the Green Chapel.

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[9]M. Mills, "Christian Significance and Romance Tradition in _Sir Gawain and the Green Knight_," MLR, 40 (1965), rpt. in _Critical Studies of Sir Gawain and Green Knight_, ed. Donald R. Howard and Christian Zacher (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1968), p. 173.

[10]Donald R. Howard, The Three Temptations: Medieval Man in Search of the World (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 220.

But Gawain's failure, like those sins of "mistrawþe"
in CL is not punished unto death. Like Lot's wife, Sarah,
or Nebuchadnezzar, he is punished, but he receives a second
chance. The significance of Gawain's successes and failures,
then, is ultimately a reiteration of the value system of CL.

CL and SG together form a coherent comment on the
virtues of cleanness and "trawþe." SG offers enough variety
in its test of the basic situations of CL to enhance the in-
terest and variety of the poem as a whole. Underlying the
moral comment of CL/SG is a current of possible tragedy, felt
throughout the poem. At any moment the games that Gawain
plays could become deadly serious, as serious as Lot's situa-
tion in Sodom. One wrong decision might bring down the wrath
of God's vengeance. For those who make the right decision
there is no hope of complete safety, simply, as in Gawain's
case, safety until the next crisis. The possibility of moral
tragedy serves as another statement of unity between CL and
SG.

There is, also, a consistent conception of God shared
by these two poems, a theology that informs both. The God of
CL/SG is presented as a judge, stern and unbending. He can-
not bear the sight of sin; He is wrathful, fearsome. All the
cries of a drowning world for mercy do not mitigate His anger.
Under His surveillance, all actions, whether good or bad,
bring their own inevitable consequences. In SG, though God
does not directly intervene as He does in CL, His law and

justice are still operative. Gawain's tests might be puzzl-

ing, but the right of the Green Knight to punish Gawain ac-

cording to his failures in those tests is never called in

question.

The theological solution to the problem for imperfect

man faced with the unwavering judgment of God lies of course

in Christ. The sin of Adam, the "mistrawþe" committed by Ga-

wain too, is, as has been seen, a sin whose consequence

threatens death. Adam had to die; Gawain faces the Green

Knight's axe. But the justice of God is satisfied by the ad-

vent of Christ as the second Adam. Adam's sin, CL states,

comes to be "amended wyth a mayden þat make had never." The

poet emphasizes His birth, His acts of cleanness among men.

That Gawain sees himself as part of the universal story of

the human fall is obvious in his allusion to himself as one

of a company of biblical figures.[11] SG has often been called

a Christmas poem, a celebration of God's assumption of human-

ity. Gawain, Mary's knight, undergoes his testing at the time

of his God's birth. In each section of this poem the main

action is surrounded and enveloped by a picture of Christmas

celebration.[12] Gawain has a hope of redemption, a possibility

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[11]Schnyder, p. 72.

[12]Charles Moorman, "Myth and Medieval Literature:
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Sir Gawain and the Pearl:
Critical Essays, ed. by Robert J. Blanch (Bloomington:
Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 221.

that his sin might be paid for by repentance rather than
death. The very cycle of striving, sin, repentance, and for-
giveness is a Christmas theme.[13] For both CL and SG, more-
over, the limits of theological action are God's plan upon
earth. Only Christ incarnate is emphasized, not Christ re-
surrected, or Christ in glory.

Here we see once again between the two poems the
development of a varied treatment of a basic identity in idea.
CL concentrates more upon God's viewpoint. He enters the ac-
tion in His own person. SG illustrates the same situations,
the tests of cleanness and "trawþe" from man's viewpoint. Ga-
wain has no direct experience of God in person beyond the
forms and rituals of his religion. The outlook of CL is main-
ly an Old Testament attitude; that of SG is characteristic of
man's condition after the coming of Christ. We may say that
in CL we see plainly the result of any chosen course of moral
action and in SG the process of active choice. The possible
results of any of Gawain's choices, however, have already been
explored and recorded in God's decisions as presented in CL.
The two parts of CL/SG cannot be separated without a loss of
richness for both.

As well as a consistent idea of God, CL and SG share
a corresponding view of man. The social aspect of man's

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[13]John Gardner, The Complete Works of the Gawain-poet
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 81.

existence has been shown to be important to CL/SG. In this

role of living in the world, stained by sins that have social

ramifications, unchastity and "mistrawþe," man is presented

as the "doer," the active man. Throughout CL/SG the man who

acts rightly is saved; he is not asked to understand. No one

in CL/SG needs to understand the implications of a response

to respond and be judged by that response. Gawain undertakes

his tests without ever knowing their significance. God simply

announces His plan to Noah and gives His orders. Noah's part

is action, obedience or death. No one in either CL or SG is

given to introspection. We do not see Gawain agonizing pri-

vately over his sins; the poet simply comments that Gawain

might feel a certain way,

> ȝif he ne slepe soundyly, say ne dar I,
> For he hade much on þe morn to mynne, ȝif he wolde,
>   in poȝt.
>   Let hym lyȝe þere stille,
>   He hatȝ nere þat he soȝt;
>   And ȝe wyle a whyle be stylle
>   I schal telle yow how þay wroȝt.
>   SG 1991-1997.

Chivalry is an embodiment of the active life.[14] Gawain is an

exemplar of chivalry; he views life from that standpoint. It

is not until his sins are public that Gawain's guilt feelings

appear;[15] his grief shows "when he schulde telle." Indeed,

Benson mentions the shifts in dramatic viewpoint from hunt to

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[14]Howard, The Three Temptations, p. 222.

[15]Spearing, The Gawain-Poet, p. 227.

bedroom as an indication that Gawain has judged experience only from its outward appearance.[16] It is appearance that tells Lot that the strangers are angels.

As a result of the predominance of action over contemplation in this poem, the viewpoint tends to be somewhat removed in both CL and SG. The wealth of examples concentrates attentions on the virtues and vices being examined in CL rather than on the people who commit the good or bad acts. The retributive justice of God works with impartial effect; that justice itself commands the reader's attention rather than the individuals who are judged. SG also is viewed from the "outside," even with that poem's subtle understanding of Gawain's reactions. Gawain is always the idealized knight depicted from the outside by an "affectionate narrator."[17] The poet, without hesitating to interrupt the narrative on his own part, is careful to maintain his distance as storyteller. This is evidenced in the lines 1191-1197 quoted above. The poet assumes the role of a clerk depending on written authority, as is common in romance writing.[18] The romance, too, emphasizes action, a hero's prowess more than

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[16]Benson, p. 197.

[17]R. H. Bowers, "Gawain and the Green Knight as Entertainment," MLQ, 24 (1963), rpt. Critical Studies of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, p. 75.

[18]Benson, p. 181.

his character. Thus, what CL accomplishes through a wealth

of material, SG undertakes through use of a particular genre.

The end result for both is the same, however, so that the

viewpoint remains consistent throughout both poems.

Still another unifying idea of CL/SG is the import-

ance given throughout the poem to man's capacity for decision

making, his will. Abraham's courteous reception of God is

willing hospitality. Everything that Gawain undertakes is a

willing task; he volunteers for the adventure of the Green

Knight; he accepts the return blow. We have seen that God,

in CL and SG, waits on man's actions and weighs the results

justly. Thus, man has the choice of what his actions will be

and his is the responsibility for them. In such a situation

he must depend upon his will for direction. Judgment has no

function if free will is denied. Continually Gawain sees

himself and is seen as the shaper of his own destiny.[19] For

her aid to Gawain, Mary is given credit, but the virtue is

his. In CL, God is active but does not force man to any kind

of action.

Even penance after sin is an act of will. Lucifer

would not actively seek for forgiveness; so it was withheld.

Both CL and SG emphasize this necessity for shrift, a doc-

trine which throws responsibility for forgiveness back upon

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[19]Sacvan Bercovitch, "Romance and Anti-Romance in
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," PQ 44 (1965), rpt. Critical
Studies of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, pp. 263-264.

the sinner.

> So if folk be defowled by unfre chaunce,
> Þat he be sulped in sawle, seche to schryfte,
> And he may polyce hym at þe prest, by penaunce taken,
> Wel bryȝter þen þe beryl oþer browden perles.
>
> <div align="right">CL 1129-1132.</div>

Gawain wears the girdle as a sign of his penitence, signifi-
cantly, a self-imposed act of contrition. The importance of
this act in terms of will can be seen in the word play of
SG 2429-2430,

> 'Bot your gordel' quoþ Gawayn 'God yow forȝelde!
> Þat wyl I welde wyth good wylle, not for þe wynne
>   golde, . . .

In both CL and SG, consistent with the view they share
of God and óf man, suspense, surprise and discovery are emblem-
atic of earthly life with all its variability and variety.
Both poems continually bring before the audience, as before
the people in the poems, a sudden vision. Events come unex-
pectedly, and consequently with some impact upon the viewers
within and without the stories. The castle of the Green
Knight appears to Gawain unexpectedly; the sudden appearance
of the Lady is as unforeseen. Most of the wonder in SG arises
from this unforeseen quality.[20] In CL the flood descends with
devastating suddenness upon the unprepared world; Sodom and
Gomorrah sink into the earth before their citizens are aware

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[20]Morton W. Bloomfield, "Sir Gawain and the Green
Knight: An Appraisal," PMLA, 76 (1961), rpt. Critical
Studies of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, p. 36.

of the danger. Learning, too, comes as a sudden vision, a
recognition or discovery. Abraham and Lot simply recognize
their visitors as divine. Gawain learns the Green Knight's
identity and motives in an instant, secrets he had not
guessed before. The nature of the world of CL/SG, a world
of action in man's societies on earth, necessitates that man
arrive at knowledge not through contemplation but through
active trial. Gawain, as well as Nebuchadnezzar, learns by
experience; enlightenment is revealed in the moment follow-
ing action,

> Þenne he wayned hym his wyt, þat hade wo soffered,
> Þat he com to knawlach and kenned hymselven;
> CL 1701-1702.

Suspense forms a necessary part of this emblematic
presentation of life in both parts of CL/SG. It is perhaps
more noticeable in SG than in CL simply because the adven-
ture of Gawain is less familiar than the biblical narratives.
But Abraham's repeated petitioning of God on the road to Sodom
builds up a suspense of the same kind as the Lady's repeated
questioning of Gawain. Suspense has been called the organ-
izing principle of SG [21] but that statement is no less true
of CL. The vision of the hand disrupts Belshazzar's feast
much as the Green Knight's appearance halts Arthur's feast.
In both instances, explanations and judgment come only at

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[21]Bloomfield, p. 51.

the end; the mystery is prolonged.

CL and SG, then, form together a single world view, one in which man acts and in which his actions, for which he is responsible, are vitally connected to his fellow man and subject to God's irrevocable judgment. This world, too, is one whose qualities are surprise and discovery and suspense. This is man's everyday world seen primarily in the poem from a moral viewpoint. This closeness of philosophy, of idea, of purpose, demonstrating the social side of man's existence with its religious implications, seems to indicate without a doubt that CL and SG were meant to be read together, as types of one another.

There remains, however, that noticeable variation between poems, the shifting of major and minor themes, the difference in directness of the vision of God and of the experience of man. Why, in two such closely related poems, should there be this element of contrast? At first examination, it would seem that the unity of CL/SG would be better served by SG's fulfilling exactly the forms established in CL, by Gawain's being tested primarily in cleanness, for example, or subjected to a punishment that the poet states is directly from God.

The answer, I believe, lies in the treatment of time in CL/SG, primarily, as well as in the tendency toward surprise already noted as part of this world and in the fact

that, in a world where men must act often without full know-
ledge, events will not always come to their expected conclu-
sions. Variability is a constant of man's world; in this
poem surprise is usual. But the idea of time in the poem
necessitates this sort of variation, too. Time as man exper-
iences it on earth, as it is presented in CL/SG, moves always
directly "onward," leaving its consequences behind as history.
What's done is done, irrevocable, "werre and wrake and won-
der," sins and their inevitable consequences. But the idea
of history repeating itself is more than an empty phrase for
CL/SG. SG, Donald R. Howard notes, carries within its treat-
ment of time the implication that succeeding events on earth
will repeat the conditions of life and reveal central truths
enacted in the work itself.[22] SG particularly stresses the
inevitable recurrence yet eternal newness of temporality,

> A ȝere ȝernes ful ȝerne, and ȝeldeȝ neuer lyke,
> Þe forme to þe fynisment foldeȝ ful selden.
> Forþi þis ȝol ouerȝede, and þe ȝere after,
> And vche sesoun serlepes sued after oþer:
> $$SG\ 498-501.$$

But this is true of CL also. Moreover, SG repeats specifi-
cally the situations of CL, so that there is no break in the
recurring conditions and situations that are stated to be
basic to man's life on earth.

Nebuchadnezzar makes one decision, Belshazzar

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[22] The Three Temptations, p. 268.

another, but their situations are alike. The actual unclean
acts of Noah's time and of Abraham's do not vary much, though
the circumstances do not correspond exactly. Repeatedly, Ga-
wain, too, faces such tests, in which he could possibly fail
as fatally as any of the Old Testament figures of CL. SG it-
self is open-ended, for though Gawain returns to Camelot and
ends this adventure with the Green Knight, resigns it to his-
tory, he can always be tested again. The number of times he
has been tested in this one quest and the evidence of many
similar tests in the past, given by CL, suggests that he will
meet such crises again. Only death can halt this continual
testing, for death is all that ends the progression of tem-
porality for man. It is this fact that makes death so fearful
for Gawain, so fitting a doom for the sinners of CL.

Thus, time on an earthly level can be envisioned as a
spiral that returns always to a point that approximates its
beginning point. In a spiral, however, these approximate
points are not the same as that beginning point; they are
further along a directional line. Cyclic time is superim-
posed on linear time to contrast and illustrate Gawain's
dilemma.[23] Cyclic time is suggested in linear time in the
recurrence of CL's Old Testament archetypes. The circular-
ity of the seasons, the direct line of history, the recur-
rence of typical situations--circle and line fuse to form a

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[23]Bloomfield, p. 52.

spiral image that is the symbol of CL/SG as a whole. SG grows out of the situations, lessons, warnings, of CL; it is an extension without being a completion of the homily. Now the need for the variation noticed between the poems becomes clearer. SG is one of those "points" similar to yet necessarily separate from its predecessors. Thus, the theme of CL renews itself in SG, inevitably; the world of CL is the world of SG, but the "forme" established in the Old Testament types does not necessarily demand the exact "fynisment" of SG. That is only one of many possibilities. The spiral image suggests great vitality, the energy of a coiled spring. This is entirely fitting to the active world of CL/SG with its tendencies (inherent in the metaphor of spiral) toward expansion, inclusion of variety.

This metaphor illustrates the possibility of seeing CL/SG as a unified whole, a poem that deals with the dilemma of man as a social being, capable of choosing sin or righteousness, who is forced to choose continually by the very fact of his existence in time. The contentions of CL that God's justice rules, that the situations of the Old Testament are types of man's perpetual condition when forced to deal with his fellow men in God's sight, that man lives in an ordered world even when its workings are mysterious, all these ideas are proved by SG with the same type of method that the New Testament proves, yet extends and varies the application of the Old Testament. The conditions that were

posited as necessary for the establishment of a unified whole in CL/SG have been met.

The same conditions, of course, have to be met in PA/PE. There must be visible a coherent and unified system of values and idea, a complete world built up and shared in the two poems. Investigation shows that PA/PE is indeed as carefully integrated a whole as CL/SG, but that the qualities that bring PA and PE together are quite different from those unifying CL and SG. PA and PE share a concern with man's inner being and his living relationship to God; these poems embody the same concept of God and of man's situation alone with God. The virtue of patience and the process of gradual enlightenment are central to both PA and PE, and, like CL/SG, they are unified by a single concept of time. Again, like CL/SG, PA/PE develops in its temporal aspect a symbol of the poem as a whole, intimately connected with its purpose, for this poem, the symbol of a circle.

As in CL/SG, too, PA and PE show a relation by type. PA should in some manner contain the impress of the events and characters in PE. Once again we have an Old Testament story with a contemporary counterpart. The situations of PE do, as a matter of fact, fulfill the expectations of PA, as we shall see.

Man's interior being is as important a part of the world of PA/PE as his exterior life is of CL/SG. In PE, as

Charles Moorman notes, the mind of the narrator is the real subject under consideration.[24] But Jonah, like the Dreamer of PE, is also revealed alone, apart from his social world. Attention is concentrated on single protagonists and especially on their mental states. Jonah's inner states, his reasons, his motives, his desires, are primary in PA. He has a social errand, but the story dwells on it less than on his attitudes and, to a lesser degree, those of the people of Nineveh. In PE the Dreamer is asked to depart entirely from his earthly communions.[25]

> I rede þe forsake þe worlde wode,
> And porchace þy perle maskelles.'
>   PE 743-744.

He experiences that most private of worlds, the dream--though the interior of a whale's belly is perhaps equally as removed from all outside contact. In both PA and PE the world presented is that of the "contemplative" man as that term is used in contrast to the "active" life.

The personal, introspective atmosphere pervades PA/PE. In the personal references in PA can be found a definite link to PE.[26] The introduction of PA concerns the narrator's own

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[24]Chalres Moorman, "The Role of the Narrator in Pearl," MP, 53 (1955), 74.

[25]All references to PE are from Gordon's edition of the poem, previously cited.

[26]Moorman, The Pearl Poet, p. 74.

situation so much as to look forward to the completely auto-
biographical fiction of PE.[27] Both poems are narrated from
the "inside." The tale of Jonah is enclosed within the
narrator's own attitudes, and the Dreamer in his first person
disclosure brings the poem still further into the realm of
the actually personal. In both poems this gives an immediacy
to the events and emotions described. The narrators approach
the audience, allowing an actual personal involvement with
them. The closeness in nature among Jonah, the Dreamer, and
the narrator of PA helps this personal development.

The typological connection between PA and PE is par-
ticularly evident in the similarities between the protagonists
of these poems. They find themselves in similar situations
and their reactions correspond. Both Jonah and the narrator
of PE experience the same anger at restraint, at feeling less
than the master of their situations. Both men need the same
reminder of the futility of anger. The reprimand of the
Maiden,

> For anger gayne₃ þe not a cresse.
> Who nede₃ schal þole, be not so þro.
> PE 343-344.

echoes God's admonition of Jonah,[28]

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[27]Spearing, The Gawain-Poet, p. 76.

[28]This and all further references to PA are from
Gollancz's edition of the poem, previously cited.

Be noȝt so gryndel, god-man, bot go forth þy wayes!
Be preue & be pacient, in payne & in joye.
                                    PA 524-525.

Both of these men fail to understand God. They are, seeming-

ly, incapable of conceiving Him save in their own images.

Jonah becomes angry because God does not share his vindic-

tiveness and his feeling of self-importance. The Dreamer,

too, finds himself bewildered by the mercy of God; His

largess seems too great. The heroes of PA and PE are unable

to comprehend, then, the full extent of heavenly "cortaysye."

For them justice is a more manageable concept.[29]

    These two men are not evil doers; they have simply

ignored the good.

    'Thow demeȝ noȝt bot doel-dystress',
    þenne sayde þat wyȝt. 'Why dotȝ þou so?
    For dyne of doel of lureȝ lesse
    Ofte mony mon forgos þe mo.
                                    PE 337-340.

These lines speak for both Jonah and the Dreamer. Their

failures are of the same kind, more often sins of omission

than commission, and are sins of the spirit. Jonah accuses

himself,

    þaȝ I be fol & fykel, & falce of my hert,
    De-woyde now þy vengaunce, þurȝ vertu of rauthe;
    Thaȝ I be gulty of gyle, as gaule of prophetes,
                                    PA 283-285.

The Dreamer is accused by the Maiden,

    'Wy borde ȝe men? So madde ȝe be!

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[29]Spearing, _The Gawain-Poet_, p. 11.

Þre wordeȝ hatȝ þou spoken at ene:
Vnavysed, for soþe, wern alle þre.
Þou ne woste in worlde quat on dotȝ mene;
Þy worde byfore þy wytte con fle.
PE 290-294.

The Dreamer and Jonah are further joined in being impatient
men who foolishly resist God's power and control.[30] Given a
personal confrontation with the divine, their limited under-
standing must either rebel, childishly petulant, as Jonah's
does, or stumble through a catechism as does the Dreamer's.
For both men the answer lies not in sudden revelation but in
education and broadening of their understanding.

Both Jonah and the Dreamer have suffered a loss; they
experience that state of "poverty" that the narrator of PA
seems to know so well. In Jonah's case, his recalcitrant will
and his loss, the relation between patience and poverty, are
separated into two episodes, united in the narrator's explan-
ation that he intends to deal with both. In PE patience and
loss are bound together, as the poet transforms the themes of
PA into a more immediate form. Here we see the use of the
type that is characteristic to PA/PE. The Dreamer has lost
something much dearer to him than the tree was to Jonah. His
emotion is thus deeper and he is brought to see something
that the unwilling prophet does not, that a loss, in God's
hands, becomes a gain.

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[30]Spearing, The Gawain-Poet, p. 154.

For þat þou lesteȝ watȝ bot a rose
Þat flowred and fayled as kynde hyt gef.
Now þurȝ kynde of the kysteȝ þat hyt con close
To a perle of prys hit is put in pref.
                                    PE 269-272.

In the same sort of transformation the resignation of PA be-
comes the hope of PE. Situations in PA are given a deeper
significance in PE; they are in a sense completed. This
development of meaning from one poem to the other is charac-
teristic of PA/PE and an integral part of the poem's message.

As man in PA/PE is a consistent type, so is God in PA
and PE a consistent being. The concept of God presented in
PA/PE stresses His mercy; God's justice becomes secondary,

And ay þe ofter, þe alder þay were,
Þay laften ryȝt and wroȝten woghe.
Mercy and grace moste hem þen stere,
For þe grace of God is gret innoȝe.
                                    PE 621-624.

The Ninevites are warned of their impending destruction, a
stay of execution not granted to the people of Sodom. Con-
demned, the people of Nineveh are pardoned for their repent-
ance. None of the crew on board Jonah's ship suffers harm,
though they worship other gods. Jonah's constant disobe-
dience is treated gently, too. He is not severely punished,
but only made uncomfortable. God exercises the same leniency
toward the Dreamer, whose disobedience earns no harsh punish-
ment, but only a withdrawal of the vision. God takes noth-
ing from him; the comfort and the glory of what he has ex-
perienced remain. In PE God does not actively condemn, but

withholds grace when a self-condemned man argues the rights
he has forfeited.[31] There is a conviction in both PA and PE
that what has been marred can be mended. God is patient with
men's failings. If a man rends his clothes, he must exhibit
patience himself to repair them, but he is not made to wear
his clothes in rags or condemned because he has torn them.
The prime attribute of God's mercy in PA and PE is genero-
sity. Mercy may be had for the asking so long as the asking
be in good faith.

PA/PE is, in effect, a poem of the resurrected God,
God in glory whose justice has been satisfied by His own
generous act and whose mercy is now fully operative. Jonah
traditionally prefigures Christ, swallowed into death, rising
the third day. Jonah's fears that he will

> . . . be nummen in Ninniue & naked dispoyled,
> On rode rwly to-rent ryth rybaudes mony.'
>   PA 95-96.

foreshadow the image in PE of Christ crucified. The Maiden's
lessons are all informed by this figure of the resurrected
Christ, who rewards those who are His spiritual laborers with
a place in Heaven. The Dreamer's final vision is of the risen
Lamb in glory, the apocalypse without the horror of the judg-
ment. Here once again we see in the treatment of the Christ
figure in these two poems, how the suggestions inherent in PA
are developed and given their fuller significance in PE.

The demands made by this type of God upon the most

personal realm of experience, as it is presented in PA and

PE form an important part of the argument of both poems.

PA and PE both affirm that it is meekness that God requires

of man, an attitude rather than any meritorious action, faith

rather than works. A clean spot in the whale's belly is found

for Jonah as soon as he prays. And poverty, the poet says in

PE, simply offers a reason for a greater gift from God, hence

the parable of the vineyard where the last are made equal to

the first.

> Þus pore men her part ay pyke3,
> Þa3 þay com late and lyttel wore;
> And þa3 her sweng wyth lyttel atslyke3,
> Þe merci of God is much þe more.
> PE 573-576.

The greatest of God's gifts, His grace, comes to man through

man's sorrow and suffrance, not his merit. The poet's argu-

ment in PE is an attempt to prove salvation is a matter of

grace above merit.[32] This theology, of course, places the

responsibility for man's salvation upon God, not man him-

self. Here appears the great necessity for patience on man's

part and the "penaunce" and "payne" involved in it.

Because of this need for waiting on God's action,

Patience is the primary virtue not only in the poem osten-

sibly dealing with it, but in PE. The importance of this

virtue becomes obvious when it is only because of the failure

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[32]Carleton F. Brown, "The Author of The Pearl, Con-
sidered in the Light of His Theological Opinions," PMLA,
19 (1904), 132.

of his patience that the Dreamer does not see the final iden-
tification of the Lamb and the pearl symbol, though there is
in the poem a gradual movement of association of Christ and
the pearl.[33] This concept of patience is the heart of both
PA and PE. Not only are the visions of God and man shared
by both PA and PE and developed from one to the other, but
they are built on the same theme, the role of man in relation
to the merciful God who saves him.

One important aspect of this role in PA and PE is the
demonstration in both poems that in such an encounter will
becomes not man's weapon, but a hindrance, a continual bar-
rier separating him from God. Surely it is no accident that
both Jonah and the Dreamer find themselves in trouble because
of unsubdued will. Jonah's will to do other than what God
desires precipitates his troubles; he becomes a victim of his
own will both in the sea and in the desert outside Nineveh.
He is continually ending up in some wilderness because of his
wilfulness. The Dreamer bemoans his own recalcitrance that
will not let him find the comfort in God that he knows might
exist,

>   I playned my perle þat þer watȝ spenned
>   Wyth fryce skylleȝ þat faste faȝt;
>   Þaȝ kynde of Kryst me comfort kenned,
>   My wreched wylle in wo ay wraȝte.
>   PE 53-56.

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[33]A. C. Spearing, "Symbolic and Dramatic Development
in Pearl," Sir Gawain and Pearl: Critical Essays, p. 117.

The Dreamer's problem is will in conflict with reason. As far as the Maiden speaks for reason, he tends to stand for his own will.[34]

Every attempt at individual action on the part of either protagonist is ill-fated. Jonah's attempt to flee from God, the Dreamer's decision to cross the river are both futile, thwarted by the exterior interference of God. Jonah is forced into his journey, the motivation being God's, and the Dreamer does not choose his vision. The Dreamer's more complete understanding at the end of PE, however, does lead him to put everything in God's hands. When the pearl is left in Christ, the Dreamer repudiates his self-willed possessiveness.[35] Thus, once again, a theme in PA is carried to completion in PE. When God is thus in control, whether by man's obedience or a necessity for subordination forced upon him, the conflict between man and his fate loses reality; efforts at rebellion become comic, as Jonah's do. The narrator of PE for the same reason appears as a somewhat dense man, comic in his inability to perceive the truth. Since the power that man confronts in PA/PE is merciful, forgiving of human weakness, it is destructive of human

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[34]P. M. Kean, The Pearl: An Interpretation (London: Routledge, 1967), p. 135.

[35]Kean, p. 235.

dignity.[36] That undercurrent of tragedy felt in CL/SG vanishes in PA/PE, not even to be found in the sometime pathos of PE.

On another level, too, the thematic concerns of PA and PE are closely interrelated. The idea of courtesy is carefully developed in both as part of God's grace which we have seen to be so much a part of both poems. In PE the most important element in the idea of courtesy seems to be merciful and generous giving—freedom from limitation, abundance in goodness and in loving kindness.[37] In this poem courtesy, like love and grace, is an attribute of the divine, unmerited by human beings.

> 'Of courtaysye, as sayt3 Saynt Poule,
> Al arn we membre3 of Jesu Kryst:
> $\qquad\qquad$ PE 457-458.

In PA, too, the word describes a relationship generated from a high estate to a low, marked by a warmth which may be greater than the merit of the receiver. The word refers often to the biblical Latin "clemens," which the contemporary Wycliffite version of the Bible translates "meke and merciful."[38] Jonah's description of God is indicative,

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[36]Spearing, "Patience and the Gawain-Poet," Ang, 84 1966), 307.

[37]Kean, p. 189.

[38]D. S. Brewer, "Courtesy and the Gawain-Poet," Patterns of Love and Courtesy: Essays in Memory of C. S. Lewis, ed. John Lawlor (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 57.

> Wel knew I þi cortaysye, þy quoynt soffraunce,
> Þy bonte of debonerte, & þy bene grace,
> Þy longe abydyng wyth lur, þy late vengaunce;
> & ay þy mercy is mete, by mysse neuer so huge.
>   PA 417-420.

The exposition of courtesy in both poems thus depends upon
God's generous and loving giving; the gift is also, in both
PA and PE, free and unmerited by man. In PE, courtesy as
shown among the inhabitants of Heaven turns upon willingness
to give place to another; thus courtesy is again shown as in-
cluding charity. It is, in all of these contexts, neither a
contract nor a social custom. In PE courtesy requires proper
regard for others and hence proper equality before God.[39]
It is precisely this aspect of courtesy that Jonah cannot
understand in his call to Nineveh.

Both PA and PE inculcate the same patience which is
itself an exhibition of this courtesy. God's patience, in
fact, forms the basis for these poems. Without it, neither
Jonah's nor the Dreamer's experiences could have taken place.
Patience assumed by God is grace, a very real gift if we re-
member the awesome wrath of God in CL. In PA God says to
Jonah,

> Wer I as hastif as þou, heere were harme lumpen:
> Couþe I not þole bot as þou, þer þryued ful fewe:
>   PA 520-521.

On Man's part, according to PA/PE, patience is necessary for
salvation. Like God's, man's patience must be based on love;

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[39]Brewer, "Courtesy and the Gawain-Poet," p. 66.

this means voluntary renunciation of self-concern, as in the
heavenly kingdom PE describes in terms of courtesy. The pa-
tient man places God's desires before his own. As man ac-
cepts the sacrificing love necessary for patience, he assumes
a divine quality; he imitates God. Thus, man's loss of dig-
nity inherent in the world view of PA/PE, so clearly epitom-
ized in Jonah, can be somewhat redeemed. Here we see, as the
result of the Dreamer's experience, the regaining of the dig-
nity lost by Jonah. The Dreamer approaches Christ and can
see their relationship when he leaves his treasure in "Kryste3
dere blessyng and myn." Once again PE completes a concept
introduced in PA.

The learning of patience by man is obviously a cen-
tral concept to both PA and PE. As has been seen, it is a
learning experience that develops gradually throughout each
poem and from PA to PE. This idea of gradual enlightenment
is itself important to the totality of PA/PE. Perception,
for both Jonah and the Dreamer, comes in a gradual unfolding,
through the direct teaching of God or the Pearl Maiden. This
unfolding of understanding that develops from PA to PE offers
a strong argument for the unity of the two poems. Jonah is
told what God is, but the effect upon him of his new know-
ledge is not visible. The end of his growth can only be seen
in the Dreamer, whose realization of God's true nature and
his own leads him to acceptance.

> Lorde, mad hit arn þat agayn þe stryuen,
> Oþer proferen þe oȝt agayn þy paye.
>
> To pay þe Prince oþer sete saȝte
> Hit is ful eþe to þe god Krystyin;
> For I haf founden hym, boþe day and naȝte,
> A God, a Lorde, a frende ful fyin.
>   PE 1199-1204.

The narrator of PA, however, is the completed Dreamer, the

man who already knows the significance of the concepts pre-

sented in PA/PE. Thus, the end of PE only returns to the be-

ginning of PA. The Dreamer's state lays bare the foreshadow-

ing of PA,

> For-þy when pouerte me enpreceȝ & payneȝ in-noȝe,
> Ful softly wyth suffraunce saȝttel me bihoueȝ,
>   PA 528-531.

The development of PE from PA, while simultaneously the major

ideas remain the same in both poems, is a strongly typologi-

cal sort of relationship. Here PE does not extend and vary

PA as SG does CL, but completes it, fulfills its predictions

and lessons on a new and deeper plane, again as the New Testa-

ment fulfills and brings new significance to the Old Testament,

completing the Old Testament's purpose.

This circularity is important to the unification of

the poem; it forms a major motif of PA/PE. Temporally also

PA/PE denies linear progression. The poem stands "sub specie

aeternitatis." In neither PA nor PE is there a sense of time

passing. The Dreamer's whole vision is measured by the space

of a dream. Jonah's experience, we are told, takes several

days, but only the effect of that time is dwelt upon. Four

and a half quatrains suffice for Jonah's three-day journey

through Nineveh and his preaching there; nine and a half are

necessary to describe the city's fear and repentance. The

time that PA/PE deals with is on the eternal scale, not some-

thing that moves, but something that encloses, that exists.

We deal not with man's time, but with God's. "The man gov-

erned by the circle of time cannot enter the circle of

eternity."[40]

Time in PA/PE is time to be redeemed, time for the

harvest of spiritual fruits. This, after all, is what Jonah

is pressed to accomplish with his time. PE takes plaee at

the harvest season, the time of fulfillment, when there is

neither growth nor decay, but only gathering in--an eternal

moment. This harvest image blends mortality and the gather-

ing of God's harvest into blessedness.[41] Life and death are

soon transposed from physical to spiritual terms; the grain

of wheat does not so much restore itself in a temporal cycle

as it is translated into another state. PE opens with ac-

ceptance of the transformation of the earthly cycle into the

eternal. The significance of the grain of wheat is wholly

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[40]Maren-Sofie Røstvig, "Numerical Composition in
Pearl: A Theory," Eng. Studies, 48 (1967), 329.

[41]Kean, p. 82.

spiritual, relating both to man's life after death and to the kingdom of heaven. The same emphasis on resurrection is implicit in Jonah as type of Christ. Moreover, even to Jonah's own limited understanding, life and death are twin states. He conceives of death not as an end to life, but as an escape from life's pressures, simply a place where the demands of patience and loss need not be met,

>   Bot now I se þou art sette my solace to reue.
>   Why ne dytteȝ þou me to diȝe? I dure to longe.'
>   PA 487-488.

The development of the idea of the "circle of eternity" and the circular progression of the characters of the three major figures of these poems illustrate the symbol that PA/PE evokes in its entirety. This is a poem of the circle, as CL/SG is of the spiral. The circle is traditionally an image of eternity and of stability. These symbols will be of help in defining stylistic characteristics of both CL/SG and PA/PE, for they govern all the areas of these poems. The circle of PA/PE is a graphic statement of the way PE completes PA, yet returns to it for inspiration, for the initial exposition of important themes.

There is, then, a coherent world present in PA/PE, a direction and purpose that both share. The number of areas in which these poems are closely similar, the way PA finds its completion in PE, the complex argument shared by both, support the contentions that PA and PE belong together. It seems unlikely that so fine a correspondence in so many parts of PA/PE

or CL/SG would occur by chance, or that the working out of

the patterns which I have called spiral and circle would come

into being without the conscious effort and plan of the poet.

CHAPTER III

MATTERS OF STYLE AND TECHNIQUE

It will be necessary to investigate the stylistic and
technical aspects of CL, SG, PA, and PE to corroborate the
postulated unity of CL/SG and PA/PE. An examination of the
style, then, will be applied to show how the poet builds dis-
crete units of CL/SG and PA/PE stylistically. These stylist-
ic units will be shown to be perfectly suited for expression
of the world-views already established for both poems, thus
verifying the conclusions of the preceding chapter. As will
be seen, the types of stylistic development are in accord with
the nature of these poems, CL and SG stressing narrative tech-
niques; PA and PE, expository. In defining the technical as-
pects of these poems, also, the symbols of spiral and circle
will once again become useful--and valid. The now familiar
development from poem to poem can be followed in the context
of style too, as SG dramatizes the essence of CL's technique
and PE makes more subtle the rigorous structuring of PA.

It should be noted, in judging the results of this
investigation, that there are no violent contrasts of tech-
nique to be found between CL/SG and PA/PE. This is to be

expected in the work of a single poet. But there are defin-
ite indications that the poet had the intention of using his
personal technique in the creation of two separate stylistic
effects for two separate purposes. The same technical compo-
nents are used differently in CL/SG and PA/PE to express the
different types of experience found in each. That two sep-
arate tendencies can be clearly distinguished, rather than
four or one, seems to be to be indicative of the essential
unity of PA/PE and CL/SG.

It is to the narrative contexts in CL and SG that we
look first to find the distinguishing stylistic qualities of
these poems. CL and SG share a predominantly narrative
style, capable of expressing the world of action we have
established in both poems.

Lines 125-137 show CL's narrative style at its best.

> Now immyddez þe mete þe mayster hym biþoȝt,
> Þat he wolde se þe semble þat samned was þere,
> And rehayte rekenly þe riche and þe poveren,
> And cherisch hem alle wyth his cher, and chaufen
>   her joye.
> Þen he bowez fro his bour into þe brode halle,
> And to þe best on þe bench, and bede hym be myry,
> Solased hem wyth semblaunt and syled fyrre,
> Tron fro table to table and talkede ay myrþe.
>   Bot as he ferked over þe flor, he fande wyth
>   his yȝe -
> Hit watz not for a halyday honestly arayed -
> A þral þryȝt in þe þrong unþryvandely cloþed,
> No no festival frok, bot fyled with werkkez;
> Þe gome watz ungarnyst wyth god men to dele.

We sense in this passage a rapid, free movement, a directional
building of effect. This effect is primarily accomplished by

means of two series of phrases, beginning at lines 125 and

129. The device of building series is frequently used in CL

in connection with forward movement, from line to line and

with an impulse toward expansion. Here we see series of verbs

that stress the action as they advance it. The similarity in-

herent in these series, since all the elements in them must

be equivalent, recalls the image of the spiral, with its

thrust within a series of similar curves. The effect of

these series, too, is one of exuberance, copiousness.

At line 134 appears still another characteristic that

will be found to be typical of CL. This line is an interpo-

lation into the sentence in which it stands, a surprise. This

line contributes, too, to suspense, since its subject is not

explained until the following lines. The syntax of these

lines loses the clarity of those preceding. Impressions are

piled up, but with a sense of disorder. The result is not

exuberance, but an overwhelming variety.

Yet another surprise is established in these last

lines in the form of a contrast between the first eight lines

and the last five. There is a tension here between the ap-

parent order of the beginning and the denial of order at the

end. Surprise, found to be emblematic of CL/SG's world, is

an integral part of the narrative style. The expectation of

symmetrical order aroused by the two similar verb series,

with their introductory "now" and "þen" that serve to advance

the linear movement, is thwarted by the last five lines.

There is a certain balance here, but it is definitely asym-

metrical--the spiral again.

The same type of construction on a smaller scale ap-

pears in lines 499-504.

> Þen Godez glam to hem glod þat gladed hem alle,
> Bede hem drawe to þe dor, delyver hem he wolde,
> Þen went þay to þe wykket, hit walt upon sone,
> Boþe þe burne and his barnez bowed þeroute,
> Her wyvez walkez hem wyth, and þe wylde after,
> Þroly þrublande in þronge, þrowen ful þykke.

Once again there are two series, the first of verb phrases, the

second of clauses. The will to expansion is evident in the

extension of the second series, adding compound elements and

finishing with unexpected participial phrases.

The style of CL finds its echo in SG. Typical of nar-

rative technique in the latter poem are lines 2160-2184,

> Thenne gyrdeȝ he to Gryngolet, and gedereȝ þe
>   rake,
> Schowueȝ in bi a schore at a schaȝe syde,
> Rideȝ þurȝ þe roȝe bonk ryȝt to þe dale;
> And þenne he wayted hym aboute, and wylde hit
>   hym þoȝt,
> And seȝe no syngne of resette bisydeȝ nowhere,
> Bot hyȝe bonkkeȝ and brent vpon boþe halue,
> And ruȝe knokled knarreȝ with knorned stoneȝ;
> Þe skweȝ of þe scowtes skayned hym þoȝt.
> Þenne he houed, and wythhylde his hors at þat
>   tyde,
> And ofte chaunged his cher þe chapel to seche:
> He seȝ non suche in no syde, and selly hym þoȝt
> Sone, a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit were;
> A balȝ berȝ bi a bonke þe brymme bysyde,
> Bi a forȝ of a flode þat ferked þare;
> Þe borne blubred þerinne as hit boyled hade.
> Þe knyȝt kacheȝ his caple, and come to þe lawe,
> Liȝteȝ doun luflyly, and at a lynde tacheȝ
> Þe rayne and his riche with a roȝe braunche.

þenne he boȝeȝ to þe berȝe, aboute hit he walkeȝ,
Debatande with hymself quat hit be myȝt.
Hit hade a hole on þe ende and on ayþer syde,
And ouergrowen with gresse in glodes aywhere,
And al watȝ holȝ inwith, nobot an olde caue,
Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he couþe hit noȝt
    deme
        with spelle.

Once again series are primary to the passage, mainly verb

phrases as in CL, here introduced by "þenne." The same sense

of continuing movement, too, is generated here as in CL. The

series once again establish a pattern that will be broken, an

imperfect symmetry that gives place to variety and a feeling

that the dynamic thrust of the narrative line cannot be held

by a rigid order. The first such break in the pattern of

series occurs at line 2170 where are piled up phrases of de-

scriptive detail--appositives and prepositional phrases.

The pattern of the original series is resumed and once again

the expectation of its continuance is broken. The "þenne"

of line 2178 is misleading, for no series follows. Once

again we find a piling up of description. Though not as dis-

ordered as the ending of CL 125-137, these descriptive lines

offer the same effect of variety, following a passage with a

recognizable order.

There seems to be a certain similarity between the

two sections of the poem that set up a balance to be upset

with elaboration of detail. The correspondence is not actual,

however, for a second order of series parallel to those in

lines 2160-2171 is never established; the first order of series

is only recalled briefly. This passage, in effect, contains
a double surprise. The reader's expectations are raised,
defeated, unexpectedly raised again, and once more defeated.
The crowning irony of the technique is that the passage falls
into two vaguely similar halves; it is both symmetrical and
not-symmetrical, like the spiral. It is obvious how a rela-
tively simple technique in CL has here been used with con-
siderable sophistication, made much more dramatic.

The same type of technical qualities that are found
in narrative in CL and SG exists also in other environments.
A didactic passage from CL shows a stylistic approach simi-
lar to that of the narrative lines just examined.

> Clannesse who so kyndly cowþe commende,
> And rekken up alle þe resounz þat ho by riȝt askez,
> Fayre formez myȝt he fynde in forþering his speche,
> And in þe contrare, kark and combraunce huge.
> For wonder wroth is þe Wyȝ þat wroȝt alle þinges
> Wyth þe freke þat in fylþe folȝes hym after -
> As renkez of relygioun þat reden and syngen,
> And aprochen to hys presens, and prestez arn called.
> They teen unto his temmple and temen to hymselven,
> Reken wyth reverence þay rechen his auter,
> Þay hondel þer his aune body and usen hit boþe:
> If þay in clannes be clos, þay cleche gret mede;
> Bot if þay conterfete crafte, and cortaysye wont,
> As be honest utwyth, and inwith alle fylþez,
> þen ar þay synful hemself, and sulped altogeder,
> Loþe God and his gere, and hym to greme cachen.
> He is so clene in his corte, þe Kyng þat al weldez,
> And honeste in his housholde and hagherlych served,
> With angelez enorled in alle þat is clene,
> Boþe wythinne and wythouten, in wedez ful bryȝt,
> Nif he nere scoymus and skyg and non scaþe lovied,
> Hit were a mervayl to much, hit moȝt not falle.
>   CL 1-22

Within these lines there are numerous approaches to parallel
constructions, but none of them manage actually to impose an

order on the passage. The very number and variety of these
temporary parallels militates against their effectiveness and
recalls that ever-present urge in the CL/SG world toward ex-
pansion, inclusion. The variety of these lines is obvious.
Among these groups of similarly constructed phrases and
clauses appear the typical series, of verb phrases, for exam-
ple, at line 7 and adjective phrases at line 17. There are
also occasional "visual" parallels, where like clauses or
phrases appear at the same place in succeeding lines, though
their places in syntactical order do not correspond. In
lines 5, 6, and 7, relative clauses introduced by "þat" end
the lines, but these lines are not balanced in any other way.
One effect of this "fluid" sort of parallelism that does not
impose order on a significant number of lines is to emphasize
the continual movement through the passage. Once again we have
recourse to the spiral, in which the linear movement is not
denied by temporary balance. Expository content here is sub-
jected to the rapid movement of narrative.

Contrast is also an inherent part of CL's style as it
appears in this passage. Lines 12-16 are typical. They are
made up of two complex sentences, each consisting of an "if"
clause and its conclusion; the connection between the two is
evident since they are linked with the conjunction "bot."
The two sentences, then, are basically equivalent in form and
of equal importance as parts of a larger compound sentence.

It would appear that a balance has been established between these sentences. The balance, however, is far from symmetrical, for the economy and brevity of line 12 is opposed to the copiousness of the next three lines with their large number of compound phrases. The double form of line 12, a clause in each half-line, is elaborated in the almost ostentatious doubling of phrases in the contrasting sentence. The second sentence exhibits also the visual similarity spoken of before; each second half-line is a phrase introduced by "and."

The idea of two contrasting conditions is well expressed in these lines, although not all of the examples of the use of contrast are so complex. The poet exhibits his working principle of asymmetrical balance once again. He has combined syntactically similar constructions in such a way as to magnify by their very similarity the contrast in the ways they are put together. This technique is very close to that of reversal of expectations already discussed; in both techniques the poet exploits similarities of construction by making them subordinate to a design of dissimilarity, of variety. Such a stylistic bias is appropriate to CL/SG, in which the variation of universal patterns is an important part of the poem's message. CL has now demonstrated a number of particular stylistic qualities, all of which accord with the nature of its subject matter and support the selection of the spiral as symbol for the poem's method of development. We have seen that a rapid linear movement is

characteristic of CL, contributed to most notably by the use
of series of clauses and phrases and by the matching in adja-
cent lines of similar constructions which give way before
other types of similarly patterned forms. Variety is a key-
note of CL. Typically in CL, superficial balance is seen to
be denied by this linear movement or by surprise and/or con-
trast; this is the nature of the spiral also. Surprise in
CL has been illustrated primarily by the frequent use of ele-
ments without obvious relation to their surroundings and by
the breaking of a pattern of expectation. Symmetrical balance
is characteristically seen to be negated in CL by the develop-
ment of contrast within the balance and expanding beyond it.

SG has so far been shown to make use of several of
these identical techniques and to develop their concomitant
effects. The use of series and the breaking of patterns of
symmetry for purposes of surprise are characteristic of SG as
well as CL. We have also noted in SG the piling up of detail,
the variety evident in CL. The use of contrast as it has
been shown in CL as well as the establishment of brief pat-
terns of similarity in close connection with one another,
again as in CL, are also part of the style of SG. These as-
pects of SG are well illustrated by lines 2506-2518.

        'þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere in my nek,
        þis is þe laþe and þe losse þat I laȝt haue,
        Of couardise and couetyse þat I haf caȝt þare;
        þis is þe token of vntrawþe þat I am tan inne,
        And I mot nedeȝ hit were wyle I may last;
        For non may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit,
        For þer hit oneȝ is tachched twynne wil hit neuer.'

Þe kyng comfortez þe knyȝt, and alle þe court als
Laȝen loude þerat, and luflyly acorden
Þat lordes and ladis þat longed to þe Table,
Vche burne of þe broþerhede, a bauderyk schulde haue,
A bende abelef hym aboute of a bryȝt grene,
And þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.

In this passage the temporary patterns of symmetry
occur in the first lines. The first two patterns overlap:
the complex sentences beginning "þis is" and the relative
clauses introduced by "þat." In lines 2511 and 2512 an ini-
tial "for" offers a more spurious similarity. In line 2513,
however, the similar clauses and phrases disappear. In their
place is found the different order of contrast. The com-
pound sentence beginning in this line offers the basic balanc-
ed structure to support the contrast; the component clauses,
joined by a coordinate structure, are theoretically equiva-
lent. But, as in CL, the brevity of the first clause con-
trasts with the length and repetition of the second, which
contains, as an element of its expansive variety, two apposi-
tives. Donald R. Howard avers that this parallelism and con-
trast in SG takes a large part in establishing the tone of the
poem, a tone he identifies as gamelike and ironic.[1] It must
be added, however, that it is their juxtaposition in the poem
and the fact that the parallelism is not perfect that deter-
mine this effect. PA and PE, as will be shown, also contain

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[1]Donald R. Howard, "Structure and Symmetry in Sir
Gawain," Spec., 39 (1964), rpt. in Critical Studies of Sir
Gawain and the Green Knight.

parallelism, even contrast, but do not produce such a tone. It is a matter of the way in which these qualities are combined.

The aspects of style pointed out as common to both CL and SG are prevalent throughout both poems. They appear in every environment and help to create the tone of these two poems. To illustrate the ubiquity of these stylistic traits in CL and SG, I have chosen two final examples from descriptive contexts.

In CL, perhaps the most striking descriptive passage is that dealing with the Dead Sea (lines 1016-1048). Its purpose seems to be purely an expression of the poet's exuberance and copiousness in this poem. The most obvious characteristic of these lines is the continual creation of discrete patterns of similarity, as in lines 1025-1026.

> For lay þeron a lump of led, and hit on loft fletez,
> And folde þeron a lyȝt fyþer, and hit to founs synkkez;

But, as usual, these similarities do not contribute to any dominant symmetry. Variety is inherent in such a mass of different patterns. Series appear, but have been subordinated to this paralleling technique. One such series, however, appears at the beginning of the passage, generally parallel in form itself.

> þat ay is drovy and dym, and ded in hit kynde,
> Blo, blubrande, and blak, unblyþe to neȝe,
> CL 1016-1017.

The lines which are similar in some way are continually
interspersed with one or two lines that have no formal con-
nection to their surroundings, that is, no patterned like-
ness to them. These lines serve as contrast, breaking the
expectations of symmetrical form. Occasionally, too, by
way of surprise, a line will appear that recalls an earlier
pattern. This is the case of the "for" clause beginning
line 1025.

> Forþy þe derk Dede See hit is demed evermore,
> For hit dedez of deþe duren þere ʒet;
> For hit is brod and boþemlez, and bitter as þe
>   galle,
> And noʒt may lenge in þat lake þat any lyf berez,
> And alle þe costez of kynde hit combrez uch one.
> For lay þeron a lump of led, and hit on loft fletez,
>   CL 1020-1025.

We may say, then, that these traits of style examined in CL
are not accidental but are an integral part of its style,
appearing in every context and dominating the poet's techni-
que in this poem.

In SG, too, the descriptive environments show the
same techniques that are under discussion. Lines 203-220
are representative.

> Wheþer hade he no helme ne hawbergh nauþer,
> Ne no pysan ne no plate þat pented to armes,
> Ne no schafte ne no schelde to schwue ne to smyte,
> Bot in his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe,
> þat is grattest in grene when greueʒ ar bare,
> And an ax in his oþer, a hoge and vnmete,
> A spetos sparþe to expoun in spelle, quoso myʒt.
> þe hede of an elnʒerde þe large lenkþe hade,
> þe grayn al of grene stele and of golde hewen,
> þe bit burnyst bryʒt, wyth a brode egge
> As wel schapen to schere as scharp rasores.

> Þe stele of a stif staf þe sturne hit bi grypte,
> Þat watȝ wounden wyth yrn to þe wandez ende,
> And al begrauen with grene in gracios werkes;
> A lace lapped aboute, þat louked at þe hede,
> And so after þe halme halched ful ofte,
> Wyth tryed tasseleȝ þerto tacched innoghe
> On botounȝ of þe bryȝt grene brayden ful ryche.

In this passage, as in the lines from CL, the most obvious quality is the repeated grouping of similarly constructed lines. Lines 204-205 and 210-212 are so grouped. Also, in lines 206-209, appears an example of contrasting style within similar form. The similarity lies in the compound object and adverbial participial phrase. The contrast is evident in the modifiers of the two objects. The first is modified by a relative clause of a complex form; the second by a compound adjective and an appositive phrase. As is usual in this sort of construction, the second element of the original balance tends to be more expansive, less compact than the first.

In line 214 appears a sentence that recalls the form of lines 210, 211, and 212; it follows an interpolated "as" adjective phrase which breaks the symmetrical arrangement of these lines. But line 214 also introduces a number of lines that do not contain similarities of arrangement of structure, that contrast with the patterns of the preceding lines. The final four lines contain various kinds of phrases piled up in a way noted before.

Thus, SG possesses, as uniformly as CL, those stylistic traits that have been demonstrated to be a vital part of

each poem. The two poems share these qualities as they share
their world-views, another reason to suppose that they are
indeed united. As has been stated, the qualities that CL and
SG share express the nature of the world of CL/SG and of the
symbol embodying that nature; form and content complement one
another.

There arises now the question whether these qualities
are unique to CL and SG and not simply common property of
alliterative verse or of the poetic techniques of the age.
Certainly such techniques as contrast and parallelism are
widely used. The answer to this question, I believe, lies
in the difference of technique between CL/SG and PA/PE. The
same elements, similarity and parallelism, for example, occur
in PA/PE as in CL/SG, but they are used in the former in a
different way. They form a close counterpart to the world
of PA/PE with their new application, assuming qualities of
the circle rather than the spiral. Benson's statement that
the meaning of sentences in SG is often a matter of position
rather than explicit statement[2] would seem to be borne out
for the other poems also.

The identifying characteristics of the style of PA
and PE can be clearly illustrated by the beginning of PA.

PACIENCE is a poynt, þaȝ hit displese ofte:
When heuy herttes ben hurt wyth heþyng oþer elles,

---

[2]Benson, p. 154.

Suffraunce may aswagen hem & þe swelme leþe,
For ho quelles vche a qued & quenches malyce.

For quo-so suffer cowþe syt, sele wolde folȝe;
& quo for þro may noȝt þole, þe þikker he sufferes:
Þen is better to abyde þe bur vmbe-stoundes,
Þen ay þrow forth my þro, þaȝ me þynk ylle.
                                              PA 1-8.

The parallel structures in these eight lines appear as doub-

lets, that is, there are no more than two similar construc-

tions linked at once. This is typical of PA. There are not

the prominent long series in this poem that there are in CL

or SG. Thus, the similarity creates a more stable feeling;

the balance in PA is primarily symmetrical. The two clauses

of line 5 and line 6 are equivalent; both are compact, brief,

and carefully balanced. This compactness and the lack of

the expansive tendencies found in CL/SG contribute to a

straightforward, direct atmosphere in PA and aid a logical

order of development.

A second characteristic of PA found in these lines

is enclosure. There is a certain formal correspondence be-

tween the first two and the last two lines that echoes the

completion of the circle symbol. The placement of the first

two lines is reversed in the last two, so that the enclosure

is balanced correctly. The "when" clause, occupying a whole

line, is equivalent to the "þen" clause of line 7, also a

complete line. Lines 1 and 8 both consist of two clauses,

the second being a "þaȝ" clause. Enclosure is an important

part of both PA and PE, for the space in these poems is

enclosed, limited, always well-defined. Jonah is almost con-
stantly to be found in an enclosed space--the ship's hold,
the whale's belly, the woodbine arbor. The Dreamer, too,
visits a carefully limited (and ordered) world. His body is
confined to the one spot in a garden; his movement in the
vision is enclosed by the river. New Jerusalem, too, is a
place with walls, that encloses the elect. Thus, there is
established a definite link between idea and structure in the
formally enclosed balance of PA. Such enclosure emphasizes
stability, a quality inherent in the God-centered, interior
world of PA/PE and also an integral quality of the circle.

The two "þen's" of the last two lines illustrate yet
another trait in PA, the emphasis on connectives which draws
attention to the relationships between phrases and clauses.
This same emphasis on order will be found in PE. Here it is
accomplished by word play, the use of homonymous conjunctions,
adverbs, and/or prepositions in close proximity. Constance
Hieatt has stated that in PE the poet characteristically
leaves no loose ends. Any element of the poem may serve two
purposes and connect various aspects of the work.[3] We see
that this is true in PA also, a link between the styles of
these two poems.

The qualities of PA reappear in PE, though often the

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[3]Constance Hieatt, "Pearl and the Dream-vision
Tradition," SN, (1967), 144.

balance in PE is subtler, less rigid than that in PA. The
rigorousness of PA, however, is transformed into a more
flexible order, a framework that does not confine, but de-
fines the content. In PE, for example, the rhyme scheme and
the refrain words at the beginning and end of the stanzas
help to create a sense of balance and of enclosure. Thus,
PE does not have to depend entirely upon syntactic construc-
tion for these qualities as PA does. Possibly the recur-
rence of homonymous words in PA is an approximation of the
rhyme and refrain of PE.

The order, stability, and symmetrical balance of PA
are all part of PE,

> Deme Dry3tyn, euer hym adyte,
> Of þe way a fote ne wyl he wryþe.
> Þy mende3 mounte3 not a myte,
> Þa3 þou for sor3e be neuer blyþe.
> Stynt of þy strot and fyne to flyte,
> And sech hys blyþe ful swefte and swyþe.
> Þy prayer may hys pyte byte,
> Þat mercy schal hyr crafte3 kyþe.
> Hys comforte may þy langour lyþe
> And þy lure3 of ly3tly fleme;
> For, marre oþer madde, morne and myþe,
> Al lys in hym to dy3t and deme.
>   PE 349-360.

The form of the first four lines of this passage is repeated
in the second four, though the parallelism is not as complete
as that found in PA. There is not enough variation, however,
to destroy the symmetry of these lines. Lines 349 and 353
contain two imperatives, line 353 merely adding a conjunction.
The second lines of each four-line section do not correspond,

but within lines 353 and 354 is formed a balanced structure with compound imperatives at the head of the lines and a further compound element in both lines. The repetition of "and" recalls the repetition of conjunctions in PA. Lines 351 and 355 are statements of the same pattern, with identical beginning words. The last lines of these four-line groups are subordinate clauses whose conjunctions head the lines. In these lines we find balance and symmetry, though, again, not as rigid as that in PA, but neither is the New Testament world of PE as stern as the Old Testament world of PA.

In these lines and in the final four, the parallel forms are grouped in twos, just as they are in PA. Like PA, PE is restrained, controlled. This trait suits the expression of a world in which men are controlled and restrained by God and obedience to rule is inculcated. While the final four lines do not evidence the closely parallel structure of the first eight, they too contain groups of double forms. The first two lines of this section comprise a compound sentence whose structure recalls, though it does not imitate, that of lines 353 and 354. Thus, this group of lines is linked to the other groups. The final two lines also recall the form of lines 353 and 354, with the compound words at the end of the lines. It seems that the principles of PA are applied more subtly in PE, as these last four lines break into two parts of a set of two-fold constructions, which in their turn are

a doubling of the form of the first line. In this stanza, as
in others, PE displays a sonnet-like form, with a division
into eight and four lines.[4]

In spite of this rather complicated technique, the
argument of PE is embodied in a simple, direct style; short
sentences build into a clear, logical exposition.[5] Once a-
gain the restraint, the conciseness of these poems is evident.
The logical development of the arguments in PA and PE con-
trasts with the technique of SG and CL, which stresses ac-
tion. The directness of the argument, without expansiveness
or tension, makes the surprise technique of CL/SG impossible
for these poems. The nature of PA/PE also demands clarity of
expression, for these are poems that educate the understand-
ing of both the characters and the reader. PA and PE per-
suade, argue and demonstrate; even the vision of New Jerusalem
is a demonstration of the Maiden's arguments. To surprise or
mystify or hold the audience in suspense would defeat the pur-
pose of these poems. The qualities that determine the simi-
larity between PA and PE, then, also set them apart from CL
and SG.

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[4]Gollancz, in his article in the CHEL (p. 360), com-
ments on the relationship between the stanza in PE and the
sonnet. He finds the 101 stanzas of PE reminiscent of a
sonnet sequence.

[5]Kean, p. 196.

We now have a definite stylistic link between PA and PE that conforms to the world within those poems. The formally balanced, logical style discovered in didactic contexts for these poems extends to the narrative environments. The result is an emphasis on the order in experience rather than the adventure; again PA and PE diverge from CL and SG. The narrative environments in PA show a less perfect symmetry than the didactic, but they retain formal balance and enclosure.

> Þen hurled on a hepe þe helme & þe sterne;
> Furst to-murte mony rop & þe mast after;
> Þe sayl swayed on þe see; þenne suppe bihoued
> Þe coge of þe colde water; & þenne þe cry ryses.
>   PA 137-152.

The movement of these lines is effectually stabilized by their form. Once again we see the parallel structures in groups of two. The first two lines both begin with an adverb and both contain a compound noun at the end of the line. The next two lines are formally even more close. The clauses introduced by "þenne" in the last two lines recall the initial clause and impose circularity upon these four lines.

This desire for symmetrical order uniformly appears as part of PA.

> Fyrst þay prayen to þe Prynce þat prophetes seruen,
> Þat he get hem þe grace to greuen hym neuer,
> Þat þay in baleleȝ blod þer blenden her handeȝ,
> Þaȝ þat haþel wer his þat þay here quelled.
>
> Tyd by top & bi to þay token hym synne,
> In-to þat lodlych loȝe þay luche hym sone:
> He watz no tytter out-tulde þat tempest ne sessed;
> Þe se saȝtled þer-wyth, as sone as ho moȝt.
>   PA 225-232.

The first quatrain not only is organized in the familiar double construction, but these constructions are all based upon the same word. "Pat" appears five times with four different meanings, an excellent example of PA's use of homonymous connectives and of the emphasis this technique places upon the connections between structures and ideas. The balance in these first four lines is perfect. The placement of the two relative pronouns and the two conjunctions correspond exactly. The subordinate conjunctions and the prepositions beginning lines 228 and 229 are also linked both by position and by sound. The techniques used to achieve balance draw the attention away from content to form, to the relationship of events and ideas.

The second quatrain shows the two-line similarity so common in PA and PE. Even lines which have no identical constructions are placed so that the position of main and subordinate clauses corresponds. The lines, then, are organized into coherent units based on a symmetrical balance. The consistent enclosure of lines into these small groups echoes the enclosure of the poem's world within the circle of eternity.

Ideas and events are held in a stable framework; they exist not in relation to one another but to overriding form. This is consistent with the world of PA/PE in which all ideas and actions are subject to the order to God and the stability of a timeless universe. Narrative development loses its

meaning when events are surveyed from God's viewpoint; all events become part of the pattern of His purpose.

Action and free line to line movement undergo this same subjection to order and balance in PE. There is very little pure narrative in PE, but what does exist is strictly enclosed in the typical order of PA and PE, as it has been developed so far.

> Delyt me drof in yȝe and ere,
> My maneȝ mynde to maddyng malte;
> Quen I seȝ my frely, I wolde be þere,
> Byȝonde þe water þaȝ ho were walte.
> I þoȝt þat noþyng myȝt me dere
> To fech me bur and take me halte,
> And to start in þe strem schulde non me stere,
> To swymme þe remnaunt, þaȝ I þer swalte.
> Bot of þat munt I watȝ bitalt;
> When I schulde start in þe strem astraye,
> Out of þat caste I watȝ bycalt:
> Hit watȝ not at my Prynceȝ paye.
>   PE 1153-1164.

Though the balance in PE does not strike the eye so obviously as that in PA, its effect upon the poem is pervasive. The clauses and phrases of the first and last two lines enclose this passage with the symmetry of a mirror image. Within these lines are two corresponding "þaȝ" clauses and two sets of compound infinitives, which overlap; "to fech" serves as part of each compound. We have found this play with double constructions before in PE. Lines 1163 and 1161 show an exactly parallel form. These twelve lines illustrate the techniques so far established as typical of PA and PE, but they are "hidden." The movement of the passage appears to have a freedom from restraint, which is really as illusory

as the Dreamer's belief that he can cross the river. Once
more, the order of PA takes on a subtler application in PE.

The passages that have been examined reveal that PA
and PE share the traits of order, symmetry, directness, clar-
ity, and enclosure as major attributes of their style. The
two poems also are seen to achieve these stylistic object-
ives with the same methods, though there is an increased
subtlety in PE's use of their mutual techniques. These sty-
listic correspondences between PA and PE aid in the creation
of an interior realm of mental and spiritual experience, dir-
ected and enfolded by the mercy of God, that realm with which
PA and PE are both occupied. The characteristics shared by
these poems also produce an effect very different from the
one we have found in SG and CL. PA and PE are constructed
upon principles of economy rather than expansiveness, simi-
larity rather than contrast, symmetry rather than asymmetry.
The same differences also exist between the nature of the
circle and the spiral. It is thus possible for the poet to
vary his style, even within the limits of a traditional form
like alliterative verse, to achieve two separate effects.

PA and PE share one other rather curious trait, that
does not have an equivalent in CL/SG. In all passages of PA
and PE except the descriptive, the poet employs the style
just examined, but in this context he alters his technique
somewhat. In the description of Jonah's woodbine, for

example, can be found the skeleton of the usual technique,

the familiar double constructions, equivalent forms, bal-

ance, but the pronounced parallelism, the dependence upon

connectives have vanished.

> For hit watȝ brod at þe boþem, boȝted onlofte,
> Happed vpon ayþer half, a hous as hit were,
> A nos on þe norþ syde, & nowhere non elleȝ,
> Bot al schet in a schaȝe þat schaded ful cole.
>
> Þe gome glyȝt on þe grene graciouse leues,
> Þat euer wayued a wynde so wyþe & so cole;
> Þe schyre sunne hit vmbe-schon, þaȝ no schafte myȝt,
> Þe mountaunce of a lyttel mote, vpon þat man schyne;
>   PA 449-456.

The clearest principle of order for this passage is

found in the abundance of double constructions. The second

quatrain is, in its entirety, one such construction. It con-

sists of two main clauses, each with a subordinate clause;

their forms echo one another but are not at all parallel.

The first quatrain shows a number of double forms reflect-

ing one another. All four lines break into two sections,

but there is no similarity between them. The halves of line

451 form a balanced chiastic structure, but none of the other

lines are internally similar. There is a vague equivalence

between the introductory conjunctions of lines 449 and 452

and a paired set of participial phrases in the first two

lines. The passage is static, containing no more instability

or movement than either of the other examples taken from PA.

The effects of stability, clarity, quietness still remain;

only the formal order no longer exists.

The same loosening of formal parallelism and exact symmetry occurs in PE.

> The adubbemente of þo downeȝ dere
> Garten my goste al greffe forȝete.
> So frech flauoreȝ of fryteȝ were,
> As fode hit con me fayre refeѣe,
> Fowleȝ þer flowen in fryth in fere,
> Of flaumbande hweȝ , boþe smale & grete;
> Bot sytole-stryng and gyternere
> Her reken myrþe moȝt not retrete;
> For quen þose bryddeȝ her wynge ȝ bete,
> Þay songen wyth a swete asent.
> So gracios gle couþe no mon gete
> As here and se her adubbement.
>   PE 85-96.

PE contains even less of the usual parallelism and similarity

of form than does PA. This is consistent with the manner in

which the poet generally makes the order of PA more rigorous

and more immediately obvious. As in PA, however, description

in this poem falls into small, doubled constructions; the

lines uniformly progress by groups of two. At the end of the

middle two lines of the stanza stand comparable compound

words. Line 89 doubles a prepositional phrase. In both PA

and PE the parts of the structure that correspond become

smaller. In didactic and narrative contexts there are whole

stanzas and double quatrains forged into symmetrical units.

In descriptive passages, however, correspondence of form ap-

pears only in brief doublets of clauses and phrases.

To supply balance in these descriptive contexts with-

out parallelism, PE employs similes or clauses linked by "as"

and "so" in which the effect approximates that of the simile.

In the lines above are two of the "so"--"as" constructions.
The use of these structures fits the environment, for similes
are descriptive figures; they supply order to a line group in
the oblique way typical of PE.

PE, like PA, retains in this context the shortness of
the structural components, the directness, and the stability
of its other environments. It may well be that, in these
poems, the clarity, the lack of crowding that appears in
CL/SG, and the emphasis on the development of the poet's ar-
gument, all militate against abundant parallelism and strict
order in descriptions. An ornate, highly formal description
would detract from the simplicity of the poem and spoil the
tone. Certainly, too much attention drawn to the ornamental
descriptions would detract from the importance of the argu-
ment and subordinate a major concern of the poem to a minor.

The correspondence of stylistic and technical aspects
now determined between PA and PE and between CL and SG veri-
fies the unity of each set of two poems discovered in their
world-views. The qualities of style characteristic of CL/SG
and PA/PE, moreover, reflect the nature of their deepest
concerns and major symbols.

CHAPTER IV

AN INVESTIGATION OF CONJUNCTIONS

It can be demonstrated, finally, that lexical evidence also verifies the unity of CL/SG and of PA/PE. I have chosen the poet's choice of conjunctions in the poems as a good indication of his thought patterns and stylistic subtlety. Conjunctions will not generally be involved in patterns of alliteration, and since most conjunctions are one-syllable words, they can easily be substituted for one another according to the poet's demands without influencing the metric system of the poem. Thus, by choosing conjunctions to study, I have freed the evidence from undue dependence upon conventions and exigencies of the verse forms. The choice of conjunctions, too, is not a trait likely to be copied by imitators of a particular author's style.

Certain types of conjunctions are predominant in PA and PE, and other types in CL and SG. The types that appear in each set of poems are consistent with the qualities of each, as they have been determined in the preceding chapters. The statistical evidence also reflects the typological relationship between the two poems of each set. This complicates the conclusions drawn in this chapter. On this account, it should be remembered that determination of the predominance

of a conjunction in either PA/PE or CL/SG will most often be
based on a proportional comparison. Thus, I will say that
PA/PE has more of conjunction x than CL/SG because there is
a higher percentage of x's in PA than in CL and in PE than
in SG.

For all the poems, the percentages appearing in the
following table are quite similar. This is only to be ex-
pected. Just as in the discussion of style and technique,
in this examination of conjunctions we find indications that
we are dealing with the work of a single poet. The word
choices that he habitually makes appear in all four poems.
Once again the significance of the evidence presented lies
in the tendencies toward the use of particular types of con-
junctions in either PA/PE or CL/SG, in the establishment of
a consistent pattern of conjunction selection, and its cor-
relation with the theory presented in the preceding chapters.
That such tendencies and patterns can be discerned seems a
significant comment on the unity of PA/PE and of CL/SG.

The figures in the table indicate the proportion of
one particular conjunction in any of the poems to all con-
junctions in that poem. For example, in PA the word "if"
makes up 5% of the total number of conjunctions that appear
in the poem. The conjunctions that can be found most fre-
quently in all four poems are listed separately. These
connectives with very small percentages of appearance in
terms of the totals for each poem have been combined under

DISTRIBUTION OF CONJUNCTIONS[1]

Conjunctions	PA	PE	CL	SG
and	24%	18%	30%	31%
bot	8%	12%	6%	6%
ne and oþer	1%	1%	.4%	.3%
as	4%	4%	6%	12%
for	12%	10.5%	9%	7%
þaȝ	9%	7%	4%	2.5%
if	5%	5%	6%	5%
ȝet	2%	1%	2%	1%
temporal conjunctions (when, biþat, etc.)	11%	14%	14%	13%
spatial conjunctions (þer, where, etc.)	3%	8%	1%	5%
interrogative conjunctions (how, whyder, etc.)	.4%	4%	3%	1%
þen	1%	1%	.4%	.5%
þat	13.4%	5.1%	13.5%	9.4%
other conjunctions	5%	6%	5%	5%

the heading "other conjunctions." These words do not appear often enough to be significant. Only those conjunctions, too, that link clauses or imperatives have been included in

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[1]Line numbers for the appearances of these conjunctions in each poem are given in the appendix.

the results of the table; those joining words and phrases have been ignored. The selection of connectives has been limited in this way to allow only one context for their use. Thus, the interpretation of the data will not be confused.

In the search for a consistent pattern of use for the conjunctions, it has already been noticed that the typological relationship suggested for the two sets of poems controls the statistical evidence of this chapter. The similar construction of each of the two-poem units emerges in the correlation of the percentages of conjunctions for both units. PA is to PE as CL is to SG. This being the case, the pattern to be expected is one that shows a relatively more frequent use of a conjunction in each poem of a unit as compared to its equivalent poem in the other unit. This pattern is evident, for example, in the percentages given of "bot."

Of the fourteen conjunctions or groups of conjunctions listed, ten clearly show this type of relationship. Of the remaining four types of conjunctions, two show identical percentages; they neither contribute to nor detract from the plausibility of a pattern oriented to a PA/PE, CL/SG dichotomy. Only one type of conjunction, the interrogative, is distributed among the poems in a way that denies this pattern. It is reasonable to assume that since the pattern occurs in a majority of the cases, it is indicative of a unity between PA and PE on the one hand and CL and SG on the other.

The percentages of temporal conjunctions in these
poems are somewhat ambiguous; no real conclusions can be
drawn from them. There seems to be a slight tendency for
these conjunctions to be proportionately more common in CL/SG
than in PA/PE, and this would be consistent with the linear
movement of the former set of poems and with its emphasis on
actions following one another in time. However, the alliter-
ative style characteristically specifies direction of move-
ment and the relation of objects and details from a strict
temporal order.[2] This fact and the deviation from the est-
ablished pattern of incidence make it possible to say only
that these conjunctions have been turned to good in CL/SG.

The evidence offered by the conjunctions in these
poems, then, is valid as another indication of the unity of
PA/PE and CL/SG. The tendencies shown in the connective
words also indicate certain things about the way ideas are
linked in these poems; they help to show the way the predom-
inant conjunctions of each set of poems reflect the stylistic
qualities already discussed in Chapter Three.

Among the conjunctions appear several which show a
greater percentage of use in PA and PE than in CL and SG.
The bias toward these words implies the sort of relationships
between clauses that are best suited to the expression of the
nature of PA/PE. There is a significant tendency for the

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[2]Benson, p. 177.

conjunctions "for" and "þaʒ" to appear more often in PA and
PE than in CL and SG. These two words are especially useful
for drawing distinctions and marking the limits of an idea or
an event. A clause introduced by "þaʒ" generally qualifies
the clause to which it is subordinate, taking into consider-
ation any limiting factor relevant to that main clause. The
primary use of "for" is to indicate cause, with the meaning
"because" or "since." The higher percentage of these two
conjunctions in PA/PE is consistent, then, with the emphasis
in these poems upon understanding and the insistence upon
explanation.

The process of continual revelation, of learning
"more and more," also evident in PA and PE forms a background
for their tendency to attract a higher percentage of the word
"þen," with the meaning "than." A large number of compara-
tive words in PA and PE corresponds to the use of this con-
junction. In fact, the use of comparative constructions is
a minor motif in PA/PE. Such comparative relations between
ideas are not nearly so necessary in CL and SG, in which it
has been pointed out that knowledge comes in a revelatory
instant, and there is no time for weighing the comparative
values of ideas and events.

Specific indication, by conjunctions, of spatial re-
lationships also tend to congregate in PA/PE. With this
type of connective (such words as "þer," "where," etc.)

carefully defined place is emphasized. Object/space be-
comes important, as each thing has its own position in an
ordered network. The strong desire for order in PA/PE is
thus reinforced. The specific delimitation of space, implied
in the use of these conjunctions, also supports the feeling
of enclosure within a definite space; this has been noted as
a characteristic of these poems. Finally, these conjunctions
help create a static effect, as they allow a pause for look-
ing around. There exists, then, a visible connection between
the certain types of conjunctions that occur with more regu-
larity in PA/PE than in CL/SG and the techniques that are
peculiar to the former poem.

In CL/SG there are two connectives, aside from coor-
dinate conjunctions, that are clearly more predominant than
in PA/PE: "þat" and "as." In these poems there are several
ways in which these conjunctions can be used. "Þat" pri-
marily appears following an expression of speech, thought, or
emotion; following an expression containing "so" or "such;"
and with the meaning "so that." There are certain reasons
why such a conjunction would be more common in CL/SG than in
PA/PE. First, in the indirect reporting of a character's
thoughts or words, we see an adjunct of the removed view-
point shared by CL and SG. The reader is not involved dir-
ectly in the character's reactions or emotions. His primary
thoughts and feelings have been subordinated to the act of

thinking or feeling, so that the narrative line of action be-comes of first importance. This narrative style is an important part of CL/SG.

A second reason for this conjunction to be relatively more prevalent in these two poems is that it accords well with the expansive nature of CL/SG, when it is used to introduce a clause following "so" or "such." In this use "þat" achieves an effect of result in terms of superlatives.

> He fonde a foo hym byfore, bot ferly hit were,
> And þat so foule and so felle þat feȝt hym byhode.
> SG 716-717.

The same idea of result is conveyed by the use of "þat" with the meaning "so that." Both of these constructions imply a necessity in terms of action. They do not explain why a thing occurs, with the connotation of "because;" they simply state cause and effect--one event follows another. Here we see CL/SG's bias toward action rather than explanation, as well as a reflection of the rather uncompromising moral attitude of this set of poems. Certain actions bring certain results ineluctably.

> For fele fautez may a freke forfete his blysse,
> Þat he þe Soverayn ne se . . .
> CL 177-178.

"As" also helps to express qualities that explain the higher percentage of this conjunction in CL/SG. This word is often found with the meanings "even as" or "according as." It designates a correlative relationship or indicates the degree or manner in which something is done. The clause

introduced by "as" is generally implemental to the clause
from which it depends, telling how an event is accomplished.
The correlative occurrences recall the trait of variation
within similar form. The implemental function relates to
the consistent desire for expansion, the piling up of detail
that CL and SG evidence.

The other relatively frequent appearances of "as" in-
clude a temporal use, which contributes to the dramatic move-
ment of the narrative by allowing the expression of two or
more concurrent actions; a use with the meaning "as if,"
which is not found at all in PA/PE; and as part of several
formulaic expressions. These latter are part of the stock of
traditional alliterative technique and, although they con-
tribute to the effect of interpolation in CL/SG, are not indi-
cative of the poet's personal technique. Because their pre-
valence in one or the other of the postulated units, CL/SG
or PA/PE, corresponds to the characteristic style of those
poems, all of the conjunctions that have been discussed seem
to have been chosen by the poet to conform to the nature of
the set of poems in which they appear with most regularity.
Even should these tendencies evidence the poet's unconscious
rather than conscious choice, they still illustrate a basic
connection between CL and SG, PA and PE.

The most frequently used conjunctions in all four
poems are coordinate. This is not unusual, for this type
of conjunction expresses the most basic and uncomplicated

relationships between clauses. PA and PE, however, show more frequent use of the conjunctions "but," "ne," and " oþer," the coordinates which indicate a more clearly defined relationship than "and." The type of conjunction favored by these two poems, then, as it has developed from an examination of the table, is one that allows for qualifications and explication of an idea as do "þaჳ" and "for," that defines the relationship between clauses as exactly as possible, whether that relationship be concrete and spatial or intellectual and expository. Since these poems concentrate upon the development of right understanding, the consistency in the types of conjunctions that tend to congregate in PA and PE must be purposeful and expressive of the solidarity with which the poems are linked.

As indicated in the table, CL and SG contain a proportionally larger percentage of the conjunction "and" than do PA and PE. The relationship between clauses linked by "and" emphasizes balance and the equality of the constituent clauses. Because the clauses are simply added to one another, the connection between them will not be explicitely defined. "And" can convey a number of different types of relationships that fit its basic qualities. Essentially, the addition of clauses to one another without a complexly defined relation between them is ideal for the expression of narrative movement; definitive action and even its emotional effects need

not be or cannot be measured and gauged like intellectual concepts or argument. The use of this conjunction in CL and SG, therefore, is an indication of their narrative style, their emphasis on action; all dialogue and didactic elements in these poems are imbedded in action.

All of the conjunctions that show more predominance in CL/SG manifest this concentration upon direct reporting of action and simple cause and effect, as in the case of "þat," for instance, or upon the expression of a single idea in a new context or with an expansive connotation of the type to be found in the use of "as." These traits are uniform on all levels of the poems' construction. Once again, the higher incidence of a conjunction in one set of poems complements their character and verifies their existence as a planned whole.

Although the conjunction "and" is more often to be found in CL and SG than in PA and PE, for the reasons given, it appears quite often in both. But the two sets of poems have quite different methods of utilizing "and," a result of its adaptability to various contexts. An examination of the ways in which "and" is employed will show still more completely the consistency between the two poems of each set. The difference in the use of the conjunction between the two sets will illustrate the fact that these tendencies are not accidental adjuncts of the four poems but can be used with purpose in various ways. There are four major variations on the

basically additive and equivalent connotations of the connect-
ive "and."

A large number of "and's" appear as indicators of a
temporally sequential relationship between clauses. The pri-
mary role of the conjunction in this context is to emphasize
continuity and direct,flowing movement, whether of thought or
of action. As would be expected, this use of "and" is es-
pecially common in CL and SG. If a large number of clauses
are linked in this way, the result is humor or excitement
and even a certain naivete.[3]

> And as in slomeryng he slode, sleȝly he herde
> A littel dyn at his dor, and derfly vpon;
> And he heueȝ vp his hed out of þe cloþes,
> A corner of þe cortyn he caȝt vp a lyttel,
> And wayteȝ warly þiderwarde quat hit be myȝt.
> Hit watȝ þe ladi, loflyest to beholde,
> Þat droȝ þe dor after hir ful dernly and stylle,
> And boȝed towarde þe bed; and þe burne schamed,
> And layde hym doun lystyly, and let as he slepte,
> And ho stepped stilly and stel to his bedde.
> Kest vp þe cortyn and creped withinne,
> And set hir ful softly on þe bed-syde,
> And lenged þere selly longe to loke quen he wakened.
>   SG 1182-1194.

The use of "and" to indicate sequence in CL and SG, however,
usually also illustrates the tendency in these poems to embody
contrast within similarity, to superimpose formal tension up-
on linear movement. Both linear direction and equivalence
have been noted as qualities of the "and" which denotes
sequence.

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[3]Eleanor Cameron, The Green and Burning Tree (Boston:
Little, Brown and Co., 1969), p. 27.

These effects are achieved in SG primarily by making

the action of the two clauses reciprocal. Though the clauses

are both sequential and equivalent, different actors respond-

ing to one another add an element of antithesis.

> Þenne he þulged with hir þrepe and þoled hir to
>   speke,
> And ho bere on hym þe belt . . .
>   SG 1859-1860.

This contrast which creates a tension within sequential pro-

gression is also achieved in SG by a shift in form from one

clause to the next, a simple change from active to passive

voice, or the recording of speech following action (or vice

versa).

In CL, this sequential "and" junction shows, super-

imposed on the equivalent clauses, the same contrast that

has been seen in SG. The methods employed in CL to gain an

effect of antithesis echo those used in SG, but are not so

dramatic. This same dramatization of CL's methods and

characteristics has been noted in SG before. Thus, in CL

most of the contrast within similarity in these clauses comes

as a result of an implication that the second clause is a

result of the first--"Þis cry waȝ upcast, and þer comen

mony" CL 1574--or of a shift between action and speech in

the two poems.

In PA and PE this type of sequential development be-

tween clauses occurs with less frequency than in CL and SG.

It primarily appears in the narrative sections of PA dealing

with Jonah's trip to Nineveh. Where this connotation is
given to "and" in PA and PE, the evidence of the consti-
tuent clauses is preserved, thus the balance essential to
PA/PE's style is maintained.

In PA and PE, the main function of "and" as it indi-
cates sequential relationship is to take the form of a logi-
cal construction, showing cause and effect reasoning,

> For meke arn alle þat woneȝ hym nere;
> And when in hys place þou schal apere,
> Be dep deuote in hol mekenesse.
> PE 404-406.

or even a syllogistic type of connection between the clauses.
This type of link between clauses follows the sequences of
reasonable thought.

> Fyrst I made hem my self of materes myn one,
> & syþen I loked hem ful longe & hem on lode hade:
>
> & if I my trauayl schulde tyne of termes so longe,
> & type doun ȝonder toun when hit turned were,
> þe sor of such a swete place burde synk to my hert,
> PA 503-507.

In CL and SG, any sequences that are not temporally
ordered are part of an enumeration of qualities, people,
objects as in CL 299-300,

> Sem soþly þat on, þat oþer hyȝt Cam,
> And þe jolef Japheth watz gendered þe þryd.

or SG 640-641,

> Fyrst he watȝ funden fautleȝ in his fyue wytteȝ,
> And efte fayled neuer þe freke in his fyue fyngres,

These non-temporal sequences recall the technique of listing
series that is so prominent a part of CL/SG's style. These

sequences are perhaps also related to the piling of detail and impression in these poems, though here the detail is more ordered than is usual in the passages built on that technique.

Thus, though both CL/SG and PA/PE employ the conjunction "and" to indicate a sequential relationship between equivalent clauses, each set of poems empresses its own characteristics onto the device. Because of the high frequency with which a specific type of sequential development appears in each compound poem and reflects that poem's stylistic character, we can assume that the similarities between PA and PE, CL and SG are purposeful and indicative of an essential relationship between the two pairs of poems.

There are two other identifiable primary uses of "and" in these poems that illustrate the same division into types suitable for CL/SG on the one hand and PA/PE on the other. First, "and" may serve as a structural fulcrum, holding similar or contrasting ideas in balance. The two clauses are understood to be equally important, perhaps necessary to the existence of one another. Typically, it is the contrast of the clauses that most predominates in CL/SG, while their similarity most often is stressed in PA/PE. CL/SG includes one use of "and" however that allows similarity. There are in these poems a number of clauses in which the emphasis falls on simultaneous action, action at one particular time, a moment from the temporal progression. This aids the complexity

of action in these poems as well as the over-all view of time in which man dwells. The action in these clauses progresses rapidly in series of small groups; there is a quickness of impression about the events crowding the sentence, like a picture flashed on the retina.

> In bry3t bollez ful bayn birlen þise oþer,
> And uche mon for his mayster machches alone.
>   CL 1511-1512.

Occasionally, this use of "and" can so merge with its sequential function that the resulting temporal situation is ambiguous. In SG 445-446

> Toward þe derrest on þe dece he dresse3 þe face,
> And hit lyfte vp þe y3e-lydde3 and loked ful brode,

does the face lift up its eyelids while the Green Knight turns it, or after? This expression of simultaneous action does not preclude contrast within it, though contrast is not a necessary part of it. Contrast is a primary organizing principle of CL/SG, as has been demonstrated, though generally it has been that "complex of antithesis"[4] that is SG in which the poet's attention to reciprocal action and the responding agent has been examined.[5] When the simultaneous actions are performed by two persons, Gawain and the Green Knight, for example, an element of contrast in introduced.

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[4]William Goldhurst, "The Green and the Gold: The Major Theme of Gawain and the Green Knight," CE, 20 (1958), 61.

[5]Marie Borroff, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A Stylistic and Metrical Study (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 121.

The expression of simultaneity in PA and PE by means of "and" very rarely includes this element of action that is so important to CL/SG. As usual, PA and PE are directed inward and deal with states of mind and spirit. These poems are concerned most often with simultaneous attitudes or states of being or, at the most active, with the frame of mind that accompanies an action.

> Bot woþeȝ mo iwysse þer ware,
> þe fyrre I stalked by þe stronde.
> And euer me þ oȝt I schulde not wonde
> For wo . . .
> > PE 151-154.

Thus, this construction in PA/PE exhibits a stable quality quite different from its effect in CL/SG.

The frequency with which CL and SG use "and" specifically to link two contrasting actions or ideas has been touched upon in the discussion of simultaneous action. Enough has been said about these poems' embodiment of contrast within a frame of symmetrical form to make further comment unnecessary. Let it simply be noted that "and" is used in this connection. There is one aspect of construction, however, that has not been mentioned; this is the element of surprise or incongruity often present in these clauses balanced upon "and." In many instances, this use of "and" appears at the end of a series, giving it an unexpected and rather abrupt ending.

> þay slowen of swettest semlych burdes,
> Baþed barnes in blod, and her brayn spylled,

Prestes and prelates þay presed to deþe,
Wyves and wenches her wombes tocorven,
Þat her boweles outborst aboute þe diches,
And al watz carfully kylde þat þay cach myȝt.
CL 1247-1252.

In many cases, as in the example, the final clause draws a
generalization from the series, becoming, in effect, a con-
trast to the abundant detail. It is not always in series,
though, that the element of surprise, augmented by the ex-
pectation that "and" gives, is utilized. SG 1848, "Lo!
so hit is littel, and lasse hit is worþy," contains a subtle
shift from physical to more subjective description, a blend-
ing of fact and value judgment. Here we see an example of
the style of CL/SG at its best, making use of every nuance
of form to express idea.

PA/PE tends to use the balanced clauses united by
"and" to stress similarity or completion of idea. There are
very few of the "and" links which connote tension or opposi-
tion. The equivalence of the ideas joined by "and" in these
poems can be illustrated by PA 186, (he) "Slypped vpon a
sloumbe-selepe, & sloberande he routes." The idea in both
cases, is essentially the same; no contrast or surprise
is implied. In many cases, this similarity of idea and equi-
valence of clauses is paralleled by a similarity of form be-
tween the clauses. Often, too, PA and PE compound subord-
inate clauses in a symmetrical balance, a device seldom seen
in CL or SG. "And" also may be used as an agent of comple-
tion, recalling the structural principle of the circle so

essential to PA/PE. In PE 783-784 the second clause perfects

the spotlessness of the Pearl Maiden,

> Vnblemyst I am, wythouten blot,
> And þat may I wyth mensk menteene;

She can even argue her own purity without spoiling it thereby;

no more could be added to her perfection.

PE, as has been noticed in another context, trans-

forms the structures of PA, giving them a more lyrical ex-

pression. The balanced compound sentences of the poem

occasionally become, in PE, a double simile,

> As a schep to þe slaȝt þer lad watȝ he;
> And, as lombe þat clypper in hande nem,
> So closed he hys mouth fro vch query,
>   PE 801-803.

Once again, CL/SG and PA/PE display disparate qualities in

the use of a similar syntactic device, though within each

two-poem compound the use of that device, here the con-

junction "and," remains consistent.

There is one final use for "and" that appears only in

CL/SG and contributes to the effect of interpolation which is

part of the style of these poems. The "and" is used to link

two unrelated clauses, to introduce new material. New ideas

are thus connected to those preceding as if they were all

part of the same topic,

> Goddes gost is þe geven þat gyes alle þynges,
> And þou unhyles uch hidde þat Hevenkyng myntes;
> And here is a ferly byfallen, . . .
>   CL 1627-1929.[6]

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[6]The underlining is my own.

The element of surprise is inherent in this use of "and;"
the quality of narrative produced is also close to that evok-
ed by the temporal "and" since both uses of the conjunction
afford a swift and smooth transition from one idea to the
next. When two ideas are linked and held equal, yet not ob-
viously connected, an intimation of unity and purpose invades
the disparate elements of the poem. This is the same sort of
unity implied by the spiral image for the whole of CL/SG.

In conversation, the effect can be one of casual
thoughts connected only by the continuance of speech between
the same people,

> 'Ʒe iwysse,' quoþ þat oþer wyʒe, 'here is wayth
>   fayrest
> Þat I seʒ þis seuen ʒere in sesoun of wynter.'
> 'And al I gif yow, Gawayn,' quoþ þe gome þenne,
>   SG 1381-1383.

As an introduction to authorial intrusion, the device allows
the poet to enter the work in his person without too abrupt
a transition from one idea to the next.

> He braydeʒ hit by þe bauderyk, aboute þe hals
>   kestes,
> Þat bisemed þe segge semlyly fayre.
> And quy þe pentangel apendeʒ to þat prynce noble
> I am intent yow to telle . . .
>   SG 621-624.

By using "and" in this way, the poet achieves an effect of
interpolation and surprise without sacrificing the progres-
sion of his narrative.

The evidence gathered from this investigation of con-
junctions forms a consistent whole within itself and accords

with what has been discovered about the nature of poems under discussion. Certain types of conjunctions are more prevalent in CL/SG and certain others in PA/PE; the types that show higher proportions for each poem are of a sort that contributes to the stylistic character of their respective poems. The ways in which the poet has used the most common conjunction in all four poems show that he has varied certain basic techniques (and for the moment it is immaterial whether they are his or part of a common alliterative tradition) with considerable subtlety to express the nature of each set of poems.

The combined evidence of Chapters II, III, and IV offers substantial ground for considering PA/PE and CL/SG as units with a typological relationship between their component poems. This interpretation gives richness to the poems' meaning and order to the perplexing question of their interrelationship.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The <u>Gawain</u> puzzle now consists of two large pieces: CL/SG and PA/PE. These compound poems seem to indicate quite different directions. The narrative action, constant movement of time, spiral development of CL/SG, corresponding to its dynamic expansion, reflect the world's experience, continual, varied, explosive. PA/PE, however, embodies a completely different force, directed inward, into the spiritual world of man's interior action. Thus, characteristics of enclosure, stability, balance are found in the poem. There must be a stability about a world ruled by God's forgiveness and enclosed by eternity, whose circle symbol becomes the emblem of PA/PE's construction.

But between these two poems there also exists a basic similarity and a fundamental connection. The manuscript itself is a compound construction; its poems receive their full value, their completion only in relation one to another. As companion pieces, they are formed alike, each made up of a homily of relatively simple form and a more complex, more ambiguous work. Within each section there are similarities too.

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The homilies, offering an introductory statement of
what is being considered in each poem, set the tone and theme
of the compounds. The construction of each poem seems to
demand that these poems precede SG and PE in the larger poems.
This precedence is reinforced by the fact that a narrative
based on the Old Testament should precede one drawing pri-
marily upon the New Testament and that this is too skillful
a poet to follow the intense drama of PE or SG with the anti-
climax of a sermon. CL and PA share, too, a strictly allit-
erative verse form and an explanatory bias. The poet in each
case is careful to gloss his exempla for the benefit of the
audience.

This explanation is necessary, not only because it
helps interpret the poems, but because both of the homilies
center on God's qualities, God's viewpoint. The purpose of
CL, the poet says, centers on divine attitudes,

> Þus upon þrynne wyses I haf yow þro ʒchewed,
> Þat unclannes tocleves in corage dere
> Of þat wynnelych Lorde þat wonyes in heven,
> Entyses hym to be tene, teldes up his wrake;
> Ande clannes is his comfort, and coyntyse he lovyes,
> > CL 1805-1809.

God's perspective, of course, is not so readily available to
man's understanding as his own viewpoint. CL and PA deal with
the different aspects of God as SG and PE do with the varying
dimensions of man. The poet first exhibits men directly in
conflict or accord with God's nature. This does not mean
that man is disregarded in these poems; he is still the

protagonist. But God is displayed clearly; He enters the ground of the poem in His own person.

PA and CL, too, both raise expectations that only their companion poems can fulfill. They foreshadow the tensions that inform the whole poem, between absolute truth and purity and man's imperfect capabilities and between God's merciful patience and man's eager impatience. Both poems end with a warning. CL cautions with a statement and a prayer; PA offers a direct warning from God. When the protagonists of SG and PE are introduced, the natural question that arises and holds attention throughout the poems is whether the admonitions of CL and PA will be observed or whether these men will suffer the consequences applied in both poems to wrong-doers. Will Gawain retain his superlative qualities in action, or will he suffer some terrible doom? The Dreamer certainly shows himself "gryndel"--will he have a hastily undertaken work or act to repent of, or find the virtue of patience?

The introductory poems also furnish a sort of authority for the argument of each compound. The biblical material is called to the reader's attention from the beginning. In this respect, too, the introduction of God's person lends weight to the contentions of the homilies. Such necessity for authority for one's arguments is a commonplace of the poet's age. What more irrefutable authority than the Bible

itself? The more "fanciful" flights of SG and PE cannot then be called to account, though the poet, perhaps through prudence as well as piety, stays close to his sources when he describes the country of his vision. He gives a firm foundation for the ambiguities of the more complex poems to follow, stating the themes upon which his variations will be played, an effective artistic practice, and one which allows elasticity without formlessness.

PE and SG leave the simplicity of PA and CL for a form combining rhyme with the direct alliterative line and for a less clear message. Both PE and SG, growing from the statements of their homilies, show one man's viewpoint in a universal situation. Here are illustrated the qualities in men striving to fulfill the necessary parts of their being-- to act rightly and to understand fully. God does not counsel in either case; He does not make Himself obvious to these men. The perspective shifts from the omnipotent view of PA and CL to a more limited and therefore more mysterious viewpoint.

In this perspective, it becomes necessary for the protagonists of both SG and PE to quest, whether in a social or spiritual context. Answers must be sought or qualities tested. The idea of life as a pilgrimage is a medieval commonplace; the quest is a natural expression for the

age.[1] Even though the Dreamer is engaged in a search he did

not initiate, it is none the less a real quest, a gift of

the mercy of God. Both Gawain and the Dreamer are involved

in that archetypal journey "there and back again."[2] They

are called out of their well-known surroundings. Gawain must

leave Arthur's court, his familiar social environment, where

he and his peers are comfortable, sure of his worth and his

character. The Dreamer is drawn outside of himself, away

from his established patterns of thought and customary re-

actions. Both pilgrimages, following the typical pattern,

return the protagonist to his starting point changed, chas-

tened. His relationship to his former environment has now

necessarily become different too. So Gawain brings the order

of the lace to Camelot and tells his tale to the court's

laughter. The Dreamer's garden becomes a place of resigna-

tion rather than grief, a reflection of the garden of his

vision.

For both questers it is necessary to wander in un-

familiar countries. They find there old acquaintances,

familiarities, such as Gawain's with courtly life and re-

sponses, or the Dreamer's with Pearl, subtly changed, become

alien and unknown, and sometimes dangerous by reason of their

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[1]Bruce A. Rosenberg, "The Morphology of the Middle
English Metrical Romance," Journal of Popular Culture, 1
(1967), 69.

[2]Mr. Tolkien's phrase.

very air of familiarity. Gawain is on his guard in dealing
with the "alvisch" Green Knight; he understands the diffi-
culty in facing the unknown. It is for this reason, perhaps,
that he can so firmly face the terms of the first bargain
and repulse the offers of his guide to the Green Chapel. In
the bedchamber, however, the courtly exchanges with the Lady
seem to present the very type of situation upon which his
reputation is based. He becomes a little less wary and is,
as the poet is careful to note, very near danger.

> þay lanced wordes gode,
> Much wele þen watz þerinne;
> Gret perile bitwene hem stod,
> Nif Maré of hir kny зt mynne.
> SG 1766-1769.

It is this sort of change that seems to cause, at least in
part, that new relationship between the protagonist and his
home environment. He can no longer take the familiar for
granted. The Maiden cautions the Dreamer,

> I halde þat iueler lyttel to prayse
> þat leueз wel þat he seз wyth yзe,
> PE 301-302.

Neither PE nor SG can, with complete justice, be
classified as an "initiation" narrative, though both show a
movement from ignorance or inexperience to knowledge. In
particular, Bloomfield has noted of Gawain that his adven-
tures leave him humbler, but not initiated into anything
specific.[3] The lesson he has learned is not secret or

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[3]Bloomfield, p. 43.

special. Discovery and initiation are not synonymous.
Neither of the seekers knows, when he begins his journey,
exactly what he is seeking. The Dreamer wishes to regain a
pearl, but finds that his desire undergoes a transformation.
He has been looking for the wrong pearl. Gawain seeks an
adventure, an extension of his glory, even if it means death
at the hands of the Green Knight. He finds his adventure
quite different from his expectations. Neither finds exactly what he goes to seek; both discover something hidden
from them before. But neither Gawain nor the Dreamer becomes
a part of any world of which he was not part before. They
simply uncover a new facet of their old worlds, or of their
old selves. These worlds and realms of personality are presented quite clearly in CL and PA.

If, as has been suggested, the audience is meant to
notice the youth and inexperience of Arthur and his court,[4]
then the parallel between SG and PE becomes even closer. In
PE the narrator is spiritually inexperienced, ignorant,
though without a corresponding innocence, as that is given
primarily to the Maiden. It has been suggested that Pearl
represents lost innocence as well as a lost innocent.[5] Without giving Pearl a purely allegorical significance, this may

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[4]Borroff, p. 117, and Burrow, p. 15.

[5]Jefferson B. Fletcher, "The Allegory of the Pearl,"
JEGP, 20 (1921), 21.

be a way of expressing the impossibility of innocence dwel-
ling on earth. Pearl thus implies perpetual innocence and
the absence of the corrupting world.[6] In the same way, Ga-
wain, called perfect in five times five ways, discovers that
perfection does not exist in men's lives. Having lost inno-
cence, failed in perfection, these men would find themselves
in a state of moral vagueness were it not for the possibility
of rediscovering value in their capacity for learning or
courage in facing tests.

The plight of imperfect man seeking perfection is a
part of common human experience. But as well as exemplify-
ing this universal Adamic theme, PE and SG relate more spe-
cifically to the artist himself. The universal themes of the
two introductory homilies become applicable, then, to all
three levels of living: social, spiritual, and, by exten-
sion, imaginative. The application to artistic experience,
however, can be seen only as a secondary theme, a specific
type within the main theme. To read either or both of the
poems primarily as a sort of "kunstlerroman" would, I think,
be too extreme and would belie both the spirit of the age
and the fine preparation for SG and PE found in CL and PA.

Without denying his primary role as essential man,
then, Gawain can stand for the artist. He has a strong sense

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[6]Stanton DeVoren Hoffman, "The Pearl: Notes for an
Interpretation," MP, 58 (1960), 77.

of form. Courtesy, in which he excels, is largely a matter
of formal distinctions and observances, which lend beauty to
social relationships. Thus, Gawain, even at the moment of
the Green Knight's surprising challenge, can respond in a
mannered, formal fashion.

> 'Wolde ȝe, worþilych lorde,' quoþ Wawan to þe kyng,
> 'Bid me boȝe fro þis benche, and stonde by yow þere,
> þat I wythoute vylanye myȝt voyde þis table,
> And þat my legge lady lyked not ille,
> I wolde com to your counseyl bifore your cort ryche.
> SG 343-347.

He is also scrupulous, for the most part, about keeping the
conditions of the compacts to which he is bound. Yet, Gawain
is not an unpassionate man. Indeed, it is a form of passion
that breaks the bounds of his compact and spoils the virtue
of his understanding. Gawain, then, is bound in that irre-
soluble conflict between form and emotion, each so essential
to the other, yet so hard to keep in proper balance. As be-
fits an active man, too, it is right that Gawain should fail
on the grounds of passion rather than the more pale fault of
over-formalism. This flaw in Gawain's work connotes also the
impossibility of perfect transmission of any artist's vision.
When he returns to Camelot, however, the badge of his failure
becomes transformed into a symbol both of common humanity in
a great work and of the artist's success, better than unaided
perception, imperfect as it is.

In PE the Dreamer, too, is a sort of artist, a

"jeweler." One of his most conspicuous traits is his inten-
sely responsive aesthetic sensibility. The more beauty he
confronts, the more he desires.[7] He exemplifies a slightly
different aspect of artistic concern than Gawain, for it is
the perishability of his treasure that disheartens him.
There is a view in the third stanza of man considering beauty
and life as inextricably related and believing beauty to pos-
sess such value that it deserves of itself to live. He
grieves for the loss of beauty as well as of life.[8] He sees
the clay spoiling his jewel as the artist is appalled by the
perishability of beauty and the ultimate loss of all temporal
creation. The Dreamer discovers that the true artist is God,
who takes his jewel and makes it eternal. In accord with
this, the garden of the Dreamer's loss, an artifice, pales
in comparison to the garden of his vision, whose loveliness
is eternal, and in comparison to the splendor of the New
Jerusalem. He finds that what he thought to be his creation
is, in fact, God's. The artist's beauty becomes but a re-
flection of God's creation. The Dreamer's sense of inferior-
ity is almost too much for him, and his yearning for the
transformed beauty of his Pearl undoes him. His state at
the end of the poem is a recognition of his co-partnership

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[7]Edward Vasta, "Pearl: Immortal Flowers and the
Pearl's Decay," JEGP, 66 (1967), 527.

[8]Vasta, p. 528.

with God and an acceptance of God's greater artistry at the core of his own. This remains, of course, a lesson in patience, waiting on the divine will.

The manuscript, with its two similarly formed poems, presents a paradox, the picture of man at once active and passive, of God both just and merciful. The whole cannot be broken into something like the later debates over the relative merits of active or contemplative life. Nowhere in these poems is there the suggestion that CL/SG and PA/PE are at war with one another. Nor can the paradox be so easily resolved into two separate parts. Just as CL and SG or PA and PE form a synthetic whole, so these compound poems combine and fulfill their messages within one another.

Thematically there is the suggestion that CL/SG should precede PA/PE in order of reading. CL/SG lays the groundwork in man's immediate social life; the first and most obvious demands of his existence spring from this world. And, as Gawain learns, a good part of man's identity or self-concept is bound up in this realm. But, as Gawain also comes to know, not all. Growing from this world is the second, spiritual life, as the Dreamer's vision grows from his attachment to his earthly pearl, or Jonah's education from his mission to men. The manuscript seems, then, to move from the temporal to the spiritual, or "anagogically," from judgment to glory. The spiritual understanding leads in turn, however, not only to more perfect communion with God, as the ending

of PE suggests, but to a more perfect action among one's
fellowmen. The rapture of PE is achieved only at the moment
of its loss; awareness of the sustaining earth follows imme-
diately.[9] The final need of the narrator is patient travail.
This he is forced back to earth to find.[10] So a return en-
sues to the world of CL/SG. An emphasis on afterlife and the
divine and its negation of the secular draws attention to the
world and the individual.[11] Another circle grows from the
linear experience of living. Neither poem is ever finished.
Gawain is forced to wear the lace as emblem of his failure;
the Dreamer finds himself thrown out of heaven. The poems
complete one another.

There are indications that CL/SG should precede
PA/PE in composition as well as in theme. PA/PE seems to
show more sophistication of technique. PA is better suit-
ed to its purpose as a homily than is CL. Occasionally
CL fails in its rather ambitious plan. In CL the realiz-
ing imagination of the poet is occasionally out of control.
In meeting Abraham, God is shown as too human; He becomes
less awesome, mysterious. In ll. 1439-1488, Cl is brought

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[9]Brewer, "The Gawain-Poet," p. 135.

[10]Milton R. Stern, "An Approach to The Pearl," JEGP,
54 (1955), 691.

[11]Howard, The Three Temptations, p. 39.

almost to a halt; the poet is trying to introduce movement
and life within something essentially static. This effort,
too, fails and degenerates into a catalog.[12] PA, on the
other hand, exemplifies its title quality beautifully both
with the narrator's knowledge that encloses the exemplum
and with the contrast of Jonah's impatience with God's mer-
ciful patience. Further, the great number of similar words
and phrases in CL and SG that, as has been mentioned, does
not exist in PA and PE probably shows uncertainty in the
poet's technique, an insistence that the two poems belong
together. Borrowing, as a unifying device, is not neces-
sary in PA/PE, where the whole is so harmoniously unified
in form and theme.

Finally, PE shows much more independence from the
strictly alliterative form than does SG. In the latter poem,
rhyme and exact meter are simply complements to a basically
alliterative style. In PE these tendencies are reversed. It
seems probable that the more rigid and ornate style developed
from the freer, particularly as there is nothing to suggest
that the poet is more at home in continental forms than the
reviving native alliterative style.

Though CL/SG takes precedence of position, neither
vision, of CL/SG or of PA/PE, dominates their relationship;
the poems belong together not only by virtue of their

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[12]Spearing, The Gawain-Poet, pp. 60, 62-63.

similar construction, but as a complete view of the human
condition. Together they illustrate the poet's technique
as it has appeared in the component parts of each poem.
Similar form has been made to contain a difference in idea,
separate viewpoints. This device of holding differences in
tension by means of form is by now familiar. It is an eter-
nal tension, as much to be accepted in living as in these
poems, for here are the two levels of reality upon which man
constantly lives.

What emerges is a sort of Lyrical Ballads. The un-
familiar is given an aura of the known in PA/PE, where a
very ordinary man visits a visionary land with his misunder-
standings and limited experience and where miracles surround
Jonah. The everyday world is imbued with mystery in CL/SG,
as the enchanted Green Knight invades the comfortable Christ-
mas festivities of Arthur's court and God's visitation upon
men may be an angel traveller or an unforeseen flood. To-
gether, CL/SG and PA/PE reveal the whole of experience, that
multiple vision of the Middle Ages that could embrace both
the secular and the spiritual within the human.

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APPENDIX

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