Evidence of the doctrine of grace in Beowulf... he thaes frofre gebad.

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EVIDENCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE IN BEOWULF

BY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study has been to establish the existence of the doctrine of grace in the poem Beowulf, not just in the parts of the poem normally considered "Christian," but throughout the poem. The presence of such a theologically sound common denominator, integral in the action of the poem, effectively displays the importance of Christian dogma to the poem. Once the presence of this doctrine of grace is proven, then arguments assuming the poet's doctrinal inconsistency or the interpolation of a pagan text will have to be reevaluated in light of this new evidence of Christian authorship.

The procedure used in this investigation is based on the study of the occurrence and lexical collocation of key lexical items denoting different forms of grace. After having established the thematic importance of grace, an alignment of what are generally felt to be opposed elements was achieved when it was found that a traditional Germanic virtue, in this case valour, could be the result of grace. To complete the study of the importance of grace in the poem, a reassessment of the poem's cosmology indicated that the same syncretism that had linked valour and grace had divided fate between the Germanic wyrd and Christian grace. Although the lexical study dominated the thesis, some attempt was made to evaluate the structure of the poem, and the result
was a "cyclical" interpretation of the poem's action. Recurring patterns of both individual and social behaviour were noted, and the closing sequence of events seemed to emphasise the presence of the "lone survivor" figure.

While it would be going too far to say that the doctrine of grace demonstrated in the text was definitively Augustinian, the operation of grace appears not to conflict with the guidelines formulated in his writings. The conclusions reached by this thesis centre on the existence of this doctrine of grace in *Beowulf*, and concern the structure of the poem.

There seems to be a constant duplication of perilous situations which are inevitably ameliorated by grace, this alternation between catastrophe and prosperity being as evident in the individual as in the national sphere. The examination of structure has brought to light an analogous cyclical development of human character, and therefore a new interpretation of moral postures in the narrative. Thus, the conclusions drawn from this thesis are: (i) that the terms *frēorc*, *hæel* and *ræed* may indicate different types of grace, and that (ii) the sinful and helpless condition of Hrothgar and the Danes, at the beginning of the story is common to *Beowulf* and the Geats at the end of the story and finally (iii) that the concept of fate used by the poet is actually a continuum created by the interplay of *vyrd* and grace.
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INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

Attempts to define the spiritual atmosphere of Beowulf have generally acknowledged the presence of both pagan and Christian elements in the poem, but critical opinion is rarely united in assessing the independence, coexistence or harmony of these elements. The most widely accredited view seems to promulgate an integration of the Germanic and Christian beliefs, through subordination of the former to the latter, wherein the traditional creed was pressed into the service of Christianity. As noted by others, this use of existing cultural institutions for the purposes of the Roman church is clearly illustrated in the instructions to Augustine from Pope Gregory concerning the use of pagan temples:

...fana idolorum destrui in eadem gente minime debeant, sed ipsa quae in eis sunt idola destruantur, aqua benedicta fiat in eisdem, sanis aspergatur, altaria construuntur, reliquae ponantur. Quia, si fana eadem bene constructa sunt, necesse est ut in cultu daemonum in obsequio veri Dei debeant commutari...1

If, as Gregory says, the pagan temples were bene constructa, their practical use to Christianity is evident; so might well the limited cosmology and morality of the English Teutonic heritage have been useful. Without developing the arguments for this syncretism any farther, I would like to

focus on the type of Christianity we may expect in Beowulf. Certainly we will anticipate an organised and doctrinally sound expression of faith if a method even roughly analogous to Gregory's has been used, but we must not expect this orthodoxy to be immediately familiar, housed, as it were, in a pagan temple. This thesis will attempt to prove that the doctrine of grace is in evidence throughout the poem and crucial to its moral current. Such a view is not new; Hamilton has postulated that the Augustinian theories of grace, especially as found in Book XV of the City of God, are reflected in the division between good and evil characters in the poem, and that the resulting polarisation of characters creates societies nearly equivalent to Augustine's cities. Two problems arise from this analysis: (i) there is no reason to suppose, as does Hamilton, that the Christianity of the poem is exclusively Augustinian, and (ii) the question of salvation, so crucial to the City of God, hardly seems an explicit concern of the Beowulf poet. I do accept, however, the idea that grace is a significant force in the poem's action. Charles Donahue has postulated a less clearly defined and much earlier source for Beowulf's Christianity in the Celtic Irish church. A vision of a third city, he says, based on the "natural order" from the "national past", which had no supernatural hope but an ambition to conquer evil, existed in Ireland about the

supposed date of the poem's composition. The idea, based on doctrinal rudiments, he claims to be closely connected with Old Testament traditions, as the pre-Christian Irish legal code upheld the Old Irish law-givers as prophets, (pp. 266-269), and he finds (p. 275) that the characters of Beowulf are comparable in moral and theological orientation to the populace of this third city. Sixteen years later Donahue justified this thesis with a massively documented article in which he distinguished between the "insular", or Celtic, and the "continental", or Roman, modes of Christianity, defining the former thus:

The Irish vision, then, seems to have originated in liturgically expressed Greek views, pre-Pelagian as well as pre-Augustinian, brought into the Celtic world by way of Gaul well before the middle of the sixth century. This "insular mode" he claims (pp. 72-73) to have been exported to the Angles in England by Aidan, and to have outweighed in influence on local culture the "continental mode". Accepting Donahue's theory happily relieves me of proving the salvation of graced individuals necessitated by Hamilton's article, and Donahue too stresses the critical role of grace in the poem. Moreover, he postulates the existence of an

3 Charles Donahue, "Beowulf, Ireland and the Natural God," Traditio, 7 (1949), 263-77.


5 Donahue, "Reconsideration," p. 71.
"hour of grace" (p. 93) that is congruent with the ad hoc type of grace suggested by this thesis; and he also feels, as do I, that Beowulf (p. 104) is without this grace and doomed by wyrd in his encounter with the dragon. I cannot concur, though, with Donahue (pp. 110-116) that Beowulf is himself a Christ figura, even if most of Donahue's work provides significant reinforcement for my conclusions.

The following study represents an effort to explore the available evidence in the poem supporting the hypothesis that the doctrine of grace is functional in Beowulf. My method is based on an examination of lexis denoting "grace", fortified with scholarship germane to the thesis that the text provides evidence of a unified, cohesive and orthodox doctrine of grace. The division of the work into three sections reflects an attempt to deal with the function of grace on three levels: the geocosm (social), the microcosm (personal) and the macrocosm (fate). This unusual order may be justified in light of the purpose of each chapter. The first proves the existence of grace as a force in the action of the poem; the second defines the human manifestations of this grace, and the third chapter assesses the cosmological or metaphysical conclusions that may be drawn from the arguments of the preceding chapters.

I wish to express at this point my gratitude to my mentors, without whose help this study would never have achieved whatever merit it may now claim. For myself I reserve the responsibility for the errors of oversights which may
present themselves to the reader, and I earnestly offer my readers Fr. Klaeber's Pauline caveat:

Omnia autem probate:
quod bonum est, tenete.
CHAPTER I

THE THEMATIC FUNCTION OF GRACE

The enigmas surrounding the poem Beowulf have for decades taxed the best resources of critical scholarship, and although much of the poem's intricacy has been unravelled, such basic problems as place and date of origin are not yet definitively solved. In effect, modern inability to recover the necessary historical evidence that would furnish the details for the reconstruction of the poem's cultural milieu betrays a simple, disappointing fact about Beowulf criticism: many specifics germane to a complete understanding of the poem remain shrouded in the obscurity produced by at least a millennium of cultural change. My thesis makes no attempt to review or appraise the existing historical work done on this problem of the genesis of the text, but accepts an eighth century dating without any geographical specification.1 My focus is on a subject that has provoked much debate: the nature of the Christianity in the poem. Attempts to define the Christian bias of the poem necessarily comment on the elementary temper of dogma expressed by the poet, and this simplicity, in conjunction with what are felt to be essentially pagan elements,2 has led critics to suppose the interpolation of a


2 For a discussion of these pagan elements, see Moorman's "The Essential Paganism of Beowulf," MLQ, 28 (1967), 3-18, wherein he contrasts the fundamental pessimism of the poem to the optimism of other Old English verse with a Christian
purely pagan text. Whallon has suggested that, except for the references to Cain, the Song of Creation and the condemnation of heathen worship ll. 175-88, there is no reason to suppose anything but an intimiation of orthodox doctrine. Concerning ourselves with these elements of the poem that are Christian, we find that they express a bias peculiar to eighth century England, and while the fundamentally militaristic disposition of the faith seems unorthodox, we must consider that the poet was addressing an audience imbued with a militaristic ethic. Chambers points out that

Surely the explanation is that to a devout, but not theologically-minded poet, writing battle poetry, references to God as the Lord of Hosts or the Giver of Victory came naturally - references to the Trinity and the Atonement did not.

It is wrong, however, to suppose that the Christianity of the poem is merely ornament, enhancing the tales of victory and rendering Catholic faith just another piece of the successful warrior's armour. Evident everywhere in the poem is a process of subordination which makes God the controller of all life and fate, so that the heroes of the poem are such only by His grace.

Hamilton has expressed the view that the theories of bias. He concludes that the Christian elements are at best "peripheral" to the emphasis on kinship and fatal pessimism (p. 6).


grace, election and predestination are operative in the poem, and makes this observation concerning the nature of Beowulf:

Here combined were the literary ingredients most to the taste of the early English... hazardous adventure exhibiting physical and moral heroism, cherished loyalties and a satisfying dualism, wherein the enlightened Christian might recognize the hand of Providence and illustrations of the doctrine of grace.\(^5\)

She offers a list of lexical items that she has found to denote grace in other Old English poems\(^6\) and points to their use in Beowulf. To her census I would add only one suggestion: fröfor,\(^7\) at least in those instances in which it can be demonstrated to be a divine emanation for the benefit of mortals.

An examination of the applications of words expressing grace in the poem will, I believe, make a major step in testifying to the unified and coherent use of what may be the Augustinian doctrine of grace by the poet. This study will demonstrate a profoundly orthodox view which is woven neatly into a framework of more primitive concepts of good and evil drawn, perhaps, from Germanic religion.

The suggestions of grace are subtle, but neither weak nor


\(^6\)Hamilton, pp. 312-313n. She proposes är, ēst, giefu and its compounds along with gifnes, hylde, ēliss, and milts. See Appendix I for justification for the use of these items in the present examination.

\(^7\)It must be admitted in all instances of fröfor used to denote "grace", that this interpretation denies the alternate and perhaps more obvious rendering of "comfort" or "relief". I have tried to acknowledge this fact in the text of the chapter and present in Appendix I a justification for my rendering of the item, which depends on express association with Providence. This embraces both divine cause (grace) and purely physical result (consolation).
inconsistent throughout the text, and the application of the doctrine is clear: God's grace is directed to an individual on an ad hoc basis for the preservation of personal and national well-being, especially the latter. The opening passage, relating to Danish history and the reign of Scyld and his son Beowulf, contains two references to grace, which is seen in each case to be the cause of worldly success and national security. The source of Scyld's grace, however, is more ambiguous than that of his son, which is conceivably Christian. We have a straightforward expression of Scyld's reversal of fortune due to frōfre:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{syddan āerest weard} \\
\text{fēasceaf funden; hē paes frōfre gebād,} \\
\text{wēox under volcnum} \\
\text{(6b-6a)}
\end{align*}
\]

While the source of help is anonymous in this instance, in the case of his son, who is sent by grace to the Danes, the origin of frōfre is manifestly clear:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dāēm eadera waes æfter cenned} \\
\text{geong in ēardum, þone God sende} \\
\text{folce tō frōfre;} \\
\text{(12a-14a)}
\end{align*}
\]

The poet expands this statement by explaining, 11. 14b-16a, that the Danes had long suffered without a leader, so that in two instances noted we have seen grace benefitting a nation through an individual. The personal benefits of grace are next seen as woroldāre - worldly grace:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{...} \\
\text{him paes Liffrēã,} \\
\text{wuldrēs Wealdend woroldāre forgeaf,} \\
\text{(16b-17b)}
\end{align*}
\]

Even Hrothgar, whom we cannot accurately categorize with Scyld
and Beowulf, participates in the ministrations of grace in his youth; the poet indicates that martial success was "given" to him:

\[
\text{På vaes Hroðgarē herespēd gýfen,} \\
\text{wēges weordmynd, ...} \\
\text{(64a-65a)}
\]

The pattern that seems to be evolving thus far is that the individual is the vehicle, or medium, of grace, and therefore a tool or instrument of Providence. In each case it is the Danish king that is favoured with divine aid, but only for the purpose of aiding his subjects, as was expressly the case with the first Beowulf.

The Danes' afflictions at the hands of Grendel, however, indicate that there has been an abrupt halt to the reception of grace that they previously enjoyed. This situation, however, may be explained by reviewing the suggested change in their moral posture; they were aided by God in their destitution until they escaped the [tyrendearte\text{fe}] of line 14 to become powerful and rich, and it is implied that they fell prey to two of the seven deadly sins: pride and avarice. We know that the newly-erected Heorot was unparalleled in size and splendour, 11. 67-69, and that other nations, far from threatening the Danes, were now sending gifts (tribute?) to them, 11. 377-79. It appears that the Danes extended themselves in the use of God-given victory for selfish extremes, and that the ravages of Grendel may be divinely-sent chastisement for their sins.

In discussing the administration of grace to the characters of this poem, we must bear in mind that none of them were yet
in contact with Christianity, and therefore cannot be considered truly Christian. One of the later events of the poem, the death of the Geatish king Hygelac in an unsuccessful raid on the Swedish nation, is dated in the early sixth century, about 510. This antedates the spread of Christianity to England, let alone the geographical area of northern Europe embracing the poem's action. Why then do we have expressions of clearly Christian faith from many characters in the poem? It will be explained in the succeeding chapter that the first effect of ad hoc grace on a mortal is the appearance of faith, so that it is possible to submit that the poet is absolutely correct in having these yet unconverted Scandinavians express faith if they are or were vehicles of grace, in fact, it is theologically necessary. The administration of grace to a pagan, however, differs from divine aid to a Christian, as Gilson observes:

Saint Augustine is always careful to note:
(i) That the pagan's virtues, although real moral virtues, never have anything but the appearance of Christian virtues.
(ii) These virtues have no supernatural value... But even if the poem's characters will not be saved from damnation by grace, the poet correctly attributes their heroic qualities to grace. Gilson notes that

... whether it is the matter of the remnants of an habitual disposition of virtue or of exceptional fortitude in performing an heroic act, these are

8Chambers, Introduction, p. 413.
the gifts of God in the man who performs them... For just as He bestows on nature the whole of its being and operation, so he maintains in fallen man the ability to perform whatever virtuous actions he performs.10

and later observes that the free will of an individual is led by grace to virtue.11 Turning to the Danes, it may be deduced that the encroachment of sins such as pride and avarice in their king certainly betrays the fact that his free will is not being guided by grace, and that he is no longer a vehicle of grace. This leads me to the conclusion that the type of grace we find in the poem is distributed by God on an ad hoc basis, that is, as a favour to those pagans who endure national distress, and that once the troubles have been overcome it is withdrawn, before it becomes a source of pride. Gilson synthesizes Augustine's concept of this danger in this way:

... moreover, (the natural virtues) become just so many vices when a man, as he is all too inclined to do, attributes the merit for them to himself and boasts of them. God is the only lawful end; every action referred to man, even though it be materially praiseworthy, ceases to be virtuous and becomes vicious for that reason.12

I find this to be an eloquent synopsis of the situation in which the Danes find themselves, for it was only through grace that they rose to such an eminent political situation and were able to afford such a monument to national prestige as Heorot.

Grace is obviously not completely denied them, for

10Gilson, p. 152.
11Gilson, p. 160.
12Gilson, p. 318.
although Grendel is able to murder and terrorize the Danes only when they are in Heorot, their symbol of pride, he is, in a pair of very much disputed lines, unable to touch their throne:

nē hē ðone gifstōl grētan mōste, 
māpāum for Metode, nē his myne wisse.—
(168a-169b)

If we translate gifstōl as "grace-stool" or "grace-seat", we arrive at an interesting and complex interpretation of these lines in context: God has not completely deserted the Danes, and for this reason the throne, seen lexically as the seat of grace, remains intact against the attacks of pagan evil. Chaney makes these lines a case for the divine protection of throne and king, a Germanic belief superseded but not changed by Christian superimposition, while Dubois goes so far as to suggest that the gifstōl is an altar figure, and that the hē of l. 168 is Hrothgar himself, who has so fallen from grace that he can no longer worship. Both interpretations concur on the supernatural qualities of the throne, which I construe as the effects of grace, so that the isolation of Grendel, who is in Cāines cynne, from this fountainhead of grace is natural. The situation of the Danes now recalls

---

13 Again, this rendering of gifstōl goes beyond the alternate and more probable definition as the focal point of treasure- or ring-giving, which was the basis of the Anglo-Saxon feudal covenant. The throne, while naturally legitimised by the deity, was also the location of giving and receiving gifts, so that "gift-stool" is just as valid an interpretation as "grace-stool".


that of the opening lines, as they are effectively leaderless, there is no vehicle of grace to ameliorate their plight until Beowulf is sent by God. It has been suggested by Howren that Grendel represents an exiled member of the comitatus who is unable to participate in the feudal aspects of the throne, a situation parallel to his spiritual banishment from God. It is not hard to see in the Danish people as a whole the same spiritual status as this exile-figure. The poet, after describing the heathen practices of the nation, moralizes about the rewards of faith that the Danes lack, ll. 183-188, and shows that the Danes do not even seek respite as they damn themselves:

\[
\text{sæule bescůfan} \\
\text{in fýres faeþm, frðfre ne wënan,} \\
\text{wihte gewendan!} \\
\text{(184b-186a)}
\]

If we construe frðfre as "grace" in this instance, we can see that in their sin the Danes' lack of grace is indicated by lack of faith, as they do not expect to receive the frðfor.

A scant five lines away is the vehicle of grace that will be able to restore the normal order and correct the mistakes of the Danes' sin: Beowulf hears of their plight and decides to help them. The first mention of grace in relation to Beowulf occurs after he has journeyed to Denmark, when the

16 The Danes may be seen as leaderless purely by virtue of Hrothgar's inability to correct their cataclysmic circumstances. The impotence of their king recalls the circumstances of the Danes in I. 15 when they were aldor(18)ase and suffered the fyrendearfe of I. 14. It will be remembered that this situation was ameliorated by grace.

coast-guard postulates that the hero's victory over Grendel will be "given". As with Hrothgar, exactly who or what actually gives martial success is not made clear at first, but may be deduced from later conversation. Initially the guard indicates the necessity of grace for the survivor of the battle:

```
swylcum gife þæt pone hildraes hál gediged.
```

(299b-300b)

and after having guided Beowulf to the Danish court, the guard makes the source of this grace more clear and openly Christian:

```
Faeder alvalda mid ðærstafum ðæowic gehealde
sída gesunde!
```

(316a-318a)

The compound ðærstafum in context here probably means "with grace" (cf. Klaeber, p. 300), and although the coast-guard's words are maybe no more than a common blessing or gesture of good will, his speech utilizes words denoting grace, and does, in fact, foreshadow the operation of grace in the defeat of Grendel. This prophetic function of the coast-guard may be compared to the omens, or hæel of l. 204, that prefigure the supernatural and possibly Christian grace that Beowulf will receive.

Hrothgar, the previous recipient of grace, is quick to realize that Beowulf's arrival signals the ðærstafum sent by God. Although in this case the word may denote "kindness" just as well as "grace", the divine origin is clear, and the sense is not effectively changed if either option is used.
On hearing of the Geat's arrival, Hrothgar declares that

"Hine hælig God
for ärstafum ős onsende,
tö Wæst-Denum,
...
(381b-383a)

Later, the king remarks to Beowulf that he was motivated by this same ärstafum in seeking to help the Danes:

"For [g]levy[r]tum þū, wine-mīn Beowulf, ond for ärstafum ūsic söhtest."  (457a-458b)

In this case ärstafum may simply indicate Beowulf's personal kindness, and its parallel syntactical function to [g]levy[r]tum seems to reinforce this rendering, but the possibility of interpreting as "grace" exists if only because this word has been so used in sentences of reasonably parallel sentiment and structure. If we accept that the references made to ärstafum indicate that Beowulf has been sent as a vehicle of grace to the Danish people in their distress, perhaps it is no accident that they are now called the Ār-Scildinga by the poet (cf. simple Scildinga, l. 351) in l. 464. The prefix Ār, of course, carries the same ambiguities noted before, but is possibly an indication of the return of grace to the Danish nation by virtue of Beowulf's presence.

Beowulf's previous state of grace is seen in his recounting of the Breca incident, when, challenged by Æfrith, he describes his victories over the sea-monsters, which were "given" to him as his hand becomes an extension of the "battle-rush":

"...
hwaepre mē gyfepæ weard,
þæt ic ēglæcan orde gerāchte,
hildebille; heapores fornām
This statement recalls Hrothgar's previous state of grace when he was *herespæd gyfen*. Wealhtheow intimates that Beowulf embodies grace sent by God when the poet paraphrases her speech of greeting to the Geats:

> ... Gode þancode
> wîsfaest wordum þæs de hire se willa gelamp,
> þæt hêo on ægnigne eorl gelêfde
> fyrena fröfre.

(625b-628a)

Although *fröfre* need not mean more than the obvious physical relief from the ravages of Grendel, the fact that she offers thanks to God for this relief indicates that if it is not a direct reference to grace; it denotes a result of grace. This conclusion is supported by the fact that it is brought by Beowulf, the vehicle of grace. Like his namesake, the first Beowulf, he brings *fröfor* to the Danes from God.

How grace operates through the hero, already suggested in the Breca-digression, is rather more clarified by the author in his depiction of Beowulf's wait for Grendel. God is pictured as the giver of strength and courage, which are closely associated, if not in apposition, with His grace, or *hylde*:

> Hûru Gēata lêod géorne truwode
> módgan maegnes, Metodes hylde.

(669a-670b)

Just as Beowulf was previously "given" victory through his hand against the sea-monsters, so now grace appears to be acting through his strength, making his body a tool of divine will. Immediately prior to the fight, the poet not only
predicts Beowulf's victory, but spells out how God used him by infusing him with grace, frōfor, and thereby granting him victory:

\[ \text{Ac him Dryhten forgeaf} \\
\text{wīgspēda gewiofu, Wedera lēodum,} \\
\text{frōfor ond fultum, baet hīe fēond heora} \\
\text{dūrh ānes crafet ealle ofercōmon,} \\
\text{selfes mihtum.} \]

(696-700a)

Note the progression in the first half-lines from the fortune of war-success to grace and support, then to the skill and strength of the warrior, then to the ambiguous reference to "his own might" which could be either a reference to Beowulf, or to God Himself, the source of victory. At any rate it is evident that the frōfor here is the grace that uses Beowulf as an instrument for the execution of divine will. The next sentence reinforces the sentiment of this one, but extends the application of God's mercy and power to a more universal sphere:

\[ \text{Sōd is gecypped,} \\
\text{baet mihtig God manna cynnnes} \\
\text{wēold wīdeferhā.} \]

(700b-702a)

Having established grace as necessary for victory, and demonstrating it as integral in Beowulf's conquest of Grendel, the poet further adds at the moment of the hero's victory

\[ \text{Bēowulfe weard / gūdhēd gyfepe...} \]

ll. 818-19 as a subtle reminder that God's grace, the true source of Beowulf's strength, is the cause of victory. Again we recall the commonplace that success in battle is generally gīsepe in previous episodes, and that the fight with Grendel allows us
a more developed explanation of how Chambers' "Giver of Victory" (see p. 7) accomplishes His will.

The Danes, celebrating victory in the morning, rejoice in their renewed reception of grace, which is made obvious by the poet's denoting the purged Heorot as a *gifhealle* for the first and only time, l. 838. Although I must acknowledge that this word has a primary connotation of "gift-hall", which is a natural description of its feudal function (cf. footnote 13), again it is possible to infer a "grace" compound, if only in view of the fact that the hall is now dominated by the grace that has cleansed it, which may be seen as a dominant characteristic. I feel that through Beowulf God has extended His grace from the inviolable throne, to *the hall of the comitatus*, the microcosm of society and order, and that by purging the hall, Beowulf has shriven the Danes *en masse*.

Hrothgar is the first to admit that the victory is God's, as he commences his panegyric to His grace and beneficence:

"Disse ansyne Alwealdan þanc lungre gelimpet."

(928a-929a)

"... A maeg God wyrcan wunder æfter vundre, wulþres Hyrde."

(930b-931b)

Further, he acknowledges that Beowulf was a medium for the power of God, in effect a vehicle of grace:

"Nu scealc hafad þurh Drihtnes miht dæd gefremede."

(939b-940b)

He then goes so far as to intimate that Beowulf's mother was given her son by grace, or *ðæs*: 
"paet hyre Ealdmetod êate wære bearnegebyrdo."

and indicates that Beowulf himself has received grace while wishing him continued divine favour:

"... Alvalda pec
gôde forgylde, swâ hê nu gût dyde!"

(to which Beowulf replies that the Geats were able to accomplish their mission only through "much grace", or ēstum miclum;

"We þæt ellenwerc ēstum miclum,
feohtan fremedon, ..."

Before I progress any further, I concede that my rendering of the forms of ēst in the quotations as "grace" denies their more obvious meaning of "kindness" or "good will", much as with ār, but in the case of Beowulf's mother, since it is God's good will, a translation of grace is not amiss, nor does it conflict in sentiment with Klaeber's rendering of it as an adjective meaning "kindly" (p. 325). It is somewhat less convincing to see the ēstum displayed by the Geats as necessarily "grace", as it may simply indicate the generous spirit in which they undertook and accomplished the mission of mercy. Note, however, that Beowulf later refers to his adversary as devoid of grace:

".... nō þær ãeníge swâ þēah fêasceaft guma frōfre gebohte;
.... ãær ãbîdan scéal
maga māne fâh. miclan dômes,
hû hîm scîr Metod scrîfan ville."

(972b-979b)

Again frōfre may indicate no more than physical relief from
his mortal wound, but the second line recalls the situation of Scyld, who was festcæft and received frēfre which was grace for the Danish nation; an interpretation of "grace" is also strengthened by the succeeding reference to Grendel's judgement at the hands of God, which implies that the frēfre that he does not receive is grace.

Grendel's spiritual condition is reflected in the character of at least one member of the Danish comitatus: Unferth, who because his fratricide is undoubtedly in Caines cynne. It is apt that Unferth should be the byle, or spokesman for the corrupt and sinful Danes, and we see him as the embodiment of evil that made the Danish court susceptible to the attacks of Grendel. Just as Grendel waged successful physical destruction on the society, so did his human counterpart, Unferth, spread the evil influence of Cain, overthowing the piety implanted originally by God's grace. The attack of evil has taken place on two complementary levels: the influence of Unferth may have led them to the pride and avarice finally represented in Herot, and once the Danes were actually living in this symbol of sin, they were finally physically destroyed by Grendel. A clue to Unferth's lack of grace is found possibly in this description:

... þēah þe hē his māgum nære ārfaest æct ecga gelācum.

(1167b-1168a)

Of course the obvious rendering for ārfaest in this context is "kindly", or "honourable", rather than "fast in grace", but the secondary interpretation is at least possible if my
analysis of Unferth's character as parallel to Grendel's is accepted, and if it is borne in mind that there was a specific reference to Grendel's lack of grace, so that a similar statement might well be expected about Unferth. In the same vein, it might be argued that there follows almost immediately a remark by Hrothgar restating Beowulf's state of grace:

"Bēo wīd Gēatas glaed, geofena gemyndig, nēan ond feorran þū nū hafast." (1173a-1174b)

The contrast and hostility between Beowulf and Unferth has been evident from their first encounter, and their antipathy is obviously grounded in their moral antimony. It may be a point of structural balance that a reference to Unferth's lack of grace is followed by a mention of Beowulf's enjoyment of what his opponent in every sense does not enjoy. For the same reason that Grendel and Unferth are equated in lack of grace, Unferth and Beowulf must be opposed. Woolf points out that not only does their conflict allow the poet an opportunity to develop Beowulf's character and background in opposition to that of his shameless adversary, but that throughout his stay in Denmark, Beowulf works a metamorphosis in Unferth, symbolized by the latter's increasing silence and finally his eventual warrior-like generosity with Hrunting, a change that symbolizes the Geat's conquest of evil will in Denmark.¹⁸ I find this analysis compatible with my theme of the reintroduction of grace to the Danish court and society, and see the changing

of Unferth's character parallel to the physical destruction of Grendel.

In the second fight, that against Grendel's dam, we find that the poet precedes the monster's attack with a reference to the operation of grace in the defeat of Grendel:

... maegenes strenge,
gimfaeste gife, ðæ him God sealde,
ond him tō Anvaldan ære gelýfde,
frœfre ond fultum; ...

(1270b-1273a)

The strength needed to subdue the monster came from God, and is labelled gifæ, ære and frœfre, three of the lexical items used for "grace" in the poem. In the battle in the mere against Grendel's dam, Beowulf is again aided by God, who protects him as does his armour, and who awards him victory:

... helpe gefremde,
herenet hearde,- ond hælig God
gewæold wigsigor; wítig Drihten,
rodera Ræedend hit on ryht gescéad

(1552b-1555b)

Brothgar's later praise of Beowulf acknowledges the fact that the hero is to be a vehicle of grace, or frœfre for his people:

"Ðu scealt tō-frœfre weorpan
  eal langtwidig lēodum þinum,
hæledum tō helpe."

(1707b-1709a)

While it would appear that the combination of frœfre and helpe in his instance seems to reinforce a purely physical or secular connotation for the word, the possibility of "grace" seems stronger if we bear in mind that Beowulf has received frœfor as grace before this, and that the function of a king is to bring grace to his people, a function that Beowulf is
already fulfilling for the Danes. This same idea is later echoed in the description of Offa I and his son, Eomer, who appear to participate in grace. Offa is a "spear-bold man" by virtue of geofum, or grace, granted that the feudal aspects of this word as a dative (cf. gifstöl, -heall) are possible instead of an instrumental function denoting "grace":

... fordäm Offa waes
geofum ond gëduum, giàrcëne man,
wëde geweordod, wîsdôme hëold
ëdel sînne; - þonon Eomer wôc
haelępum tô helpe, ...

(1957b-1961a)

If "grace" is meant here by the poet, we find a neat parallel to the opening situation between Scyld and his son in Offa and Eomer, and the function of the ruler is made clear - to execute the divine will for his people through the power of grace. With this in mind, we see in Beowulf the best possible material for kingship, and furthermore, the poet reminds us that Beowulf received grace:

ac hë mancynnes, mæste craefte
giðfaestan gifge, þe him God sealde,
hëold hildedëor.

(2181a-2183a)

just before he tells us that the young Beowulf was scorned for his idleness and frailty, ll. 2183-2188. We may also note this as a parallel to the situation of the destitute Scyld helped by grace at the beginning of the poem. It is fitting that the first section of the poem should end with reference to the fact that Beowulf shares the rule of the Geats with Hygelac:

Him waes bām samod
on dām lēodscipe lond geczynde,
The action of the poem now shifts to a much later date, at least fifty years later, and Beowulf is king of the Geats. At this point Beowulf and the Geats are in a situation almost parallel to that of Hrothgar and the Danes earlier. Blessed with the ad hoc reception of grace necessary to protect the Geats from the catastrophe of being leaderless, much as he rescued the Danes before, Beowulf ascended the throne after the death of Hygelac and did, in fact, thus become a fròfor to his people. It can be seen, however, that he does not enjoy grace in this second division of the poem, and that the calamity that destroys him is allowed by God, much as Grendel was allowed to ravage the Danes, because the slave that provokes the dragon does so by the grace of God. Why this seemingly abrupt reversal of fortune for Beowulf? Goldsmith points to what she feels is the hero's moral deterioration in the second part of the poem; she feels that he has acquired a sinful pride found earlier in Hrothgar and foreshadowed for Beowulf in the old king's extensive moralizing speech, 11. 1700-1784. In another article she demonstrates a further parallel between Beowulf and Hrothgar: they both reign for fifty years before a disaster in the form of a fabulous creature visits their realms. (This length of time, however, may be simply a formulaic expression used to indicate a lengthy reign.) She then goes on to liken the

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pride exhibited by Beowulf in this latter section of the poem to that shown by other heroes in mediaeval literature whose arrogance was the basis for their ultimate destruction, and that of their followers — Roland in the Song of Roland and Bryhtnoth in the Battle of Maldon. Her observation that in each case the comitatus of the hero is destroyed is borne out in Beowulf by the messenger's prediction that wars and invasion will follow the death of the Geatish king. 20

Actual textual evidence for such an appraisal of Beowulf's character in the second part of the poem is shaky at best; the only explicit suggestion of Beowulf's moral corruption is found in the intimation that he transgressed against some ethical law at an earlier date, and by so doing, offended God:

węnde se wissa, paet hæ Wealdende ofer ealde riht ēcean Dryhtne bitre gebulge; ...  

(2329a-2331a)

Exactly what Beowulf has done to offend God is a matter purely for speculation, as ofer eald riht indicates that it is wrong to anger God, who is the Law. It might be suggested that if we construe the riht as a commandment, it may be that it is a reference to pride, and thereby to original sin. This would class Beowulf effectively with Hrothgar, who was dominated by pride. The slave, on the other hand, is protected and aided by God's grace in the theft of the cup; note that for the purpose of this adventure, the slave enjoys the same hyldo granted to Beowulf in his fight against Grendel, ll. 669-670:

... he to ford gestop
dyrman craefte dracen hæafde neah.
sva maeg unfaege .slides gedigan
vean ond vræeciæ se de Waldendes
hyldo gehealde!

(2289b-2293a)

This open statement of the slave's reception of grace is
later balanced by a strong suggestion that as king, Beowulf,
and therefore the Geats as a nation, no longer have any hope
of receiving grace. It will be recalled in our earlier dis-
cussion of the gifstöl in relation to the Danish court, that
Hrothgar and the Danes were allowed a modicum of grace even
through Grendel's reign of terror, to which the intact throne
bore witness, and that Beowulf's advent was testimony to the
arrival of a stronger quantum of grace that was needed to
purge the evil represented by Grendel and his dam. Now, in
the case of Beowulf and the Geats, the throne, the gifstöl,
is consumed in the dragon's fire:

På vaes Bîowulfe bróga gecyded
snûde tò söde, þæt his sylfes hâm,
bolda sëlest brynewylmum mealt,
gifstöl Gêata.

(2324a-2327a)

The throne that represented the divine legitimization of
kingship through grace is now gone; from this point on almost
all references to grace will occur in recalling previous
events. For instance, we see that Beowulf might have convey-
ed grace to the Geats through counseling them in the time of
young Heardred's reign:

hwædre he hine on folce frêondlârum hêold,
êstum mid ærc, od daet he yldra weard,
Weder-Gêatum wêold.

(2377a-2379a)
The force of ēstum mid ēre, it must be admitted, again will seem to indicate a purely moral or social kindness, but the redundancy of these terms allows a possible interpretation of one of them as "grace", so that we have a statement of cause and effect. Note that what is possibly a function of grace in the protection of his people continues until (œd dæt) Beowulf becomes king. Now perhaps we may understand the ealde riht offended by Beowulf; it may be suggested that he was never meant to rule, that he was eligible only for a warrior's or retainer's grace, not that of a king. We find an intimation of this in Beowulf's admission that it was "given" to him to be an ideal retainer in the service of Hygelac, as he revenged the death of his king:

"Ic him þā mādmas, þē hē mē sealde, 
geald aet güde, swā mē gifede waes,"

(2490a-2491b)

Beowulf has been given grace so that he would be able to effect a loyal and perfect completion of the feudal contract legitimized by Heaven; this is how he may be a frōfor to his people: his place is in the service of the gifstōl, not in its possession. An interesting sidelight to this interpretation is found in the hero's dying words to Wiglaf, when Beowulf observes that a son was not "given" to him:

"Nu ic suna mīnum syllan volde 
gūdegædu, þæt mē gifede swā 
ænig yrfewerd æfter wurde 
lice gelenge."

(2729a-2732a)

The hypothetical son is referred to as an yrfewerd—a heir, and we can see that there was no grace given to Beowulf
that would assure the continuation of his rule of the Geats through his issue.

Goldsmith proposes that Beowulf exhibits an overbearing pride before he meets the dragon in conflict:

Before the earlier monster-fights, he committed himself to God. This time he boasts to his men that he alone will win the gold.\textsuperscript{21} Which recalls the \textit{oferhygde dæl} of Hrothgar's sermon; she states further that the dragon and the hoard symbolize the pride and avarice that have overcome Beowulf as they did Hrothgar, in whose case Heorot manifested his sins.\textsuperscript{22} Kaske, on the other hand, points to ll. 2794–2798, in which Beowulf declares that he wanted the treasure only for his people, and is therefore free from avarice.\textsuperscript{23} Whichever analysis is more correct, we can be sure of Beowulf's pride, and if he lacks avarice, this characteristic only strengthens his association with Hrothgar, whose generosity in rewarding Beowulf eliminates any question of greed, as does his magnanimity toward the Danes at the opening of Heorot, ll. 71–73.

In both Hrothgar and Beowulf, however, we find a king without the grace necessary to defend his people; just as Hrothgar was powerless against Grendel's onslaught, so when Beowulf encounters the dragon, we see that it is not "given" to him to succeed:

\textsuperscript{21}Goldsmith, "Theme," p. 91.

\textsuperscript{22}Goldsmith, "Theme," p. 100.

Then, in his moment of greatest despair, Beowulf is granted victory in a way that reminds us pointedly of his deliverance of Hrothgar and the Danes. I suggest that as Grendel chastises the hubris of Hrothgar, so in a more pointed way does the dragon dissipate the arrogance of Beowulf, and it is at this crucial point of humility that grace is brought to the kings as a protection for their people. For Beowulf, a victory that is at best Pyrrhic, but nonetheless a victory, is vouchsafed by Wiglaf, and the relationship between Wiglaf and Beowulf finds a parallel in the earlier situation of Beowulf and Hrothgar. We have noted Beowulf's resemblance to Hrothgar, and may see the function of Wiglaf as essentially that of Beowulf in Denmark, but the similarity of situation includes more than the similarity of Wiglaf's receiving ad hoc grace to save his king and country. It must be noted that Beowulf aided the king who had succoured his father, Ecgtheow, after the latter had killed Heatholaf and was fleeing prosecution for this act. In the same way Wiglaf helps Beowulf, the king that gave shelter and protection to Wiglaf's father, Weohstan, after he had killed Eastmund and was fleeing the revenge of the Swedes. In each case, the vehicle of grace seems to be motivated as much by filial loyalty as by divine commission to protect the nation that is threatened by the attack of fabulous evil. I find in this situation a nice blending of traditional Germanic loyalty and the concept of the Christian
God as a protector of mankind through the deeds of virtuous men. Further parallel between Beowulf and Wiglaf might be found in the young retainer's actions just before he helps his lord to kill the dragon, and in the story of Beowulf's youthful metamorphosis from a weakling to the best and most powerful of warriors, ll. 2183-2189. It is possible to suggest that Wiglaf flees with the rest of the retainers, ll. 2596-2602, and that his consequent emergence as the bravest and most loyal of the lot recalls Beowulf's reversal of character while young. Lumiansky demonstrates a rapid but credible development of Wiglaf's character, a product of the influence of his father and Beowulf, which makes him the wisest and bravest of the Geats, and naturally, their next leader:

Thus, the passages which show this development make possible the emergence of an important character, Wiglaf, whom the poet employs as an exemplar for the thematic virtues of loyalty and courage in the face of danger.

The dragon-fight itself has been analyzed by Sisam as accurate and credible only insofar as details of the fight go, and he has noted that the scenic circumstances are often confused and inconsistent. He concludes that the audience demanded a

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24 It is possible to construe these lines as a statement of Wiglaf's constant and unflinching loyalty and courage, as l. 2599 controls our suppositions by emphasising the anum (Wiglaf) in contrast to the by alliterated in the preceding line which refers to the cowardly retainers. If the contrast between Wiglaf and the retainers is understood in terms of the immediate action, then it is possible that he did not flee at all, and that we witness no change in his character.


26 Lumiansky, p. 206.
realism only in the actual fighting, which they received in this and other contemporary battle-poems. Thus from this milieu of authentic martial technicalities the character of Wiglaf evolves and is almost instantly accredited. Wiglaf, in becoming like the previous Beowulf, is accepted almost immediately into the position that the old hero had held only long after having proved himself: kingship.

The resulting state of the Geats after Wiglaf has brought the grace necessary for the destruction of the dragon does not, however, parallel that of the Danes after Beowulf's grace has saved them. For a little while at least, the Danes are spared the fæcenstafas of civil war and the Heatho-Beardian feud that will destroy Heorot and cause the deaths of many men, while for the Geats the apocalypse is imminent. Primarily, it is possible to interpret from the fact that Wiglaf's hand is burnt from contact with the dragon's fire, ll. 2697-2698, that the new leader of the Geats lost his ad-hoc grace in the moment of victory, and that maybe he has been susceptible to the destruction of evil, in both a moral as well as physical sense, when this grace was withdrawn. This, however, is a speculation founded on no explicit evidence, and is not in itself sufficient to betray a sullying of the new king's character. There is an indication that the Geats are to be denied grace in the future; the messenger's speech at the closing of the poem states that the kindness of "the

Merovingian" is "not given" to the Geats:

"Us wæcs ǣ syédan
Merewīoingas milts ungysēde." (2920b-2921b)

It is tempting to see in milts a reference to "grace", as stated in Hamilton's list of words denoting this concept, but this is the "kindness" of the Merovingian, and the threat posed by him may indicate a lack of grace only if his menace is compared to the fact that Grendel was "allowed" by God to harass the graceless Danes. It must be noted also that the reference to ungysēde need not betray a supernatural action of not giving, but may be a reference to the hostility of the Merovingian, who is withholding his "kindness" from the Geats. My reason for supposing an interpretation of grace in this context is that it fits into the theory that the Geats, devoid of their gifstōl, and therefore of grace, are a doomed people, as is evidently borne out in history.28

This lack of grace found in the Geat's situation by the end of the narrative is reflected in the doom of Beowulf himself, although the poet equivocates on the question of whether the hero is saved or damned. As the Geats congregate about the lifeless body of their lord, the poet makes much of the curse laid upon the man who should touch the treasure hoard:

\begin{align*}
\text{ittomena göld galdre bewunden,} \\
\text{þæt dām bringinge hrīnan ne móste} \\
\text{gumena ðenig, ...} \quad (3052a-3054a).
\end{align*}

28 Klaeber, 56vi-xlviii.
but immediately qualifies this by indicating that God's grace would be able to negate the effects of the spell:

\[
\ldots \quad \text{hefne God sylfa, exsogra Sæcyning sealde þám de hē wolde}
\]
\[
\text{hē is manna gehuld - hord openian,}
\]

(3054b-3056b)

In the phrase *manna gehuld* we have an echo of the protection voiced in the *hyldo*, or "grace", enjoyed previously by both Beowulf and the slave. The curse is mentioned again, ll. 3069-3073, wherein the poet explains that he who plundered the hoard was damned to burn in Hell, unless he had previously more eagerly sought the *æst*, or "grace" of God:

\[
\text{naefne goldhwæte gearwar hæfde}
\]
\[
\text{Ægennes ðæst aer gescēawod.}
\]

(3074a-3075b)

It is possible to look back to ll. 2819-2820, where we learn that Beowulf's soul has gone to seek the *sæðfaestra dōm* - the judgement of the righteous ones, or to look ahead to his funeral, and decide that his ultimate destination is Heaven when the poet tells us that ... *Hæfæn réce sweð (a)lg.*

l. 3155, especially when we remember that nobody knew where the funeral ship of Scyld was received, ll. 50-52. If because of this evidence we suppose that Beowulf has gone to Heaven, then we must deduce that Beowulf was given enough grace to overcome the curse and ascend to Heaven.

Many problems arise that make the above position almost untenable, the most obvious being that just before the fight with the dragon, as Goldsmith notes, Beowulf does not seek the grace of God more eagerly than the gold itself (cf. l. 2536); in fact there is no mention of faith at all in his
speeches. Furthermore, the sóðfaestra dóm sought by his soul might just as well mean a glorious reputation as a benign judgement from the Christian God, who is not mentioned in this context. The question of Heaven swallowing the smoke may be explained as a purely physical phenomenon having no Christian spiritual overtones whatever. The idea of salvation for a pagan, as Gilson has noted, is out of the question in the Augustinian doctrine, as the grace given them has no supernatural value. But would a Christian poet writing for the amusement, and possibly the edification, of his Christian audience not overlook this point of theology, especially seeing that he has made many of the poem's characters profess to the Christian faith although they could not possibly have come into contact with the Church at that time? If the poet was willing to make some concessions in historicity to dogma, might he not exclude a troublesome and confusing doctrine and allow his characters to present exempla that would easily relate to the condition of his audience?

The problem becomes even more confused when we note Beowulf's speech to Wiglaf, in which he seems to anticipate a favourable judgement from God, 11. 2736-2743, because he has committed no heinous crimes, and he therefore able to rejoice even in the moment of death. Is this a reference to God, or to the reputation that he will leave behind him after his death? If the sentiment is Christian, it merely indicates that he has not committed murder nor treachery nor
borne false witness, and it does not concern his probable sins of pride and avarice. Or does the statement he makes ll. 2793-2798, in which he thanks God for allowing him to win the treasure for his people, display an altruism that clears him of any charge of avarice despite the comment made l. 2536? At any rate, it is still possible to find pride, if not avarice, as his motivation before the fight against the dragon, and this pride is enough to indicate sin and damnation.

It might be argued that Wiglaf, the vehicle of grace that saves the Geatish people from the threat of the dragon, in purging the Geatish nation of the malitia embodied by the monster, also restored grace to Beowulf, in a way somewhat similar to the purging of evil from Unferth by Beowulf suggested by Woolf. This would certainly explain the renewal of Beowulf's piety and faith, which appear to be as Christian as any utterance in the poem, after Wiglaf brings him the grace that finally conquers the dragon. It may be suggested that Beowulf's lack of success against the monster humbles his pride, and that in his repentant and humble condition he is now eligible for restorative grace, which arrives at this point in the person of Wiglaf. This, I feel, is what the poet means to imply, and in following the career of Beowulf we can see that the poet makes him more human in this way. This amounts to no more than a statement about the corruptibility of even heroic human flesh, and the ever-present hope of Christian redemption. We see in Beowulf,
moreover, a combination of the experiences of both Scyld and Heremod: like Heremod, Beowulf received grace, was exalted over other men, but fell to the sin of pride and maybe avarice, but like Scyld he was a virtuous man dedicated to the welfare of his people, and, like Scyld, went on Frēan weorc at his death.

If the applications of the terms suggested by Hamilton have not been indiscriminate, I think it safe to say that the poet has used a unified and cohesive theory of grace to provide a Christian continuum throughout the main action of the story of Beowulf. I believe that this evidence of doctrine is integral with, rather than superimposed on, the structure and matter of the text, and I therefore disagree with Whallon that there is no more than a suggestion of orthodox doctrine in the poem. It may well not be purely an Augustinian doctrine, as the Bishop of Hippo did not invent the theory of grace, and any Christian might well have found the same doctrines used in the poem in the same place that St. Augustine found them: the epistles of St. Paul. St. Augustine was, however, the major Christian theological influence until St. Thomas Aquinas, and it is probable that if this poem was written by a literate Christian, then this individual would have knowledge of current doctrines, and might apply them in his work.  

29Rosemary Woolf, for instance, finds [MAE, 27 (1958)] in the Dream of the Rood an orthodox statement of Christology that she submits was meant as a subtle refutation of heresies for the audience of the poem. If this is so, might we not expect and find the same type of "propaganda" in Beowulf?
Further evidence in the text that suggests the operation of grace is the use of the lexical items based on the word hæel\textsuperscript{30} which indicate the operation of "luck" or "good fortune", even "omen". The supernatural associations of this word naturally lend it an association with divine will in a Christian context. If the words based on hæel do denote grace, we would expect their application to follow the same pattern as the one noted thus far for the distribution of grace. First, however, it will be valuable to note the ambivalence with which the author spasmodically defines the evil fabulous individuals: Grendel and his dam. In several instances the poet ascribes to these monsters a term that equates them with their human antagonists; for example, in Hrothgar's description of them, ll. 1349-1353, we are told that their shape is human, even if their size is superhuman. Remember that Hrothgar described Beowulf in an analogous fashion, ll. 379-381, when he allocated to the hero the strength of thirty men.

During the battle between Beowulf and Grendel in Heorot, the poet gives the antagonists equal status:

\begin{quote}
Yrre wæron bægen,
reþe renweardas.
\end{quote}

(769b-770a)

and just a few lines later describes the pair as headodiðorun, l. 772. Both Grendel and Beowulf are identified as yrre and both are called renweardas and headodiðorun. There seems to

\textsuperscript{30}See Appendix II.
be no distinction made here between good and evil individuals. Later Grendel will be described as a destitute warrior-
fæsceat guma, l. 972, in a way that reminds us of Seyld Seefing in l. 7, and before all this, Grendel is given comitatus status when the poet refers to him as a retainer of the hall, or healdegræces, l. 142. Another generalized equation of hero and monster by the poet is found in his application of the term ãglaēca to Sigemund, l. 893; this term is generally reserved for the denotation of fabulous creatures. 31 The ambivalence with which the monsters are described leads to the conclusion that the difference between hero and monster is seen spiritually, not physically. Baird sees Grendel as an exiled-warrior figure, 32 and reads the disputed lines 168-169 as an indication of his inability to participate in the feudal security of the throne (cf. above, p. 13). He finds this part of the irony of Grænlec's being parallel to, yet distant from the human warriors that he confronts. If this is true, we see another of Grendel's insufficiencies concerning comitatus participation in his alienation from the use of weapons, ll. 433-434. Beowulf describes this as ignorance of the göða— the "good things" which are the usual pursuits of the warrior:

"nát hē þéra göða, þaet hē mē ongēan slēā, rand gehēave, þēah de hē rōf sē." (681a-682b)

31 Cf. Klaeber, p. 298, also 11. 159, 433, 592, 732, 739, etc.

We would naturally expect such an individual to be without grace, and I feel that this is indicated in the first description of the monster, when the poet refers to him as the *wiht unhæelo*, l. 120, and his defeat at the hands of Beowulf is classified as an encounter with "harder luck" than he is used to:

næfre hē on aldordagum ðær nē sipðan beordran hæele, healdegnas fænd!

(718a-719b)

The apposition of "harder luck" and "håll-retainers" emphasizes the fact that Beowulf is the vehicle of grace, expressed as hæele, sent against Grendel, who is unhæelo. From the beginning of his adventure, Beowulf seems to have been favoured by this type of grace; good omens, or hæl, indicate to the Geats that the voyage to Denmæk is to be encouraged:

hvetton hige(r)ōfne, hæl sceawedon.
(204)

The Danish coast-guard illustrates that, in the forthcoming battle against Grendel, the same agency that is able to "give" him victory will also preserve the hero hål:

"gōdfremmendra swylcum gifepe bīd, þæt þone hilēras hål gedīged."
(299a-300b)

Brothgar openly invokes this type of grace, also seen as victory by apposition, for Beowulf just before the battle with Grendel:

(Ge)grette þā gumā ōrne,
Hrōdgār Bēowulf, ond him hæl ābēad,
wīnaernes geweald, ... 
(652a-654b)

This sentiment is later voiced by Wealhtheow in urging
Beowulf to enjoy the rewards of victory; when she wishes him hæle, we see the extension from grace used in battle to that used in dealing virtuously with riches:

"Brūc aisses bēages, Bēowulf lēofa, hyse, mid hæle, ...

... cen pec mid craeftē, ...

(1216a-1219a)

There are two possible interpretations to this passage. If the punctuation of l. 1217a is left intact, the queen's injunction is that Beowulf administrate the treasure with the virtues given by grace, and this is equated with acting mid craeftē, or "with cunning". If the first comma is eliminated from the verse, then Beowulf becomes the "youth with grace", the hyse mid hæle, and the exhortation to display himself mid craeftē may be construed as an allusion to his strength, and Wealhtheow may well be referring to the grace that brought him success over Grendel and earned him the treasure.

As has been noted before, Wīglaf becomes the vehicle of grace for Beowulf just as the latter was for Hrothgar, so we expect and find a congruent re-positioning of Beowulf with respect to hælo. Just as Hrothgar wished luck, or grace, to Beowulf, l. 653, so Beowulf wishes luck to Wīglaf and the other retainers just before the battle with the dragon:

þēden hǣlo ābēad heordgenēatum,  
goldwine Gēata.  

(2418a-2419a)

Having done this, he is succoured by Wīglaf, and the formula of wishing hǣl to the vehicle of grace that will eventually
save you is repeated once again, this time with Beowulf as Hrothgar, and Wiglaf as Beowulf. A final consideration of harl and its compounds reveals that, like the other terms for "grace", they are applied to any individual for only a limited space of time. The poet seems to emphasize the fact that for Hrothgar, Heremod and Beowulf, grace is only a temporary gift; it is bestowed and taken away without any control by the warrior, and we are led to wonder for how long Wiglaf will retain the power to save his people.
CHAPTER II

GRACE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

While the previous chapter concerned itself with demonstrating the evidence of the operation of grace within the thematic structure of *Beowulf,* it was admitted that the doctrine applied was not necessarily Augustinian. Nor will this chapter be able to prove that the poet is faithfully reproducing an Augustinian theology when he makes an individual the vehicle of grace and the instrument of Providence. Augustine was, however, the dominant theologian of his time, perhaps by virtue of his constant battle against heresy, especially his anti-Pelagian treatises. Countering the fifth-century heresy of the British Pelagius and his followers, Augustine refuted the theory that man was not born into original sin and that consequently he might attain salvation without grace. That this doctrine was a denial of Christ's messianic mission of salvation and a serious rebuttal of the foundations of Catholic faith needs no belabouring, and Augustine was quick in quelling this dangerous insubordination.

The resulting doctrines on grace and salvation propounded by St. Augustine at the condemnation of Pelagianism at the Council of Ephesus in 431 were accepted as true Catholic faith.¹ It was established that salvation was not a reward

for virtue, but rather the product of the divine mercy of grace and the source of all mortal virtue, as noted in the quotations from Gilson in the preceding chapter. Augustine affirmed that the free will of an individual was imbued with the initial and paramount virtue of faith by the grace of God, so that the basic and essential merit of man had its source in Heaven, not in the soul. Consequently, it was held that man could not by himself achieve salvation, that merit could not possibly occur before the grace that was axiomatic to its very existence. It is crucial to note that grace operates on the spiritual level of man's free will to produce salvation and merit; we will find the temporal results of this action of ad hoc grace on a hero to be both a physical and intellectual excellence or strengthening. Just as faith is a spiritual strength or excellence produced by grace, so the intellectual result will be wisdom and the physical consequence valour. It is my contention that a character in this poem does not display one type of superiority without the other, that valour is the corollary to a soul in a state of grace, as is wisdom, while the soul is bound to the earth. Salvation from damnation is the eternal reward of grace, but this destiny is foreshadowed by victory over evil in temporal situations. With these precepts in


3 De Gratia Christi xxvii, pp. 602-603, and De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio xii, xiii, pp. 743-744.
mind, we must turn to the text and investigate the mental attributes of the characters in an effort to prove an adherence to this aspect of the doctrine of grace propounded by Augustine.

It must be admitted at the outset that the concept of mental excellence as the source of physical virtue can hardly be said to have originated with Christianity. The symbiosis between cerebral and physical qualities is an age-old concept, and the Aeneid offers us a prime example of a hero whose pagan piety is the cause of his worldly success. What our enquiry seeks among the characters of Beowulf is evidence of divine grace affording a strength of will and concomitant wisdom in the hero; this must find contrast in the spiritual/intellectual conditions of the evil and ungraced individuals. A common denominator in our analysis will be pride, the original sin of both Adam and Lucifer, and the reason for man's fallen state. An ancillary or consequent sin, avarice, will be examined to reinforce the operation of pride.

Because we have already concluded that pride was the downfall of Hrothgar, Unferth, Heremod, Hygelac, and Beowulf, not to mention the Danes as a nation, and have noted its opposition to grace as either a deteriorator of spiritual excellence or as the object of the purgative effect of grace, we may safely assume it to be a state of mind antithetical to

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Unferth's humiliation at the hands of Beowulf was initiated by the Dane's proud attempt to belittle the hero, so as to appear superior to him. Cf. 11. 499-505.
faith. Avarice in its association with pride may be seen as an extension, physically, of this attitude, much as valour is the objective correlative to grace-produced spiritual faith. The moral current of the poem develops an opposition of good and evil as a conflict of righteous and sinful wills, again not a strictly Christian idea, but the operation of grace lends a dogmatic flavour. Note that the speech of the Danish queen, recorded in the first chapter, intimates that grace, or hæle, will aid Beowulf in the conquest of avarice:

"Bruc disse bæges, Bæowulf læofa, hyse, mid hæle, and þisses hrægles nœt, þeō(d) gestrēona, and geþēoh telo, cen þēc mid crae

(1216a-1219a)

I construe the import of this speech to be that Beowulf, dominated by grace, mid hæle, while still only a youth, hyse, will exhibit the wisdom of continence and abstain from greed, and thereby will prosper well, geþēoh telo, and display a power or skill, craefte, which might be considered a virtue in this context. His later yielding of the treasure to Hygelac, ll. 2146-2149, allows us to realize that Wealththeow's words were prophetic, and Beowulf's declaration that he gives Hygelac the treasure with ēstum, l. 2149, might be a reference to the grace implied in mid hæle in Wealththeow's speech, although a translation of "good will" seems more probable in this instance. We see in Beowulf, however, the rare case of one who has dominion over riches without having them exercise a reciprocal dominion over him. We find this condition earlier in Hrothgar and later in
Wiglaf, and the crucial observation made by Wealththeow that grace is necessary, reveals the symbolic function of wealth in the poem: it is a degenerating influence on the spirit unprotected by grace, a conclusion borne out first by the testimony of Hrothgar and Heorot, then by Beowulf and the hoard.

The discussion of the protagonists will commence with a brief examination of their participation in the intellective aspect of grace in the poem: divine counsel and influence. Our quest will then be to survey the functions of their minds or wills and find a correlation among the lexicon for bravery, seen as strength of mind or spirit, actual will, the faculty of judgement, the quality of valour itself, and finally the position of the individual in relation to the administration of grace or the domination of sin. Kaske has analyzed the poem from a standpoint only slightly different from the one proposed above; he deals, however, not with grace, but with the qualities of the ideal warrior: sapientia et fortitudo, wisdom and strength. While these attributes explored by Kaske are analogous to the characteristics of intellectual and physical strength that I hope to show are the manifestations of grace in the Christian hero, considerable difference is found in our interpretations of Beowulf. Kaske maintains that it is possible to have either sapientia or fortitudo without having both, while it is obvious that my

5For a discussion of the lexical items admitted to this category see Appendix III.
thesis finds them complementary aspects of a spiritual state, the presence of one implying the existence of the other. Thus, although we examine essentially the same characteristics of each individual, my analysis of their moral postures differs considerably from Kaske's. Before I commence this work, however, I should like to point out that frequently the words I use as evidence of a divine or mortal intellective faculty have an alternate and perhaps more valid translation in the context within which I am using them, as well as elsewhere in the text. No attempt will be made to force all the occurrences of these words into a Procrustean uniformity, and only those instances in which they may reasonably be supposed to carry the force that I indicate will be offered, along with an acknowledgement of another possible rendering.

Primarily, we see the more intellectual nature of God's grace as counsel or advice. His aid to a hero may result in unmatched strength and prowess, but the poet indicates that it is raed, or "counsel", that links hero and deity. Raed, of course, may also indicate "benefit" or "gain" (Klaeber, p. 387) without any necessary allusion to "advice". An example of the ambiguity in this word presents itself when we examine Beowulf's victory in Grendel's mere; in the one instance that we find God called Raedend it is possible to see a link between divine will and the will of the hero:

... ond hālig God gewēold wīgsigor; wītig Drihten, rodra Raedend hit on ryht gescēd Ydelice, sypān hē eft āstōd. (1553b-1556b)
Here the hero's standing up is seen as the decision of the "wise Lord / Councilor of the Heavens". A difficulty arises, however, when it is observed that Raedend may mean no more than "ruler" (Klaeber, p. 387). Although it is safe to assume the same relation between Haelend and haelan (Appendix II) as we find between Raedend and the verb raedan, we find that the latter verb embraces both the force of "to counsel" or "deliberate" and that of "to rule". If my specialized rendering is accepted, then we may understand God, the witeg Drihten and "Councilor", to be aiding Beowulf in an intellectual way, with spiritual strength, because framing this unique description of God are two references to Beowulf's valour in terms of being "resolute" or anraed, a word that could conceivably be translated "one counsel" or "of one mind" (cf. Clark Hall and Meritt, p. 22). Battling Grendel's dam, Beowulf is described as:

Eft vaes anraed, nalas elnes laet.  
(1529)

and following the reference to God's grace, in the depiction of Beowulf's final revenge on Grendel, the hero is yrre ood anraed, l. 1575. The fact that within thirty-six lines we find the only occurrences in the poem of the words Raedend and anraed suggests that their association cannot be overlooked. The concept of God as Raedend falls almost medially between the two references to Beowulf as anraed, and as such, Beowulf's

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6 Cf. Bosworth-Toller, p. 782; "Two verbs originally distinct coalesce under this form..."

7 Raedend is almost equidistant from both; twenty-six
attitude neatly frames the reference, ll. 1554-1555, to the
intellectual function of divine grace. This participation
of the hero in divine wisdom is important, and will be
demonstrated later; we have established in the first chapter
the integral role of grace in this victory, and the passage
just discussed may be a clear indication of God's strengths-
ening the mind of the hero—a condition assessed as "faith"
by St. Augustine. A more ambiguous reference to God's con-
trol over man in this fashion is made by the poet at Beowulf's
death:

\[
\text{\textit{volde dōm Godes dāedum rāedan}} \\
\text{\textit{gumena gehwylcum, svā hē nū gēn dēa.}} \\
\text{(2858a-2859b)}
\]

Although the verb \textit{rāedan} carries the same ambiguous force of
either "to rule" or "to advise" as noted before, the subject
of the sentence is the \textit{dōm}, or "judgement" of God, which is
surely an indication that a divine intellectual function is
in operation in a way that may be construed as guiding man-
kind: It is in this way that the poet enforces two consider-
ations vital to the moral/theological bias of the poem. The
first is that God's help is emphasized as a spiritual
strengthening; the second is that we are presented with a
picture of Beowulf both in his participation in and
separation from the grace of divine wisdom. His state of
grace we have discussed; the second instance implies that
although God was able, He, by deduction, did not inspire

lines separate it from the first occurrence, only twenty
from the final.
Beowulf during the contest against the dragon. An elaboration of this suggestion is found in Wiglaf's observation concerning the situation of the Geats, which attributes their predicament to the bad will of Beowulf. After we discover that the Swedes and the Merovingians will overrun the leaderless Geats, Wiglaf tells us:

"Oft sceall corl monig Ænes willan
wræc Ædrêogan, swâ ës geworden is."

(3077a-3078b)

The position that the Ænes willan that caused the Geats' hardship is Beowulf's is tenable only if we eliminate the possibility of reference either to the slave that initiated the catastrophe or to the dragon. We have been told earlier that the slave committed his crime against his will, ll. 2221-2222, and it is reasonable to assume that a remark of this nature would be facile in reference to the dragon, although we are presented with an allusion to the monster's will in ll. 2306-2307. It is safe to conclude, I believe, that Wiglaf's statement refers to the destructive nature of Beowulf's will and its disastrous effect for the Geats. When we remark the operation of Beowulf's will, combined with grace, in the salvation of the Danes from fabulous evil, the disparity between Beowulf as warrior and Beowulf as king is seen to encompass moral polarities that are reflected in the social fortunes of his environment.

It is natural that Wiglaf, the vehicle of grace, should be able to recognize in the spiritual failings of Beowulf the responsibility for the coming holocaust. Besides Wiglaf
the slave provides an earlier indication of Beowulf's corrupted will; the poet is at pains to emphasize that the slave steals the cup, ll. 2221-2222, and guides the warriors back to the barrow, ll. 2409-2410, against his will. Since we have noted in the first chapter (p. 27) that the slave participates in grace, at least the ad hoc grace necessary to accomplish his mission, it is easy to see that Beowulf's proud eagerness to meet the dragon is the desire of a will in contradiction to wills directed by grace. The reader must gradually become aware that the will of Beowulf is not strengthened by grace in the sequence of events that lead to his death; this insight is accomplished through the foils of Wiglaf and the slave who are, in fact, vehicles of grace. Goldsmith's contention that Beowulf's pride is exhibited at this point because for the first time he does not commit himself to God before battle reinforces the argument that he has allowed pride to displace the faith that we know him to have possessed before.

Returning to the proposition that ræd embodies the concept of the initial spiritual or intellectual strength sent from deity to mortal, we are able to perceive in the poem a constant contrast of divine and mortal ræd that reinforces our findings on this type of grace. As the medium of grace in Denmark, Beowulf is willing to share his gift in an intellectual way with Brothgar:

8Goldsmith, "Theme," p. 91.
"Ic þaes Hröðgar maeg þurh rûmne sefan ræd gelaecan,
hû hê frôd ond gôd féond oferswyþep."

Here we see that Beowulf attributes eventual victory to counsel administered through "wisdom" (Klaeber, p. 139) which is described literally as "broad spirit", or rûmne sefan. It is possible to consider this reference as an indication of the spiritual operation of grace indicated by ræd. The same statement is made by Hrôthgar in the beginning of his long sermon, in which he observes that snyttrru, which we may consider to be the result of divine ræd, is given to man through the sîdne sefan of God:

"Wundor is tô secganne,
hû mihtig God maanca cynne þurh sîdne sefan snyttrru bryttad,
eard ond eorlscipe; hê ãh ealra geweald."

While again the normal translation for sîdne sefan would be "wisdom", it is, literally, the "great spirit" that we noted before with Beowulf and Hrôthgar. If we consider the references this sefan in their most abstract sense and accept the postulation that the wisdom being shared in both cases is the result of grace, it may be possible to identify this "spirit" with the Holy Ghost. This, however, is a conjecture for which there is only the thinnest of actual evidence, and represents not the poet's, but my intention. What can actually be deduced is that the action of spiritual grace is reinforced by the use of spiritual terms concerning its transmission. The final statement that He has power over
everything will be recalled later, but it may perhaps be observed that ealra includes the benefits of...snyttru... / eard ond corlsceipe that immediately precede it. The nature of the transmission of grace is once again identified as spiritual by Hrothgar in speaking of the wisdom that God has given to Beowulf:

"þæ þæ wordcwydas wigtig Drehten
on sefan sende; ne hyrde &c snotorlícor
on swā geangum feore guman þingian."
(1841a-1843b)

This use of sefan is obviously an allusion to Beowulf's own spirit, and we may see in the modifier snotorlícor that the effect of grace on Beowulf has created an unprecedented "wisdom" or "prudence" in the eyes of Hrothgar, and has thus created an intellectual virtue that we might associate with that produced by divine ræd.

This spiritual grace and its intellectual manifestation as wisdom finds contrast in the lack of wisdom and insufficient or ineffective ræd of the Danes. An example of this intellectual condition is made evident at Scyld's funeral:

Men ne cunnon
segan tō söde, selerædende,
hæled under heofenum, hwā þæm hlaeste onfēng.
(50b-52b)

The ignorance of the comitatus is perhaps due to their appositional modifier, selerædende; the Christian hero benefits by the counselling of his spirit by the ræd of the Holy Ghost; the Danes participate only in the communal intellect of the hall. This limitation of knowledge is
again expressed when Hrothgar admits to the ignorance of the selerædende concerning the ancestry of Grendel (ll. 1355-1357). After telling us of Scyld's grace and destination on Fræan væære at death, the poet emphasizes the hall-counsellors' confusion on the latter point. Similarly, long after an allocation of Grendel to the race of Cain, the poet has Hrothgar point to the same hall-counsellors' ignorance.

The inefficacy of the Danes' ræd is given a profoundly Christian implication early in the narrative. Just after the poet has mentioned God's grace in protecting the gifstöl, he presents a contrast in the anti-Christian counsel of the Danes:

Monig oft gesæt
rice tō rūne; ræd eahtedon,

Hwīlum hīe gehēton æt haergræafum
wīgweorpunga, wordum bǣdon,

(171b-176b)

Their advice is confined to a mortal source, rice tō rūne; even if the source of this ræd is enlarged beyond the precincts of the hall, it is still pagan, and, as we learn later, useless in contrast to the grace-inspired ræd brought by Beowulf. In appraising the Danes' actions morally, the poet delivers in lines 178-188 a sermon on faith that explains the plight of the Danes and ends with a general statement concerning the respective rewards of the faithless and faithful. The conclusion that I draw from the Danes' condition at this point is that they have allowed pride to
dominate their wills and hence are ineligible for the rāed of grace. This pride has not only led the Danes from holy rāed to their own insufficient faculties, but has twisted them so far from the truth that they have forgotten the only avenue of hope. The poet is at pains to underscore their need for both temporal and spiritual salvation; the latter he marks by the contrast of the embrace of Hell, the fyres faehm, l. 185, and the embrace of Heaven, or Fæder faehmum, l. 188.

The superiority of Beowulf's divine rāed appears in the sequence following the attack of Grendel's dam on Heorot.

Aware that Beowulf's rāed has triumphed over Grendel, that the strength of will produced by grace in which he puts his faith just before battle:

Hūru Gēata lēod georne truwode
mödgan maegnes, Metodes hyldo.-
(669a-670b)

has accomplished what mortal wit found impossible, we are confronted with a more forceful example of the Danes' intellectual impotence: the death of AEschere. The only victim of the nocturnal visit of evil is the man whom we may assume to exemplify the bad will of the Danes; AEschere was a counsellor, or rāedbora, and as such was doubtless a party to the rāed of l. 172 that fostered the heathen practices of the people:

9An interesting and not totally irrelevant parallel might be drawn here with Adam, Eve and the Tree of Knowledge.
"Dēad is AEschere,
Irmenlāfes yldrāˈbrōpor,
mīn rūnвитa ond mīn rāedbora."

(1323b-1325b)

As a rūnвитa and rāedbora to the king, the man seems to be naturally most vulnerable to the onslaught of the race of Cain, because he symbolizes the faithless, pride-dominated will of the Danes. ¹⁰ In response to this re-entry of evil, Hrothgar admits that it is the rāed of Beowulf alone that will be able to purge the evil:

"Nū is se rāed gelang eft acet þe ānum."

(1376b-1377a)

This statement may indicate the importance of the spiritual strength given by divine rāed in the coming battle, or it may indicate no more than a simple "plan" or "advice" without any reference to God beyond the implicit fact that Beowulf is the agent of His will. The use of this word does, at any rate, prepare us for the Rāedend - anrāed balance that we have noted before.

The triumph of Beowulf over Grendel's dam demonstrates the final victory over pride by faith, or of divine over human wisdom. An important symbolism is introduced that frames this conquest of evil by grace, and it deals with the figures of bad will: the heads of AEschere and Grendel. It

¹⁰It must be acknowledged that the poet's purpose in making AEschere the victim of this attack may be no more than to indicate the immediacy of the danger to the king. AEschere's rank and evident friendship with Hrothgar makes the propinquity of the harm to the king much greater than it was in Grendel's attacks (i.e. ll. 168-169).
is a source of great grief for the Danes to find Æschere's head on the cliff by Grendel's mere, ll. 1417-1421, but it is apt that he should have been deprived of his head as a warning to the Danes. As the separation of his head from his body signifies his physical death, so the separation of his will from faith, also symbolized, perhaps, by his head, is the cause of his spiritual death. The decapitation of Grendel by Beowulf, ll. 1588-1590, continues this symbolism to the victory of divine will over evil will. Beowulf's presentation of the monster's head to the Danes, ll. 1647-1650, is a more forceful presentation of this symbolism of the defeat of evil by grace, just as the death of the Danish counsellor figured the conquest of sin by evil. It is worth noting that this warning about the omnipotence of God has been given on two levels: the winning and exhibition of Grendel's hand and shoulder proved the superiority of strength sent by grace over the physical might of evil, while the complementary spiritual supremacy is announced by Grendel's head. A redundant, but fortifying observation may be made that Beowulf's resolve to defeat what we now see to be pagan evil was described as his faestrædne geböht, l. 610; again, if we consider this ræd to be a symptom of grace we understand that his mission is accomplished through a spiritual strength. It is evident, if my textual renderings are not amiss, that the intellectual facet of the operation of grace, seen as God's strengthening or counselling the spirit of the hero through faith, operates integrally within
the scheme elucidated in the previous chapter. From this point we must go on to what we know of the individual characters' mental processes and attributes to determine whether or not the characteristics of intellect accorded them reinforce their classification in our theory.

That Beowulf is immune to the dictates of earthly ræð is emphasized by Higelac when the hero returns, and the king, 11. 1994-1997, complains that his entreaties could not veto the journey to Denmark. This is only to be expected, since we know that Beowulf was following the divine advice of omens, the hæl of 1. 204 that sanctioned the journey. Conversely, we may perhaps see his isolation from the divine counsel of grace in the latter part of the poem when Wiglaf observes:

"Ne meahton wē gelāeran lēofne þēoden, rīces hyrde ræð ænigne, ðæt hē ne grētte goldweard þone."

(3079a-3081b)

Just as when he was the vehicle of grace for Hrothgar and the Danes, Beowulf's assistance was initially expressed as ræð gelāeran, 1. 278, so the vehicle of grace for Beowulf and the Geats, Wiglaf, attempts to avert disaster with the same gelāeran... / ræð formula. It is my contention that Beowulf's refusal to adhere to the ræð given by Wiglaf shows an extreme attitude of the/sin of pride. The refusing of counsel and the burning of the gifstöl together indicate that Beowulf is completely alienated from grace. In a situation that contrasts to this, a parallel between the earlier,
virtuous Beowulf and Hama has been noted by Goldsmith: both Hama and Beowulf are associated with the choosing of ecen raed - Hama, l. 1201, and Hrothgar’s exhortation to Beowulf, ll. 1758-1760, in which the hero is advised to choose the ece raedes instead of pride, the oferhýða. The function of the "eternal counsel" may in both instances seem to be opposed to pride; Hama’s wisdom is to flee battle in humility, but to be thereby infinitely better off than if he had followed his pride to a glorious death. In the case of Beowulf, it is easy to see that the "eternal counsel" will oppose him to the oferhýða, simply by the antithesis that Hrothgar implies in this line. This evidence also tends to give support to the theory that raed indicates grace used to strengthen the will of an individual to prevent the incursion of the archetypal sin of pride.

An observation supporting this idea of God’s dominion over the virtuous warrior is made in the poet’s reference to His geweald, or "power":

... sê geweald hafað saela ond mæla; þæt is sóða Metod. (1610b-1611b)

and, as we have noted before:

... hē ðæ ealra geweald." (1727b)

In this way, God’s influence over man is stressed after statements about His help in the defeat of Grendel’s dam

and about His distribution of wealth and virtue to mankind.

In contrast to this particular expression of God's grace, we find that the cases of sinful, or damned individuals, Grendel and Heremod, are defined in terms of the geweald of evil: "the fiends". Grendel's destination at death is indisputable (cf. l. 852), and his journey to Hell is thus described:

... ond se ellorgæst
feor siðian.
(807b-808b)

and we may assume that the cause of his damnation, and maybe his defeat, was the domination of evil geweald. So with Heremod the wrong influence pervades:

Hē mid Æotenum weard
ford forlæcen,
(902b-903b)

and immediately before this we find a statement of the diminishing of his strength and valour. We learn later that crime entered him, l. 951, and may construe this as evidence that he was not spiritually strengthened by grace, although we find out eventually that he was a recipient of grace, ll. 1716-1718. Sin, then, attributed to the geweald of evil, is responsible for the two great catastrophes of the Danes, and the antidote for the effect of this evil is found in the grace embodied by Scyld and Beowulf. The power of God, who is frequently called Wealdenc, is contrasted to the power of the evil "fiends" as a further lesson in the opposition of grace and sin.

For evidence of Scyld's succession to Heremod see Klaeber, p. 162 ff., especially p. 164.
An analysis of the intellectual aspects of the characters in the narrative should commence with an examination of their wills. Although one rendering of *willa*—an offered by Bosworth-Toller, pp. 1225-1226, corresponds to the modern usage: will, determination, intention, purpose, disposition and resolution, etc.; in the poem the word is frequently used to denote the object of willing or desiring (cf. Klaeber, p. 424). I have tried to select only those instances from the text wherein the first definition might reasonably be supposed correct, although the distinction between the interpretations noted above often seems obscured in context.

An extrinsic example of what I consider the function of faith in the will caused by grace comes from the *Dream of the Rood*, when that poet describes the newly-shriven sinner's spiritual commitment to seek salvation:

\[\text{Me is willa to dam mycel on moêde, ond min mundbyrd is geriht to paere rode.} \quad \text{(DR, 129b-131a)}\]

It must be remembered that this rode from which the dreamer seeks his *mundbyrd*, or "protection", is able to dispense grace, i.e. *haelan*, 1: 85b, and that it is by his "will" that the narrator hopes to achieve this grace. In *Beowulf* the will is given not soteriological, but *ad hoc* grace, used only for the security of a nation, except for the intimation that both Scyld and Beowulf are granted salvation. Grace is given to kings and warriors for the protection of their people, as the examples of Scyld, his son, the young Brothgar and
Beowulf, and Wiglaf all shew.

The "will" being discussed is assumed to be the "free will" or *liberum arbitrium* defined by Augustine in his doctrine on grace. We have seen in the hero the action of grace on this will to be a fortification or strengthening referred to by Augustine as "faith", which is accompanied by the physical might or fortune to prove successful in the battle against evil. We have little or no trouble in recognizing this condition in Beowulf and in other characters that enjoy grace, but we must assume that those individuals without grace lack this strength of will and body, especially in the fight against sin and evil, if we are to allegorize the action of the poem. I feel that the Danish nation as a whole suffers from the spiritual and physical impotence brought about by sin, so that while they may wish the defeat of Grendel, they are, symbolically, not strong enough to accomplish their will. The indication that Beowulf is the agent for the execution of this will is first voiced by Wealhtheow, when she thanks God that her *villa* has come to fruition, in that Beowulf has brought *fröfre* to the people:

```plaintext
grette Geata læod, Gode þancode
wifsaest wórdum þaes ðe hire se villæ gelæmp,
þæt hēo on hēnigne eorl gelýfde
fyrena fröfre.
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(625a-628a)

Of course, *villa* here may mean "wish", "pleasure" or "gratification" (cf. Klaeber, p. 424), and *fröfre* may indicate nothing more than the physical relief from Grendel's reign of terror that would be the desire of everybody at the Danish
court. Even granting this, her thanking of God for this occurrence is certainly an admission of the grace brought by Beowulf, and the collusion of God's purpose and her will indicate to me that God is vicariously strengthening the free will of the queen through Beowulf, the vehicle of grace. This, I suspect, is the import of Beowulf's reply to Wealththow's statement of faith, wherein he admits that he had resolved from the outset that his mission would be to implement this will:

"Ic þæt hogode, þæ ic on holm gestāh,
sæðāt gesæct mid mīhra secga gedriht,
þæt ic ānunga ēowra lēoda
willan geworhte, ..."

(632a-635a)

Admittedly, as before, the import of willan may be no more than "good will" and geworhte may be "gain" instead of "perform" or "carry out" (cf. Klaeber, pp. 424, 429 respectively). I feel that it is possible, since Beowulf knows that he is bringing rāed to the Danes, that the quotation refers to their spiritual weakness. For the same reasons, I consider the poet's observation that

Denum eallum weard
æfter þām waelrāe se willa gelumpen.

(823b-824b)

to refer to Beowulf's bringing the grace needed to conquer the evil represented by Grendel and Unferth, although on the physical level, a rendering of "gratification" for willan is, as Klaeber suggests, more apt than any other. A corollary of my argument that the symbolic use of willa indicates the free will of the Danes is that this will is in concordance with a divine will. If my reasoning is not amiss, this gives us in
the Danes a classic example of fallen man (cf. again Adam and Eve), whose will, weakened by sin, may well desire that which is good, but needs the strength of grace to accomplish salvation or virtue. That Beowulf brings this grace to the Danes is seen in his destruction of Grendel and in his conversion of Unferth.

The action of God on man's free will through grace is illustrated in Brothgar's sermon to Beowulf. The hypothetical individual to whom God gives ...snytttru... eard ond eorlscipe as grace seems to enjoy the accordance of his divine will:

"Wunad hē on wise; ...
... ac him eal vorold
wended on willan; hē þæt wyrse ne con -","  
(1735a-1739b)

The wyrse that he does not realize is the archetypal sin of Adam and Heremod, the oferhygda dæl - pride, which becomes, ll. 1748-1750, avarice. I believe this to be a statement of the antithesis between the direction of will by grace and the domination of this will by sin.

Moving to the second division of the poem, we find a reversal, naturally, of the good will found earlier in Beowulf. As previously discussed, it is possible to see a difference between the salutary effects of his will for the Danes while he is their vehicle of grace, and the misfortunes he brings upon the Geats through his will once this ad hoc grace has been withdrawn, and he is dominated by pride. We have noted his estrangement from the divinely-inspired ræd
offered by Wiglaf, and the contrast between his will and that of the slave whom we know to have benefitted from grace; Beowulf now seeks the dragon willfully, while the slave will go only against his will. Kaske is correct, I believe, in finding the dragon an allegory for malitia, as a manifestation of pride and avarice, and he points to the fact that the glove on Grendel's hand was fashioned from dragon-skin. The nature of the dragon's will is indicated by the poet through darkness imagery; night comes and bright day departs according to the desires of this evil will:

\[ \text{þa waes daeg sceacen} \\
\text{wyrme on willan; ...} \]

(2306b-2307a)

It is now this eschatological bad will that will dominate the action; Beowulf's faith has been replaced with pride, and he does not receive the ad hoc grace necessary to conquer the evil that has invaded his kingdom and his spirit. An indication of Beowulf's pride-dominated will is inherent in his preparation for battle: he uses a large iron shield and a troop of retainers. The hero now trusts only in his own physical resources, weapons and retainers, whereas before the battle with Grendel, we see, ll. 671-674, that after the poet emphasizes the hero's faith in grace, the Geat removes all armour and weapons. Into Grendel's mere he went without retainers, and found that only a weapon sent by God could help him. Before the attack of the dragon, however, he

13 Kaske, pp. 303-304.
places his faith in human ability, and this new bias of his will is indicated by Wiglaf:

"Dē hē ñīc on herge gecēas
tō dyssum stāfate sylfes willum,
onmundē ñīc mǣrēa, ...

(2638b-2640a)

This speech implies that Beowulf has placed faith in mortal, not divine aid, as his pride has left him spiritually blind. The willum that Wiglaf mentions here is the same one to which he will accredit the dilemma of the Geats later:

"Oft sceall eorl monig Ænes willan
wraec ādrēogan, swa ñīs gevorden is."

(3077a-3078b)

It can be demonstrated, I think, that a correlation exists between the pattern of occurrence of divine raed and the condition of an individual's will at any point in the narrative. If we construe the raed as a type of grace, and the willa to be the free will of Augustinian theology, it is possible to find the doctrine of grace in this evidence. The Danes' weak will and their mortal raed are a foil to Beowulf's early faith and divine counsel. Heremod and the dragon are used as exempla, of human will without grace and of essential malitia respectively. Hrothgar's sermon has neatly encapsulated the life of Beowulf, omitting only his death-bed salvation, if this occurs at all. The slave and Beowulf share two important characteristics if we consider the king to have been saved: they are both free of the treasure's curse by the grace of God, and they both wanted the treasure only for somebody else.
A theme parallel to that concerning the operation of grace on free will is the poet's use of dōm in relation to the characters. Two interpretations for this item are "fame" and "Judgement", (cf. Clark Hall and Meritt, p. 86; Klaeber, p. 316), and it is the latter alternative that concerns the theme of this thesis. In a sense, taking the human will as the medium for the transmission of grace, dōm becomes the human expression of divine raed. The idea of "judgement" here implies the proper use of the intellective faculty, and as might be expected, the individual that displays this dōm is always successful. Since this idea will be applied, in most cases, to instances of combat, the distinction between dōm as "Judgement" and as "fame" will be difficult to make, as both imply success at this endeavour. Again, no attempt will be made to force an incongruous or unwieldy translation, but it will observed that in some cases a minor variation from the accepted rendering of a passage may result in dōm acquiring a different force than that generally acknowledged.

Importantly, the ability to judge is attributed to God, and perhaps by virtue of this attribution we may infer that any consequent use of the term carries with it the idea of divine wisdom and resulting grace. If, as Augustine says, the first merit granted by God is faith, then we may recognize faith as the proper judgement or inclination of the will. Beowulf identifies the archetypal dōm of God when he speaks of the coming encounter with Grendel:
... dærf gelēfan sceal
Dryhtnes dōm sce þe hine dēad nimea."
(440b-441b)

This is a statement of the universal domination of divine
judgement, as the vanquished, whether good or evil, will be
"resigned" to whatever decision God makes on his soul. The
human type of dōm is presented in the digression on Sigemund
in two instances, each having an apparently different mean-
ing. In the first instance, the hero's fight with the
dragon, the term is clearly given the force of "fame" or
"glory" (cf. Klaeber, p. 316):

Sigemunde gesprung
æfter dēæðæge dōm unlätel,
syðan ðiges heard wyrm æcwealde,
(884b-886b)

This is obviously a reference to the fact that a glorious
reputation for having killed the dragon survived the hero,
and only by seriously contorting the syntax of this passage
14 can the dōm be seen as the intellectual cause instead of the
social result of his valour. Ten lines later, however, dōm
seems to indicate the mental process of "discretion" or
"choice" (cf. Klaeber, p. 316); the poet observes in reference
to the spoils of Sigemund's victory:

Haefde ãglæeca elne gegongen,

14 This variation would allow a prepositional rendering
of "through" or "during" for æfter, cf. Bosworth-Toller,
p. 10, and Klaeber, pp. 294-295, although the latter does not
agree with this supposition. Syðan would then have to be a
conjunction with the force of "when", but Klaeber, p. 399,
does not suggest this. The dēæðæge would then be that of
the dragon and the dōm that "sprang" to Sigemund could be the
reason or cause of his victory. This distortion is obviously
unsatisfactory no matter how attractive to my thesis.
ποετ ἦ βεαυθορδες  βρυκαν μοστε
σελφες δομε; ...

(893a-895a)

Klaeber declares δομε a dative singular, and I feel that it may be construed as an instrumental, i.e., that Sigemund was able to enjoy the treasure because he had exercised δομ in slaying the dragon, and not, as Klaeber suggests (p. 162), that it is a reference to the discretion exercised in choosing what he would load into his boat from the hoard, although the latter translation seems immediately more reasonable.

The next occurrence of the word is in connection with Heremod, and again it is confusing to try to establish exactly which sense the poet means to imply in this instance. In speaking of Heremod's moral failings Hrothgar observes:

"Hwaepere him on ferhpe greow
brœosthord blodrœow; nallas bœagas geaf
Denum æfter dœme; ...

(1718b-1720a)

The ambiguity arises when we try to distinguish whose δομ the poet is talking about. Is this a reference, as Klaeber suggests, p. 316, to "fame" and Heremod's unwillingness to reward the heroism of his warriors, as he is obliged to do under the covenant of Germanic feudalism? It is possible to see the failure of a king to give bœagas to his retainers to be a folly of judgement. The sin-dominated Heremod would not be able to act æfter δομе, as we have seen that this is a virtue attributable maybe to grace, and we know that Heremod no longer enjoys grace.
The same problem presents itself in the next occurrence of this word. When Beowulf illustrates the duty of the hero, is he referring to "fame" or the virtue of "judgement"?

"... wyrce sæ ðe môte
dômes ær dêæpe; ðaet bid drihtguman
'unlifgundum æfter sêlest." (1387b-1389b)

Klaeber notes that dômes here indicates "glory" (p. 316) and that the genitive case combined with the verb wyrce (p. 430) gives us the meaning "let him who is able acquire glory before death"; consequently this is simply a statement about reputation. This view is difficult to refute unless we consider the sentiment to be "let him who is able accomplish his judgement...", in which we would have to consider dômes as a partitive genitive, and the following statement a reference to the Heavenly reward of those that executed divinely-sent dôm.

The episode that precedes the battle in Grendel's mere, from which the above quotation was taken, offers two more examples of the use of dôm, and again it is not clear whether the poet is referring to "glory" or "judgement", although in these cases there is a true ambiguity, unlike the situation above where the equivocation was contrived. In reference to Unferth, the foil to Beowulf and the bête for the evil will of the Danes' pride, the poet makes the following statement equating Unferth's lack of valour and lack of dôm:

"... sêlfan ne dorste
under ðêæ gewin ældre gehêpan."
drihtscype drēogan; þæer hē dōme forlēas, ellenmærdum.

(1468b-1471a)

If we consider that dōm as "judgement" in the sense that it represents a spiritual strengthening through God's grace that produces the virtue of valour in a man, we may easily see that Unferth is without these qualities and that this passage, consequently, is a reference to his spiritual inferiority. On the other hand, if the dōme means glory, it is easy to consider this as a statement that Unferth lost face, or reputation, by not displaying valour at this point. The question is whether the loss by Unferth of dōm is the cause or the result of his not displaying valour. Klaeber shows that both dōme and ellenmærdum are datives, so that we cannot establish any precedence or distinction between them grammatically; he offers a translation of "glory" in this instance for dōme, but I feel that it at least plausible that the other rendering is faithful to the poet's intentions.

Just after this incident describing Unferth's lack of dōm, the poet offers us this heroic resolve from Beowulf just before the hero enters the mere to battle with Grendel's dam:

"... ic mē mid Hruntinge.  
dōm gewyrce, ōpāe mec dēad nimed."

(1490b-1491a)

The ambiguity is almost the same here as in the situation discussed above: is the hero going to "accomplish glory" or is he going to "carry out, (his) judgement"? Either sense may be indicated by the accusative dōm and the ambiguous
verb *gevrce*. Klaeber feels that the first alternative is true, while the latter is obviously a reinforcement of my theory that the *döm* that the hero will "carry out" will be the result of the *anræd* - *Rædend* link between Beowulf and God in this episode, and that the Geat's words indicate his faith in God's grace in the fight against evil when he acts as the vehicle of grace for the Danes. All that can be said, I think, is that both possibilities exist.

Thus we face the same difficulty when we encounter the poet's reference to *döm* in his description of Beowulf's triumphant return to Heorot, bearing the head of Grendel as testimony to his conquest of the race of Cain:

*Dā cōm in gān caldor dēgna,
daēdæcēne mon dōme gewurþad,  
haele hildedēor, Ħrōgār grētān.*

(1644a-1646b)

At the risk of redundancy, I will point out that Klaeber construes the dative *dōme* as a reference to the hero's being "honoured by (his) glory", but I think the same phrase may indicate that he has been honoured by the "judgement" which was the spiritual strengthening given to him by grace and crucial in his gaining victory in the mere. The next occurrence of this word is in Beowulf's report to Hygelac about the success of his venture in Denmark, when the hero relates how he was rewarded by Hrothgar:

"... ac hē mē (mǣma)s geaf,  
sunu Healfdenes on (mīn)ne ðylfes dōm;"  
(2146b–2147b)

Although Klaeber notes this as an instance of the intellectual
quality of döm, it is clear that his rendering of "discretion" or "choice" means something quite different from the interpretation I read from this statement. Klaeber certainly means this to be an allusion to how the treasure was given, i.e. that Beowulf was able to take whatever he wanted as a reward; while I feel that this statement expresses why the treasure was given, i.e., that since the grace represented by döm was the major factor in his success at Denmärk, Beowulf indicates that it was this characteristic of his that was being rewarded.

In what appears to be a synopsis of Beowulf's early career, the poet implies that the virtue of döm in the hero is closely associated with the grace sent to him by God. The passage just quoted combined with the following one effectively ends the first section of the poem, and after this we will see Beowulf's character very differently. In anticipation of the hero's dying words, ll. 2736-2743, the poet makes this judgement about Beowulf:

Swæ bealdode bearn Ecgðoves,
guma gūðum cūd, gōðum dāēdum,  
drēah aeftir dōmē; nealles druncne sōk  
heordæncēatas; naes him hēōch sefa,  
ac hē mancynnes māēste craeftē  
ginfaestan gife, þē him God sealdē,  
hēōld hildēdēor.  

(2177a-2183a)

In this census of admirable qualities, we have no trouble in recognizing the ginfaestan gife that is the māēste craeftē.\(^{15}\)

\(^{15}\)Although Klaeber indicates, p. 344, that ginfaestan gife is accusative while māēste craeftē, p. 313, is dative, the case for considering them to be parallel is made in his note p. 207. Cf. ll. 1207b-1271a.
as grace from God, as this is explicit in the text, so that we realize that the poet is attributing these characteristics to grace. When we read this passage in the light of the one that follows it, we find that the poet is subtly attributing all of Beowulf's success to this grace. Juxtaposed to this statement we find the poet's account of Beowulf's inglorious youth, and the mysterious Edwenden that came to him that reversed his fortunes. The force of these two statements is certainly focused on the grace sent by God that produced all of the hero's good qualities, and which we may infer is the reason for the Edwenden. Klaeber suggests that Beowulf's acting æfter dōme means that he bore himself in such a way that he acquired or deserved "glory", which seems reasonable since he is cūd by virtue of his gūdum and gōdum dāedum, but the verb dēah indicates to me that the dōme was a principle by which the hero guided himself in this case, and not a reference to his reputation. This situation would indicate to me that the dōme, like the mēeste craefte and the gife from God is a Heaven-sent virtue, and that dōme means the faculty of "judgement" that Beowulf exercised in not committing the crimes that are attributed to Heremod (cf. Klaeber, p. 207). In the case of Heremod, whom we know to have fallen from grace, we noted that the author's decision was that he did not act æfter dōme, but Beowulf, who has been inspired and helped by God throughout his crusade against evil, does not display these sins and does act æfter dōme.

In the balance of the poem, as I have suggested, we find
Beowulf without grace, and consequently without the virtues that he displayed in his earlier adventures. If this is so, we must find him without the characteristic of dóm, which betrays grace, and we might expect to find this characteristic in Wiglaf, the new vehicle of grace. While it might be supposed that a lack of judgement is demonstrated in the hero's hubristic resolve to conquer the dragon single-handed, this submission is inadmissible as evidence on the grounds that he has accomplished the same feat without any help but God's before in Denmark, and that he may expect the same help this time, although his lack of reference to God's aid before the battle makes this situation different. When Beowulf is being bested by the dragon, and Wiglaf rushes to help him, the young retainer encourages his king to remember that he had boasted that his dóm would never diminish while he was living, ll. 2663a-2666a. Here it is difficult to make a case for translating the word as anything but "glory", nor will I attempt to change the sense here.

After his heroic defense and the mortal wounding of his lord, Wiglaf rushes into the cave to bring his king testimony of the victory: treasure. The young retainer, the vehicle of grace, and possibly the bearer of divine rāed, has naturally displayed virtue in judgement in his decision to help Beowulf, ll. 2632-2662, and in his shrewd appraisal of the dragon's vulnerability, ll. 2699-2701, and dóm is instrumental in allowing him to plunder the hoard:

Dā ic on hlāeve gefraegn hord rēafian,
Although Klaeber indicates that a rendering like "judgement" is appropriate here, again he is referring, I think, to how the treasure was selected to be brought back to Beowulf. I believe that there is a possible reference here to the reason why Wiglaf was able to plunder the hoard: that it was his judgement which made him first help Beowulf and allowed him to strike the first effective blow against the dragon, and it is this quality that permits us to see him as the vehicle of grace for Beowulf. Thus I construe dōme here as a reference to the grace which allowed Wiglaf entry to the hoard and will protect him from the curse that can only be negated by the grace of God. This use of dōm is followed by a reference to the sōdfaestra dōm, the destination of Beowulf's soul. As previously discussed, this could be an allusion either to the judgement of God or to the hero's reputation. That it is a reference to divine judgement might be strengthened by the fact that the next use of the word is indisputably a reference to the control of all mankind by the dōm of God:

Wolde dōm Godes-daēdum rāedan gumena gehwylcum, swā hē nū gēn dēā.  

Whether the verb dōm means "to rule" or to "advise", the sentiment clearly is that the guidance of man, which must indicate the action of grace by God, is accomplished by
dōm, which we may construe as at least an aspect of this grace. Wiglaf's remonstrance to the ten cowardly retainers after Beowulf's death at first appears to use a dōm compound as a reference to "glory":

"... flēam ēowerne, dōmlēasan dāed." (2889b-2890a)

Was their action "inglorious" (cf. Klaeber, p. 317) because their rout was certainly nothing to boast about and a stain on their collective character? This seems the probable force of the sentiment. But if we consider Wiglaf's valiant defense of his king to be a result of his grace-inspired courage, one aspect of which was the dōm that permitted him to plunder the hoard unscathed, then might not the cowardice of the comitatus be seen as an action that was without the virtue inspired by the spiritual strengthening of dōm? It is possible that this is the meaning. This reference to the Geats, when it is considered that their gifstōl was destroyed by the malitia symbolized by the dragon, may indicate that the nation as a whole is in the same condition as the Danes at the beginning of the poem, and that their bad wills may be reflected, as in the case of the Danes, by their lack of dōm.

It is possible to see dōm as an extension of the will that is influenced by divine grace, which is the rāed sent by God. Unlike the will, which is only potentially good, judgement is a characteristic only of God and his followers. Thus Sigemund, Beowulf, and later, Wiglaf exhibit this
ability while Heremod and Unferth, and possibly the Geats are excluded from this category; the fabulous individuals are also excluded, but only by omission of any reference to or connection with dom.

I have already suggested that the influence of grace is seen both physically and intellectually, and that the virtue of valour embraces both the temporal and spiritual aspects of grace. If we accept Sisam's view that the martial detail of conflict was of paramount importance to the audience, on the assumption of a communal militaristic bias and familiarity, it follows that the Beowulf poet could choose no virtue more effective than valour to illustrate the doctrine of grace. Valour is pivotal not only between the concepts of mental and spiritual virtue, but also between the indigenous military ethic of the Anglo-Saxon audience and the express Christian morality of the battle against evil. To examine the application of valour-lexis must be to produce a pattern similar to the one evinced so far in ascertaining the operation of grace, if we are to demonstrate the poet's adherence to this doctrine and his adaptation of the doctrine to the moral/ethical axioms familiar to his audience.

Valour finds expression textually in the intellectual traits of each individual; it is strength of mind and spirit. The lexis that denotes "courage" or "valour" in an individual is usually formed by adding a strength-modifier to root substantives for intellectual faculty, "mind" or "thought",
or for the soul, or spiritual faculty, "spirit" or "heart". 16
Spiritual and intellectual, instinctive and rational, sub-
conscious and conscious, the unfathomable and the revealed,
all find a common denominator in this apparent equation of
mind and spirit, for the action of grace on the will pro-
duces a virtue from one that might easily evolve from the
other.

It is not surprising that the poet wastes no time in
introducing valour; in what may be a miniscule prologue we
find presented the two great virtues of a warrior that the
poet will employ throughout the text:

HWAET, WÈ GÄR-ĐENA in gæardagum,
þēodcyninga þrym gefrûnon,
hû æþæ aæpeilingas ellen fremedon!
(1a-3b)

The outstanding qualities of these anonymous and prototypic
heroes are "strength", þrym, and "valour", ellen, which I
hope to show are the physical and mental manifestations of
grace. This supposition may be supported by the introduction
of Scyld and his son, Bèowulf, apparently as examples of the
þēodcyninga of 1. 2, whom we assume to have participated in
grace. Unfortunately, there is no specific reference to the
mental qualities of either hero that would allow us to demon-
strate the action of ræd or accompanying döm in their wills,
aside from an allusion to the generosity of Bèowulf, ll. 20-
25, which is discussed as good in purely political terms. If

16 Cf. Appendix III.
divine grace, as Gilson notes, produces "natural virtues" in all men, as is the case with the founders of the Scyld dynasty, we can see in the description of Grendel that these virtues have disappeared from the people:

Dā se ellengæst earfaðlice
præge gebolode, sē þe in þystrum bād,
(86a-87b)

Grendel is the ellengæst, a "valour-spirit", or "valour-ghost", and in this context, assuming "valour" to be the result of grace, I construe the force of "ghost" to be "shadow", "shade" or "reflection", rather than having the connotation of "genius", "soul" or "psyche". As a ghost is the ephemeral and empty representation of a man, so the definition of Grendel's valour is a vacant and inadequate representation of true Christian courage. If Grendel does symbolize the malitia of the Danes, it is exquisitely congruous that they should be punished by this symbol of their spiritual degeneration. Noting the poet's implied judgement of the Danish wisdom, i.e. the seleæaedende, ll. 50-52, we find irony in his description of them as the "strong-spirited ones":

raēd echtedon,
hwæt swīðerhæm sælest wære
wil færgryrm tō gefremmanē.
(172b-174b)

Neither their strength of mind nor their raēd can help them, and their impotence, it has been seen, has a profoundly Christian explanation. The poet will continue to contrast the virtues of the Danes to Beowulf's grace-inspired abilities to underscore the inadequate capabilities of fallen man in
contrast to a vehicle of grace.

In reply to the challenge of the coast-guard, Beowulf apprises him of their mission in Denmark; note how the poet introduces this speech:

Him þæt ellenrōf andswarode,  
vlanc Wedera lēod, ... (340a-341a)

Beowulf is characterized by his "valour", he is the ellenrōf; his courage is a function of his identity, while Grendel manifests only a faint reflection of virtue. Aptly, another figure is used by the poet to contrast the nature of the Danes, and he too is a foreigner: Wulfgar. Maybe it is important that he is the first to meet Beowulf and gain him access to the hall, perhaps in a symbolic function of guarding the hall, something that the Danes cannot do for themselves. Wulfgar, like Beowulf, is ellenrōf, l. 358, when addressing Hrothgar, and the poet has already described Wulfgar's psychological nature in terms with which we are already familiar:

Wulfgar mæpelode þæt waes Wendla lēod,  
waes his mōðsefa manegum gecyēed,  
vīg ond wisdōm—... (348a-350a)

Wulfgar's virtue is seen primarily as spiritual; it is his mōðsefa that has earned him his reputation, and his vīg ond wisdōm reflect the dual manifestations of grace in the intellectual and physical realms. Wisdōm cannot be overlooked as a use of dōm. Wulfgar is not a Dane, but a Vandal prince, so his isolation from the Danes is complete on all
levels. The spiritual worth of the Danes is expressed by the fact that the two major individuals whose courage is concomitant to intellectual excellence are both emphatically foreign to this environment: Beowulf is a Geat, Wulfgar a Vandal.

Hrothgar, whom we realize to have once benefitted from at least the physical aspect of ad hoc grace (herespēð gyf en l. 64), is naturally able to recognize this virtue in Beowulf's mission, and makes an important association between grace and courage:

"Hine hālig God
for ērstæfum ūs onsende,
...
... Ic þæm gōdan sceal
for his môdpræce ðæðmas bēodan."

(381b-385b)

Both the source and the result of Beowulf's courage are isolated here: for ērstæfum (grace) is neatly echoed in for his môdpræce. The similarity of lexical structure in these phrases is indicative of a similarity in sentiment: God's grace is Beowulf's courage, and courage is strength of mind, or môdpræce. Wulfgar's invitation to the Geats to enter Heorot reinforces their identification as intellectually strong:

"Éow hōt sæc gan sigedríhten mīn, al dor Ėast-Dena, þæt hē ðēower æpelu can, ond ge hīm syndon ofer sæwylmās heordhīcgende hīder wīlcuman."

(391a-394b)

It is, I believe, implied that Hrothgar recognizes their æpelu, or "virtue" (cf. Klaeber, p. 297, Bosworth-Toller,
p. 22), as that of being "hard-thinking ones", or
heardhicgade, and this is a statement of the intellectual
excellence of the Geats. When the Geats sit together in the
hall, the poet again characterises them by their virtues:

vaes Geatmaecgum geaðor æetsomne
on beorsecel benc gerymed;
þæer swiðferhþe sittan æodon,
þryðum dealle.

(491a-494a)

Note that in the two final first half-lines, the "strong-
spirited ones" are "eminent through strength", which is an
accurate description of the action of grace on an individual,
as it demonstrates both an intellectual strength and a
physical power.

The contrast between the Geats and the Danes is made
evident in Beowulf's prediction that he will teach Grendel
the meaning of Geatish strength and courage:

"... secce ne wéneþ
to Gær-Denum. Ac ic him Géata sceal
eafoð ond ellen ungeára nū,
güpe gebéoden."

(600b-603a)

The moral implication may be that there is a harmony between
the Danes and Grendel, as the monster neither expects nor
gets any resistance from them. It is perhaps reading too
much into this comment to deduce this, but it is obvious
that the Danes do not have the eæofð ond ellen that the Geats
are going to use against Grendel. If these virtues are
inspired by grace, then the impotence of the Danes may be
abstractly compared to an equality with Grendel. The
intellectual superiority of the victor of the coming conflict
is indicated by Beowulf:

"Gæp eft sē þe mōt
tō medo mōdig, ...

(603b-604a)

The successful combatant will be mōdig, his courage intellectual: Beowulf will be; the Danes cannot be. The polarities in virtue between the spirit dominated by sin and that inspired by grace are delineated in the qualities of the Danes and the Geats. The type of strength given by grace has an intellectual quality, according to the poet, when he describes Beowulf's strength as:

mōdgan maegnes, Metodes hyldoch.

(670)

The hylдо, or "grace", provides him with a "courageous strength" (cf. Klaeber, p. 153), and in this quality we can see again the bipartite effects of divine aid — strength of mind and body.

When Grendel unexpectedly meets resistance and conflict from Beowulf, the author makes it evident that the supremacy of Beowulf in physical battle is reflected by his superior spiritual characteristics. At the start of the match Beowulf is "strong-minded", or higebīhtigne, l. 746, and Grendel, realising the hero’s power, is shown to be intellectually/spiritually weak:

... hē on mōde weard
forht on ferhde; ...

(753b-754a)

Grendel, who is dominated by sin, cannot summon the spiritual strength to match an opponent inspired by grace, and this is
his first realisation when confronted with this superior strength. The monster's inferiority in terms of bodily strength is linked to his sins by the poet:

De þæt onfunde se þe fela Ærór
mðes myræ manna cynne,
syre geþæmede -hæ [vaes] fæg wið God-
þæt him se lîchoma læstan nolde,
ac hine se mðega mæg Hygelæces
haefde be bonda; vaes geþæper ðårum
lifigende læd.

(809a-815a)

We see that Grendel's opposition to God has left him only physical resources, or lîchoma, which cannot withstand the intellectual strength of Beowulf, se mðega. As Beowulf's spirit is an extension of God's through grace, Grendel is hostile to both of them; this is borne out by the observation that neither of the combatants could tolerate the other alive. The futility of Grendel's attempt to emerge victorious is shown in the juxtaposed first half-lines that contrast the hero's inspiration with the monster's abilities:

þæt him se lîchoma læstan nolde,
ac hine se mðega ...

The pattern of a pronoun followed by an article and substantive is used in both these verses, the first in reference to Grendel's only hope, his body, which fails him in the second half-line, so that in the next first half-line his scourge is presented in the same structure that his hope was, and the pronoun change from dative to accusative indicates the difference between hope and despair. Beowulf's conquest of the monster is aptly called a purging by the poet, who emphasises the intellectual/spiritual superiority of the
The poet attributes the purging of Heorot to one who is intellectually, snotor, and spiritually, swäferhā, excellent, who rejoices in his "valour-honour", or ellenmærpum. This is a close association of mind and spirit in the production of the virtue of valour, and that this grace-fed virtue purges the hall that is perhaps microcosmic of Danish society illustrates the conquest of malitia in Denmark by the vehicle of grace, Beowulf.

The intellectual weakness of the Danes finds ironic criticism after the defeat of Grendel; in their joy at having been delivered, the Danes are described as módge, l. 855, as they race their horses in competition. Not only is horse-racing an insignificant display of courage compared to the battle against Grendel that they were unable to do, but their judgement is implicitly questioned. They admit, ll. 856-861, that Beowulf is unparalleled and is worthy of kingship, but in the same breath they do not blame Hrothgar for his inadequacy and observe that he too is a good king, ll. 862-863. Their decisions are at once logical and irrational; the inconsistency inherent in their judgement betrays a weakness: they are unable to find fault and are as likely to put their faith in vice as they are in virtue. Note the poet's reference to their trust in Unferth:
Confronted with evidence of, or at least in full knowledge of Unferth's crime, the Danes blindly trust to the mód micel that he does not possess. Whether this is cause for the Dane's being dominated by evil, or the result of the intellectual weakening caused by contact with evil is hard to guess; what is obvious is the poet's attempt to show the inferior mental abilities of men dominated by sin in contrast to Beowulf, who receives grace.

In immediate contrast to the Danes we have the digression on Sigemund balanced by the one on Heremod, which serve to parallel the distinctions made between Beowulf and the Danes. We have inferred already that Sigemund's success may have been due to his use of dōm, while Heremod was without this faculty, and it is evident that Scyld displays valour, ellendædum, l. 900, and elne, l. 893. The adjoining story of Heremod states that in previous times, ærran mælum, he was swīðerhdæs, ll. 907-908, and we realize later that this was due to his state of grace, ll. 1715-1716. The decline of Heremod is pictured as a diminishing of his eæfæd and ellen, and this condition is the result, l. 915, of his domination by crime, which implies that he had lost the grace given to him by God and consequently the virtues that accrue to this spiritual state. The digressions on these
historic characters have been used by the poet, I suggest, to illustrate the concomitance of spiritual and temporal virtues, and the later digression on Heðemod allows us to see the operation of grace in the production of virtue.

An ironic comment on the intellectual virtue of the Danish leaders is found in this observation made by the poet:

swiðhícgende on sele þąm hēan, 
HRōgār ond HRōhulf. Heorot innan waes 
fréondum āfylled; nalles fācenstafas 
þēod Scyldingas þenden fremedon.

(1016a-1019b)

There is no reason to suppose that either Hrothgar or Hrothulf has been or is now a "strong-thinker", and the treachery foreshadowed in the fācenstafas indicates that intellectually it is not virtue but sin that is manifested in Hrothulf. Just as the Danes mistakenly put their trust in Unferth and Hrothgar, we learn, 11. 1180-1187, that the Danish king and queen foolishly trust to the non-existent virtues of Hrothulf. Kemp Malone has pointed out the irony in this speech made by Wealhtheow:

"Hēr is æghwylc eorl òþrum getrywe, 
mōdes milde, mandrihtne hol(d), 
þegnas syndon geþwære, þēod ealgearq, 
druncne dryhtguman dōa swā ic bidde."

(1228a-1231b)

in which he finds the expression of a situation which in reality is opposite to the court's latent perfidy. Beowulf himself points out, in his appraisal of Danish foreign policy, 11. 2020-2069, that the continued faith in individuals who do

Although we cannot make a case for Grendel's dam receiving a
ad hoc grace even for a mission so respectable as the revenge
of her son's death, nor for the purpose of eliminating a
propagator of bad counsel like Aeschere, we are forced to
admit that in this instance valour is displayed by an evil
individual. It would appear that the dragon, too, has this
quality, although it is ignored by the hero later in life:

Oferhgodode dā hringa fengel,
þæt hē þone wīdþlogan weorode gesōhte,
sīdan herge; nō hē him þā sæcece ondrēd,
nē him þæs wyrmes wīg for wiht dyde,
eafod ond ellen, ...

(2345a-2349a)

The only possible reason that I can suggest to explain the
attribution of valour to these embodiments of malitia is
that they seem to be "allowed" by God; that is, that they
have a chastising function ordained by the Lord, and that
might possibly be construed as a type of grace. Beowulf's
alienation from valour seems to be suggested by the poet in
this brief account of the hero's career:

Swā hē nīda gewhane genesen haefde,
sliðra geslyhta, sunu Ecgælowes,
elwenworca, od dōne ānne dāeg,
þē hē wið þām wyrme gewegan sceolde.

(2397a-2400b)

Beowulf survives the rigors of "valour-works" only until, od
daet he fights against the dragon; in this way his last
battle is purposefully excluded from his previously successful
displays of valour. Perhaps the reason for this change is seen
in his perverse view that valour is the means of winning gold:

"Ic mid elne sceall
gold gegangan, odde gūd nimed,
The association of valour and avarice indicates to us that
Beowulf is dominated by the sin of greed, and that he is no
longer in a state of grace. Although the hero is stāmōd as
the dragon approaches, l. 2566, it is possible to see this
quality not as the strength of faith, but as vainglory, and
his unfortunate fate at the hands of the dragon is natural.

The focus of attention now falls on Wiglaf, from whom the
necessary valour comes not only to defeat the dragon, but
perhaps also to inspire a spiritual reform in Beowulf. The
poet implies, ll. 2620-2625, that Wiglaf is destined to per-
form eorlacipe, or "valour", and that the young hero's speech
to the cowardly comitatus illustrates not only his loyalty and
courage, but also an understanding of Beowulf's pride:

"pis ellenweorc āna ādōhte
tō gefremmanne, folces hyrde,
forðām hē manna mǣst māerā geŌremeđe,
dēdā dollicra."

Wiglaf realizes that Beowulf's faith is in his past exploits,
and he acknowledges it to be "valour-work" that his lord is
attempting. The young hero points out that Beowulf needs
help, ll. 2646-2650, thereby pointing out the king's inadequacy.

Committing himself to God, ll. 2650-2651, Wiglaf rushes to help
Beowulf, and the poet comments:

ac ēse maga geonga under his mǣges scyl
eine geōde, ...

and just before the wounding of the dragon:
Wiglaf, not Beowulf, displays the valour that was habitual to his king before. Notice that "valour", "skill" and "bravery" are geceande, "natural", or "innate" in the young warrior, who is the mōdiges mannes shortly after. It is not hard to infer that Wiglaf, who displayed faith before the battle, received the ad hoc grace that gave him his valour, while the pride of Beowulf denied him this grace and consequently any valour.

As I have suggested, his effect on Beowulf seems to be purgative, and the strengthening of the old king's will is described as his control of his senses as he kills the symbol of malitia:

Da gēn sylf cyning
gewēold his gewitte, ...

Conversely, Wiglaf speaks of the weakening of the dragon's flames using the same word:

... bonne ic sweorde ārep
ferhāgenīłan, fyr unswīdor
wēoll of gewitte."

Much like the head symbolism used after the battle in Grendel's mere, the gewitte here may represent the will of either individual. Beowulf's is strengthened through Wiglaf's grace, while the fire of the dragon's gewitte, symbolic maybe of Hell-fire, is defeated and eliminated by the same grace.

Referring to Beowulf's speech, uttered after what I construe to be his return to faith, Wiglaf refers to the king's state
of mind:

"Cwico waes pä génà,
wis ond gewittig; ..."

(3093b-3094a)

There is no doubt that the dying Beowulf is in command of his thoughts; he seems to have regained the faith signified by ðōm and therefore valour, as the poet points out in the hero's killing the dragon:

forwrät Wedra heím wyrm on middan.
Fēond gefyldan –ferh ellen wraec–.
(2705a-2706b)

It is their collective ellen that takes away the life of the dragon; Beowulf’s return to grace is implicit, and serves to fortify the possibility of his salvation. Beowulf’s return to virtue is also seen in his yielding of his treasure to Wiglaf:

Byde him of healse hring gyldenne
bīoden brīsthydīg, þegne gesælde,
geongum garwigan, ... 
(2809a-2811a)

Not since before his reign have we been assured of Beowulf's "brave thoughts", but now, with control of his gewitte guaranteed, we see that his righteous rejection of wealth makes him brīsthydīg. He now observes that all of his forbears died in valour:

"... ealle wyrd forswep
mine magas tō metodsceafte,
eorlas on elne; ic him aetfer sceal."
(2814b-2816b)

Beowulf, following the example of his ancestors, dies on elne and it is just after this that the poet observes that the old king's soul goes to seek the unspecified sōðfaestra
döm, all of which leads me to conclude that Beowulf dies in a state of grace. His lack of greed and associated display of valour seem to me to be complementary methods of describing his newly-regained faith. "Wiglaf openly attributes Beowulf's valour to God's grace:

"hwaedrē him God ūde,
sigora Waldend, þæt hē hyne sylfne gewraec ðæa mid ecge, þæ him waes elnes þearf." 

(2874b-2876b)

The Lord granted victory to Beowulf when he had need of valour. The Geats, on the other hand, enjoy no such divine inspiration: they are, as the poet observes, l. 2661, those "whose courage (elne) failed" and their action, as already noted, is the dōmēasan dæd, l. 2890, and we realize their condition to be roughly equivalent in spiritual weakness and physical cowardice to that of the Danes. A final synopsis of Beowulf's virtues is found in the lamenting praise of his people:

eahotan eorlscipe ond his ellenweorc
dugdēum dēmōn,- swā hit gedē(þe) bid,

(3173a-3174b)

and,

cwædon þæt hē waere wyruldecyning[a]
manna mildust ond mon(ðw)ærust,
leōdum līdost ond lōfgeornost.

(3180a-3182b)

At first it seems paradoxical to attribute both valour and gentleness as egregious characteristics of one man, but if we understand them all to be virtues, as the proper functioning of a free will inspired by grace, then we have a picture of the ideal Christian hero. Kaske has pointed out that the attributes in this last description of Beowulf correspond to
the definition of *sapientia* in the Vulgate Old Testament, while *lofgernost* certainly represents the highest ideal of Germanic tradition, so that the final appraisal of Beowulf places him at the top of both moral scales, representing a synthesis of the two. I cannot disagree, but tend to place more emphasis on the fact that Beowulf's virtues are seen primarily as intellectual/spiritual entities, able to embrace excellence both in friendship and hostility. It is his mental disposition that earns praise just as it earned him glory; and possibly salvation; a spiritual strength with consequent virtue has been the source of victory for the heroes of this poem.

Our examination of individuals is now complete in terms of the doctrine of grace that may be Augustinian; those characters to whom we ascribed grace in the first chapter were shown to receive divine counsel and to have acquired or used a strong will and/or judgement in conquering evil or displaying virtue. Narrowing our focus to a single virtue, valour, we were able to perceive its dependence on a spiritual/intellectual strength identified with faith. The consistency with which this pattern occurred in our study of each concept and the resulting congruence of each investigation with others leads to a confirmation of the hypothesis that the Beowulf poet consciously and uniformly applied the full and intricate orthodox doctrine of grace to this poem.

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18 Kaske, p. 298.
The polarities of good and evil are found in heroes and monsters respectively, but there exists the ever-present middle ground of fallen man, the state of original sin that every man knows before grace, and to which the proud return or are forever confined. We have witnessed the fall of two nations and their leaders from grace: Hrothgar and the Danes and Beowulf and the Geats; countless exempla of pride and avarice balance an equally prevalent group of elect. In an inexorable progress the rise and fall of man's state seems to be reflected in his soul; he vacillates between sin and grace, 19 neither being able to hold sway. The operation of grace expressed by St. Augustine may well be summed up in these verses from St. Paul's Epistle to Titus 20:

Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost

Whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour:

19 Arthur E. Dubois in "The Dragon in Beowulf," PMLA, 72 (1957), 819-22, finds both the dragon and Grendel to be symptoms of internal or social disorder or weakness that are only temporarily defeated by Beowulf. Kaske, p. 308, insists that Beowulf's death is unimportant compared to the significance of his having purged the malitia among the Geats, symbolised in his slaying of the dragon. Both agree with Howren that the fabulous creatures embody spiritual evil, but the question of cleansing the environment of this evil proves contentious. I incline to support Dubois' thesis that there is no absolute triumph of good over evil, as both Danish and Geatish societies face hostility and war after the death of the fabulous element. Kaske's opinion that the Geats have learned their lesson is attractive but lacks evidence; without testimony of this national metamorphosis, and confronted with evidence of the Danes' coming treachery (Hrothulf, the Heitho-Beardian feud), I am tempted to postulate a reinstatement of dominating (human) evil.
That, being justified by His grace, we may be heirs according to hope of life everlasting.

Titus 3: 5-7.

An interesting concurrence to my thesis, concerning the intellective faculty of dom, occurs in St. Paul's condemnation of heretics:

...Knowing that he that is such an one is subverted and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgement.

Titus 3: 11.

In Timothy, the spiritual function of grace is made more clear, and reminds us somewhat of the final description of Beowulf:

For which cause I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear: but of power and of love and of sobriety.

II Timothy 1: 6-7.

The second verse recalls the "valour-work" of Beowulf, and his being the "mildest, kindest and gentlest" of all men, and the grace of God is seen as a spiritual attribute. Perhaps the nicest synopsis of this doctrine is:

For by grace you are saved through faith: and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God.

Ephesians 2: 8.

The question of baptismal symbolism has been raised by

20The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version; (New York, 1941), all quotations from this edition.
several scholars, and evidence from their work supports my thesis considerably. Cabaniss postulated that the episode in Grendel's mere was an allegory of baptism in the poem, and pointed to the influence of Holy Saturday liturgy and the Harrowing of Hell in this scene.²¹ MacNamee has gone so far as to turn Beowulf into a Christ-figure in this episode and throughout the poem and supports the hypothesis of baptismal symbolism in Grendel's mere.²² While I feel that Father MacNamee ignores too much evidence pointing to Beowulf's fall from grace, I concur with him and Cabaniss about the sacramental nature of water in the poem. The Geats are sea-farers and Beowulf appears to be their most-travelled hero, and his constant association with water would reinforce, in this case, my thesis that he enjoys grace. Nicholson has done an exhaustive study of baptismal imagery in the text and has demonstrated this symbolism not only in the episode in Grendel's mere, but also in the Breca narration, Scyld's and Beowulf's funerals, the initial trip from Hygelac's court to Denmark, the purpose of Beowulf's seaside barrow, the metamorphosis in Modpyrd after crossing the ocean, and Wiglaf's thrice-attempted, ll. 2722, 2790, 2853, stimulation of the dying Beowulf with water, which Nicholson claims to

have a Trinitarian symbolism. I would, or need, add little
to this analysis for the benefit of my thesis, but I feel
that some additional evidence of baptismal symbolism will
strengthen my argument.

Primarily, the sea itself, among other things, is denoted
by the word geofon, some forms of which are nearly homographic
to the forms of giefu and gifnes compounds suggested as grace-
lexis by Hamilton. One instance of this possibly intended
confusion comes after the episode in Grendel’s mere, when
the story of the Deluge that destroyed the race of giants
identifies the flood as gifen:

      syðan flóð ofslōh,             
gifen gæotende gīganta cyn,   
frēcne gefþrun; ...         (1689b-1691a)

We can almost construe the sea in this instance to be the
"rushing grace" of God, which, in a sense, it was; at any
rate it is easy to see the sea as the medium of divine
Providence. Bonjour points to the poet’s choice of words
for "sea" as demonstrating great care as to their associa-
tional pertinency:

      ...the Beowulf poet delicately varies his
synonyms to use their associational powers
in accordance with the prevailing mood or
tonality of the respective passages in
which they are fitted.24

Granting this, we may see in Beowulf’s comment on the imminent


24Adrien Bonjour, "On Sea Images in Beowulf," JEGP, 54
(1953), 115.
death of Grendel the poet's attempt to reinforce the monster's isolation from any type of grace:

"... nē on helm losap, 
nē on foldan faeþm, nē on fyrgenholt, 
nē on gyfenes grund, gā þær hē wille!" 

(1392b-1394b)

In stating that Grendel cannot achieve safety even on the bottom of the ocean, the poet may be suggesting through homonymic allusion to the *gifnes* that means "grace", that the monster, unlike the others in the poem, cannot participate in the grace given in baptism. If this is true, we can see that the poet has purposefully used these words for "sea" in each case to illustrate the destructive nature of Providential will on evil characters, while for the heroes of the poem the sea is used as a medium of grace.

Naturally, we must expect that contact with the sacrament-symbol, the sea, must be confined to those men who benefit from grace. The instances in which the Geats are referred to as sea-farers are too numerous to catalogue, but in contrast to the Danes in the early part of the narrative, the question of marine association is pronounced. The terrified Danes who hear the battle of Beowulf and Grendel are *ceasterbűendum*, l. 768, and when Hrothgar speaks of their having spied Grendel and his dam, they are *londbűend*, l. 1345, and *foldbűende*, l. 1355; dramatically, this association of the Danes with solid ground comes at a time when their weakness is emphasised: their fear of Grendel and their ignorance of his lineage. Their lack of grace is shown
by their alienation from this symbol of baptism. On the 
other hand, both Scyld and Beowulf are subjected to a long 
sea-voyage early in their youth; Scyld came to the Danes 

ænne ðær umborwesende
(46)

and Beowulf's challenge with Breca is similarly youthful:

"Wit þæt gecwædon chihtwesende
... þæt vit on gārsecg ðæt
aldrum nēðon, ond þæt geæsðon swā."
(535a-538b)

We know that both Scyld and Beowulf have participated in 
grace, and this identification with baptismal symbolism in 
their youth may explain the frglomer that was givem to Scyld 
as well as the mysterious Æðwenden of l. 2188 that made a 
warrior and a hero out of the wretched, despised young 
Beowulf.

Emerging from Grendel's mere, Beowulf is described in 
sea-lexis surrounding the swídmöd that is an extension of 
his anræđ disposition:

Cōm þā to lānde  lidmanna helm
swídmöd swymman; sælāce gefeah,
(1624a-1625b)

Immersion in water seems to complement his virtue, as he is 
the "protection of sailors" and has "sea-booty": Grendel's 
head in this instance certainly being a symbol of the 
triumph of his grace. Returning triumphantly to the hall, 
the Geats are classified as feorrancundum, l. 1795, as opposed 
to the Danes who are, apparently, hall-dwellers. Beowulf, 
in urging Hrethric to visit Hygelac's court, points out by
way of advice:

"... feorcypæ bēoā
sēlran gesūhte þæm þe him selfa-dēah." (1838b-1839b)

The man who will be good, argues the Geat, will travel to
distant countries, usually by sea and consequently it may
be implied that virtue is a product of symbolic baptism.
Finally, I would like to point out that the cowardly,
virtueless Geats at the end of the poem are no longer refer-
red to as sea-farers, nor has this symbolic baptism occurred,
apparently, since Beowulf's coronation. They are now the
boldāgendra, the "house-owners", l. 3112, and, like the Danes,
11. 855-867, 916-917, horse-riders instead of sailors. The
function of symbolic baptism presents a real and viable
support for my thesis, and furthermore it reveals the same
degree of sophisticated syncretism displayed by the poet in
the use of valour as a sign of grace. Linking a facet of
the audience's everyday life with a sacrament is to make
Christianity a familiar and credible experience for them.

In brief conclusion, the aim of this chapter has been
to demonstrate the fulfillment of the operation of the
doctrine of grace hypothetically ascribed to the poem at the
outset; it is the complement to the first chapter's explora-
tion of the physical manifestations of grace. Without
rehearsing the congruence of these chapters at length, I will
point to the fact that they depict a process of alternation
between prosperity and catastrophe on both the individual and
national level. Beowulf rises from mediocrity to virtue,
falls to sin and is finally redeemed, paralleling or combining the situations of Hrothgar and Wiglaf. Scyld and Sigemund offer a progress reversed by Heremod, whose case finds chiasmatic contrast in that of Modthryth. The fortunes of the Danes and the Geats are congruent to the situations of their leaders. Inexorably we are drawn to the conclusion that the temporal situation of man is at best a balance between sin and grace, and that the final state of bliss can only be Heaven. To a people whose history and heritage was invasion and war, the appeal of happiness and stability on Fæan ware cannot be underestimated.
CHAPTER III

FATE AND GRACE

From the phenomenal and psychic functions of grace that we have explored we must now turn to the most abstract stage in the emanation of grace: fate. Establishing God as the source of grace and the hero as its destination, the temporal continuum within which this grace operates is fate, the series of events that reflects the decisions of the Lord. This concept of fate as the disposition by which Providence rules temporal affairs has been noted as Boethian:

Providence and Fate are not opposed but harmonized by the subordination of the latter; and divine Prescience is no check on man's activity, but cooperative with it. In this view, and with the rest of this train of associations, we can hardly err in recognizing a mind fed upon the book of Boethius, De Consolatione, especially iv. 6, and onward.¹

Certainly the question of wyrd, in Beowulf, has received considerable attention, and Timmer has scrutinised the use of this word throughout the corpus of Anglo-Saxon literature and concluded that by the seventh and eighth centuries the idea of wyrd had changed from that of a deity to a sequence of temporal events dictated by fate. He maintains that the word was assumed into Christian nomenclature and reconciled

¹John Earle, The Deeds of Beowulf, (Oxford, 1892), p. 145. Cf. C. W. Kennedy, Beowulf, The Oldest English Epic, (Toronto, 1959), "...God and wyrd are brought into juxtaposition in such a way as to imply the control of fate by the superior power of Christian divinity.", p. L.
to doctrinal ideas, which made it "... a bridge between the old and the new creed." Roper, on the other hand, after offering an exhaustive rehearsal of critical opinions concerning the synthesis of fate and Christianity in the poem, while noting some further congruity between the Consolation's philosophy and that of Beowulf, makes a strong and cogent argument against a strictly Boethian interpretation. He notes that Beowulf enjoys the five gifts of the Boethian Fortuna (p. 389), but he then points to a contrariety of perspective on mutability: the theme of contemptus mundi in the Consolation, he argues, is at variance with the celebration of temporal happiness and delight in material wealth evident in the poem (pp. 390-391). Referring to the significant sixth prose of the Consolation's fourth book, however, Roper emphasizes the use of Fatum as opposed to Fortuna elsewhere, and suggests that:

...the Boethian Fatum is the impersonal force which translates the infinite will of a providential God into the finite world of man, whereas Fortuna is the lot of individuals, the particular result of that translation.

He further notes that wyrd's being ancillary to Providence is only natural, since a Christian will subordinate all things to God, so that we need find no explicit reference

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4Roper, p. 392.
to the *Consolation* in this arrangement, and he also distinguishes (pp. 393-396) between those occasions in which God restricts the activity of *wyrd* and those in which Providence and *wyrd* cooperate. Roper's theory of three types of *wyrd* in *Beowulf* starts from his observation that the word is invariably connected with death (pp. 392-393) and he postulates a triad of fatal functions that exhibit a spectrum of applications ranging from the general to the specific: *wyrd* is a force governing all men, as death is a characteristic common to man universally; but also fate is more specifically a time appointed for the death of each individual; and finally, apart from being a feature of man's nature and the situation encompassing his death, *wyrd* is a death figure, a killer or a "body-snatcher" that effectively causes his death (pp. 397-400).

While I appreciate Dr. Roper's differentiation between the Boethian and Germanic concepts of fate, and find a parallel between his final definition(s) of *wyrd* and Moorman's speculations on the "pessimism" of the pagan elements; 5 I find him in agreement with others concerning one essential fact, that fate as it is presented in *Beowulf* is a power that enforces the predetermined will of Providence by influencing every event or activity of mankind. We may well expect that the Latinate and Germanic world-views, because of different heritage and tradition, would interpret different moralities  

5Moorman, p. 5.
from the same concept of the emanation of divine authority; we could hardly expect the Mediterranean and Scandinavian culture climates to duplicate each other's sentiments.

My thesis, naturally, defines fate according to the Augustinian notion: that is, a connection of causes dependent on the will of God. Since we may prove that fate aids those who participate in grace and dooms those in the human condition, we may not only justify its association with death, but also its function in cooperation with the bestowal of grace. In an environment as treacherous and hazardous as the setting of Beowulf, survival may well be dependent on courage and strength, the gifts of grace. Wyrd, then, is the complementary lot of man, as it is God's will concerning those individuals to whom He denies grace and who therefore die. This conclusion, however, admits that all men, good and bad, must die, and the qualification appended here is that in a conflict between good and evil, grace will give the elected man victory and life, while the evil man will be conquered and killed because wyrd, not grace, is his portion. Timely death, after all, is for the Christian not an end to grace, but the commencement of everlasting bliss. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, fate will be considered the temporal equilibrium created by the interplay of grace and wyrd.

Beowulf illustrates the possibility of salvation in death in his first address to Hrothgar, in which the hero

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6 Oates, Basic Writings, De Civitate Dei, viii, p. 63 (Vol. I).
emphasises that the will, or judgement of God will sentence the loser's soul:

"... dær gelýfan sceal
Dryhtnes dôme, sê þe hine dêad nimea."  
(440b-441b)

and concludes with the statement Gæðæ a wyrd swā hīo sceal!

1. 455. The first statement seems to mean that God's judgement in this case is, at least for the loser, death. We know that the monster is killed by Beowulf's grace-inspired strength, and it is possible to infer from the concluding statement that wyrd is God's judgement for Grendel. Because the Geats are beneficiaries of divine mercy, we see that they are not sent wyrd at the hands of Grendel, as he is at the hands of Beowulf:

He waes þæt wyrd þæ gēn,
þæt hē mā mōste manna cynnex
dicgean ofer þā niht.  
(734b-736a)

The wyrd that is not sent to the Geats is in fact the murderer of the sinful Danes through Grendel:

"... is mīn fletverod,
wīghēap ēwenode; hīe wyrd forswēop
on Grendles gryre. God fēge mǣg
þone dolsceadan daēda getwǣfan!"  
(476b-479b)

Hrothgar makes it clear in these lines that Grendel is allowed to commit his crimes which God could easily prevent. The fabulous element appears to be the vehicle of fate, in

7 The question of Hondsceio's death, 11. 740-745, does make an exception to this statement, but this may be accounted for with reference to Beowulf's statement 1. 2077 that Hondsceio was fǣge, or doomed to die. Cf. Beowulf's aphorism 11. 572-573.
direct contrast to the hero who is the vehicle of grace. Thus we may see Grendel's defeat as a predomination of Beowulf's transmission of grace over the fate of mortality, normally the lot of fallen man. Beowulf's aphorism,

"Wyrd oft nereð
unfægne eorl, þonne his ellen déah!"

(572b-573b)

stresses that wyrd spares those who are unfægne, "not doomed", and who exercise the virtue of ellen, or "valour". This appears to be a statement illustrating wyrd's passing over an individual whose grace is manifested in virtue and the quality of being "not doomed". The poet, in explaining Grendel's defeat, implies the bipartite quality of God's actions in settling temporal affairs:

nefne-him wītig God wyrd forstōde
ond ðaes mannes mōd. Metod eallum wēold
gumena cynnes, swā hē nū git dēd.

(1056a-1058b)

The fact that wyrd is obstructed both by the wisdom of God and the courage of Beowulf shows that God acts through the hero to impose grace on the situation, through His omnipotence. The prevalence of grace changes the nature of fate from destruction to safety, and this condition is seen as a prevention or correction of the wyrd typical of those born into original sin. Hygelac's destiny offers us an exemplar of the fate of those dominated by superbia:

... hyne wyrd fornæm,
syðan hē for wlenco wēan ðhsode,
fæhde tō Prysum.

(1205b-1207a)

The Geatish king acted out of pride, for wlenco, and was
taken away by fate, as he displayed sin, not the virtue of, say, ellen; remember that Beowulf's aphorism ll. 572-573 postulated that survival was dependent on virtue and election, neither of which Hygelac enjoyed. When Beowulf is dominated by sin, we see that wyrd is no longer displaced by grace; we have noted that, parallel to Hrothgar earlier, he wishes luck, or grace, hælo, to his retainers, and recalling Hrothgar's spiritual state, we recognise a duplication in Beowulf's. Thus the poet's description of the hero:

Him waes geōnor sefa,

wæefre ond waelfūe, wyrd ungemete nēah,

sē ēone gōmenan grētan sceolde,

(2419b-2421b)

betrays his lack of grace in two ways. Primarily, Beowulf's spirit, or sefa, is not confident and strong as we have seen him before the previous monster-fights, but "sad" or "wretched", geōnor, and it may be inferred that he lacks the strength of faith. Secondly, the fabulous vehicle of wyrd is as near spatially as is the death of Beowulf temporally, and we may see in Beowulf's peril a similarity to Hrothgar's earlier vulnerability. Ironically, Beowulf prophesies both his own and the dragon's death when he shares this observation with his retainers:

"... ac unc [furður] sceal

weordan æt wealle, swā unc wyrd getēod

Metod manna gehwaes."

(2525b-2527a)

I have purposefully omitted the comma indicated by Klaeber at the end of l. 2526 because I do not believe Metod to be in apposition to wyrd, rather I construe Metod to be the
subject of getēd and wyrd to be its direct object. Thus I feel that Beowulf's use of the dative plural unce indicates that he knows that both he and the dragon will receive wyrd from God, and that neither of them will be spared the reward of sin. During the actual fight with the dragon, the poet observes:

swā him wyrd ne gescræf.
hrēdæ æet hīlda.

(2574b-2575a)

Note that Beowulf's fortunes are no longer being determined by God explicitly, but in a negative way, by wyrd. This, perhaps, is the reason for the old king's death and is his reward for pride. Remembering once again the warrior's aphorism, ll. 572-573, we see that since he is not being spared by wyrd at this point, he must be "doomed" and without ellen. This, I think, is sufficient evidence, even if implicit, to indicate that any ad hoc grace Beowulf might ever have enjoyed has been withdrawn.

Fate, expressed as wyrd, then, can be seen as those events which are responsible for the ultimate condition of fallen man, and thus as a part of God's will. It is that which occurs in the absence of grace, reflecting the destruction ordained for evil. An interesting remark has been made by Irving in his chapter "The Defeat of Expectation", wherein he explores the frustrated intentions of the fabulous characters and concludes that evil will is not allowed to succeed; in speaking of these instances he says:

Usually they offer a perspective on "fate" as
being a fundamentally will-blocking force indifferent to the wishes of the characters, and often they bring out the role of the hero in cooperating with fate or serving as fate’s agent.

Naturally the hero is instrumental in the administration of fate, and this resulting sequence of events proves the inadequacy of the sin-dominated will; the intellective aspect of grace is seen in the intellectually frustrated destiny of those without it.

There is evidence in the poem that “wyrd,” much like grace, is the manifestation of divine will. The poet says of the sleeping Danes just prior to the attack of Grendel’s dam:

Wyrd ne cūbon,
geōsceaf grīmme, swā hit āgāngen wearē
eorla manegum, sypēan āēfn cwōm,
(1233b-1235b)

Here the word “wyrd” is in apposition to “geōsceaf,” and we may realise in the identification of these two words that “wyrd” has the quality of being predetermined. The sentiment of the compound “geōsceaf” is literally “previously created” or “former creation” (cf. Klaeber, p. 342), and thus we may see “destiny” as some type of creation. In this immediate instance, I construe “geōsceaf” to refer to the destiny of fallen man as determined by God, which is “wyrd,” as sinners are denied grace. Thus the death brought by Grendel’s dam, the vehicle of “wyrd,” is a “previous-creation” of God. Lexical items based on the root substantive “sceaf” that mean

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"destiny" obviously imply that this fate is some type of creation, and the source of all creation is, ll. 90-98, God. Not all these words carry the pessimistic force that wyrd embodies, as they may refer to both the merciful and severe creations of the Lord's will. When Beowulf speaks to Wiglaf, he shows that fate as wyrd seems to fulfill a necessary function in the destiny of the virtuous Waegmundings:

"... ealle wyrd forsweop\nmine magas to metodsceaufte,
eorlas on elne; ic him aefter sceal."

(2811b-2816b)

In this case wyrd definitely is the "body-snatcher" defined by Roper, and the force of metodsceaufte may be seen to be "God-creation", although Klaeber gives it the interpretation of "death" or "decree of fate", p. 374. Although there seems little evidence to differentiate the metodsceaufte of the Waegmundings, who die on elne, and of Beowulf from the geōsceauf that is the lot of the proud and unvalorous Danes, it will be recalled that the Danes' destiny was grimme, while we have reason to suspect that Beowulf, and consequently his forebears, have gone to Heaven. These two collocations of a sceaf compound with wyrd indicate not only that fate is a type of creation, but also that there exist two qualities of fate, even if death is common to both: one is destruction through participation in evil, the other a glorious, active,

9Cf. Bosworth-Toller, pp. 821-22, and compare ...bās læmannan gesceafte, 1. 1622, which refers to all created life or the world. These words need not signify only the action of divine "creation", as they also carry the force of "shaping", "ordering" or "arranging".
but unsuccessful fight against the vehicle of wyrd, which may imply salvation.

At the outset of the poem we find in the situation of Scyld a statement of the relationship between fate and grace:

... syddan ærgast weard fæsceafte funden; hé baæ frôfre gebåd, wëox under wulcanum ... (6b-8a)

We have already noted these lines as an example of the operation of grace, but the word fæsceafte now becomes significant in our examination. Literally it may be rendered as "little-" or "few-creation", which is translated as "destitute, poor, wretched" by Klaeber, p. 327. The thrust of this passage may be seen as a description of the quantitative disparity between the amounts of "creation" or grace ordained by God for the individual in his natural and in his graced conditions. Because fæsceafte is in opposition to frôfre we may recognize them as markers of indifferent and charitable divine attitudes, respectively, and may deduce that the state of grace embodies a greater amount of divine creation. The contrasting type of fate is manifested in the actions of Grendel, the vehicle of wyrd, who cannot create, but only destroy. His function is a type of negative or perverse creation, and it is enforced that he is without grace:

... wonsceafte vera. Wiht unhæelo,

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10 Bosworth-Toller, p. 1167. Cf. van p. 1164; which means "lack, want, absence..."
Because we know that unhæelo indicates a lack of grace we may see this quality in the fate that he brings to the Danes: wonsceaf means literally "no creation". As noted in the first chapter, both Scyld and Grendel become fæasceaf, but where the hero's situation is ameliorated with frófre, l. 7, Grendel, l. 973-974, is denied help. Knowing that Scyld went on fæan wære l. 26-27, but that Grendel's death has led his soul to Hell, l. 851-852, we may conclude that the condition of fæasceaf, or insufficient divine creation, must be remedied by the grace of frófor.11

The poet attributes to Grendel a function derived from Cain, when the latter's fratricide is offered as the reason for his exile, and Grendel is pictured as part of this issue:

\[ \text{fæan wœc féla} \]
\[ \text{geösceafgtästa; waes þáëra Grendel sum,} \]

(1265b-1266b)

The race of fabulous creatures descended from Cain are those spirits who embody the geösceaf that carries the Danes to their death, l. 1235. Grendel's specific association with this aspect of fate leads us to view the situation of the Danes as good or bad depending on whether Beowulf or Grendel is triumphant. Both monster and hero are agents of divine

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11 In each case, of course, frófor may also denote a desired remedy for purely physical misfortune, and would be read in such a light as "comfort". This does not deny a more abstract rendering of "grace", cf. Bosworth-Toller, p. 340, if we are able to ascribe to frófor a divine source.
will, but they represent the contrasting vengeful and benign characteristics of God's intentions toward men.

Hrothgar's sermon to Beowulf indicates that destiny, given to man by God, is perhaps both temporal and eternal benefit:

"... ond he þā forðgesceafte
forgyted ond forgymed, þaes þe him ðær God sēalde,
wulþres Waldend, weordmynþa dæl."  
(1750b-1752b)

We have noted that this hypothetical individual in Hrothgar's sermon has benefitted from grace, and now we see him in his sinful condition, forgetting the grace, or weordmynþa dæl that he has received, also possibly salvation, or forðgesceafte, literally "further-creation", that God has ordained for him. The prefix ford- certainly implies a positive and active creative function on God's part in this instance, which we may contrast to the fēa- type of fate allotted to sinful or unelected individuals. The Geats ruled by Beowulf in the second division of the poem are perhaps symbolised by the lord whose slave stole the goblet from the dragon; this man, the fēa, may be the fēasceafteþum men by whose volition the hoard was ravaged:

Dā waes hord rāsod,  
onboren bēaga hord, bēne getīdād  
fēasceafteþum men; fēa scēawode  
Fīra fyrgneveorc forman side.  
(2283b-2286b)

This anonymous lord I find to be a figura of the Geats as a whole, and we know them to be approaching an apocalypse in the form of an invasion by either the Swedes or the Merovingians. The lord, incidentally, may be Beowulf, as we
learn 11. 2404-2405 that the treasure is brought to him by the meldan, or "betrayer" (cf. Klaeber, p. 373- "informer"). If we are able to identify the slave as the "betrayer" and Beowulf as the lord to whom the peace-offering is given, then we may deduce that the old king is both greedy and severe, not charitable and merciful, and that he is not dominated by virtue but by sin. Whether or not the frēa is Beowulf, this feasceafte condition was exhibited by the Geats after the death of Hygelac, as in their supplications to Beowulf they are collectively the feasceafte of 1. 2373. It is obvious that the nation enjoys no grace, although the only explicit evidence for sin is Hygelac’s pride, the wlenco of 1. 1206 that caused his death, and the avarice of the virtually anonymous Geatish lord to whom the cup is brought. Thus I find the lack of grace-lexis to be complemented by the prevalence of negative-creation-lexis in this part of the poem, a phenomenon that indicates a domination of wyrd, not grace, and indicates the doomed circumstances of the Geatish nation.

No better evidence of the vacillation between fate as wyrd and fate as grace may be found than in the process of reversal of fortune displayed in the main action of the poem and in its digressions. The progress of fortune may be likened to the swinging of a pendulum, a movement between the extremes of calamity and prosperity as that movement forms the environment of all creatures. I do not mean to imply that fortune in this poem has the capricious qualities
which are its dominant traits in the Consolation, nor that its action reflects some supernatural use of mankind for sport, but rather that we can see the execution of the justice of divine will in the fortune allotted to characters in the poem. Instances of this reversal of fortune have been forthcoming in withdrawals of ad hoc grace, with consequent doom, or in instances of faith producing a turn for the better, and in the reversal of situation in Denmark following Beowulf's arrival we find a complete operation of this inversion of fortune. When Grendel was triumphant over the hall and the nation of the Danes, his murder of Hondsfo, the doomed Geat, is described in a brief catalogue of the bodily parts consumed by the monster:

\[ \ldots \text{slæt unwearnum,} \\
\text{bæt bænlocan, blöd eðrum dranc,} \\
\text{synsnædum swealh; \ldots} \]

\(741b-743a\)

A similar list is presented in the depiction of Beowulf's conquest of the monster:

\[ \text{Līcsār gebād} \\
\text{atol ðeglǣca; him on eækle weard} \\
\text{syndolah sweotol, seonwe onsprungon,} \\
\text{burston bænlocan.} \]

\(815b-818a\)

The poet uses two detailed descriptions to enforce the fact that the tables have turned, and that Grendel has changed from predator to victim while the actual nature of the hostility has changed in no wise. Further, in his triumph Grendel had been joyful, hūde hrēmig l. 12b, while the Danes were terrified and miserable, ll. 129-163, but in his defeat Grendel makes a "sad journey", the gēocor sīd of l. 765,
his tracks are *tīrelēases*, l. 843, and he is *werīgmōd*, l. 844, while we are assured that joy and celebration is now the lot of the Danes. The poet summarises the reversal brought about by Beowulf:

Haefde Æast-Denum
Gēatmecga lēod gīlp gelēgest,  
swylc sce nóngēde ealle gebētte,  
invísorges, þē hīc æer drūgon  
ond for þrēanýdum þolian scoldon,  
torn unlētel.

(828b-833a)

The halls of Grendel and the Danes undergo a similar reversal of condition: while Grendel was allowed to dominate the Danes, Heorot was stained with blood, as Hrothgar points out:

"Dōne wæs þēos mēdoheal on morgentīd,  
drihtsele drēorfāh, þōne daeg līxte,  
eal bencþalu blōde bestymed,  
heal heorudrēore; ...

(484a-487a)

When Beowulf has defeated Grendel and purged Heorot, ll. 825-827, and we find that it is refurbished, ll. 991-1000, after the destructive fight, we also find that the monster's hall reflects defeat; the *wynlēas wīc*, l. 821, that Grendel seeks for refuge, his mere, becomes as Heorot once was:

Dāer wæs on blōde brīm weallende,  
atol ūda gesving eal gemenged,  
hāton heolfrē, heorodrēore wēol;  

(847a-849b)

Grendel and the Danes seem, through Beowulf's intervention, to have exchanged conditions; their situations are reversed in every detail. A case may be made for the proposition that Beowulf's defence of the Danes has left no outlet for
the evil of the monster that is the vehicle of *wyrd*, and that this destruction has turned upon Grendel himself. In triumphing over Grendel's dam, and effectively eliminating the fabulous evil that threatened Denmark, Beowulf has purged the haunted mere; the same word, *gefælsod*, is used in reference to Heorot, ll. 825, 1176, and to the mere, l. 1620. In fact, the process of reversal effected by Beowulf is the assertion of right over wrong, which corrects a previously converse situation.

The process of reversal of fortune from good, or beneficent, to bad, or malignant, or vice-versa, is found in the various digressions that occur in the poem. Bonjour notes that the digressions form significant links in the structure of Beowulf and that

...each digression brings its distinct contribution to the organic structure and artistic value of the poem. In other words, we have found that all of them, though in different degrees, are artistically justified. If this be admitted, the problem of the relation between episodic matter and the main narrative is actually solved.12

I agree that the digressions are an integral part of the poem, and find that each one conveys an example of the reversal of fortune; the moral impact of these *exempla* strengthens the theme of grace demonstrated in my argument thus far. The first digression actually opens the poem; the story of Scyld, ll. 1-52, gives an example of the reversal

of fortune from bad to good through grace, but this case is balanced by a short digression on the fiery fate of Heorot, the symbol of Danish civilisation, in ll. 82-85. This complementing of good with bad fortune for the Danes is accomplished by allowing Scyld, the vehicle of grace, to reverse their initial misery and then permitting Heorot, a product of their superbia, to manifest the reversal of their happier condition. The pendulum, moved by grace, has swung from bad to good, and sin has allowed it to return to bad, and Beowulf, the vehicle of grace, will again sway it to good. In his absence, the spiteful pride of the Ingeld-Freawaru incident, ll. 2024-2064, plunges the Danes again into cataclysmic circumstances. The succession of characters dictating the Danes' fortunes, Heremod, Scyld, Beowulf, and finally the Heatho-Bards and Hrothulf, produce a picture of Danish history that exhibits an alternation between grace and sin with consequent phenomenal results: the amplitude between good and bad fortune is described five times by the pendulum of fate, until at last the apocalyptic fall into evil fortune is signified by the doubled disaster of the Heatho-Beardian feud and the treachery of Hrothulf.

Two brief digressions on Beowulf and his father, Ecgtheow, serve to introduce the theme of reversal of bad fortune to the Danish court. Beowulf's concise synopsis of his previous victory over the sea-monsters, ll. 420-424, foreshadows the reversal of Danish bad fortune in the conquest of Grendel, and the story of Hrothgar's kind
treatment of Ecgtheow and the reversal of the hunted man's fortunes show that Hrothgar, at that time perhaps still a vehicle of grace,¹³ was able to reverse bad fortune for Ecgtheow as Beowulf will for the helpless monarch.

I turn now to three digressions that I find to convey a similar message concerning the reversal of fortune for good and evil individuals. Primarily the dispute between Unferth and Beowulf, ll. 449-603, serves to frame the digression on Breca and the brief illustration of Unferth's fratricide; we learn that grace brought Beowulf a reversal of a bad situation in the sea, and that Unferth's sin will reverse his high station in life when he is damned at death, ll. 588-589. The digression concerning Sigemund and Heremod also exhibits this type of reversal, but only in the case of Heremod, ll. 871-915; we learn of Heremod's fall¹⁴ and consequent evil fortune, ll. 1720-1722, while Sigemund's case provides the foil of an unpolluted man whose good fortune persists. Finally, the case of Hengest and Finn in the episode recalled in ll. 1071-1159 shows that treachery produces bad fortune and that virtue is rewarded, as Finn is killed by the same perfidy that he perpetrated on the unsuspecting Danes. Sin changed the Danes' fortune from

¹³For a full explanation of Hrothgar's fall from grace, or more exactly the withdrawal of his ad hoc grace, see Chapter I, also cf. ll. 64-65 for an indication of his youthful reception of grace

¹⁴Heremod's fall, or loss of grace is also discussed in the first chapter, but a reference to ll. 1716-1718 should make the situation clear.
good to bad, the vengeance of Guthlaf and Oslaf reversed the
good fortune of Finn and the bad fortune of Hengest and the
Danes. In short, these three digressions have juxtaposed
a good and a bad individual and demonstrated that fortune
reversed both the prosperity of evil men and the desparate
situation of the good.

Worth noting are the two short digressions on Cain, and
their structural position. The first digression on Cain,
ll. 106-114, which points out his reversal of fortune after
his fratricide, follows on the heels of the digression known
as the Song of Creation, ll. 90-98. This juxtaposition
contrasts God's decree of good fortune for man and evil
fortune for Cain, and plainly associates good fortune with
grace and bad with archetypal sin. The second episode con-
cerning Cain immediately precedes the attack of Grendel's
dám; in ll. 1261-1266 we find again the bad fortune of Cain
and his descendants, and in ll. 1270-1274 we see that grace
is used to prevent the imposition of this fate on man. The
digression on Cain's kindred foreshadows the death of
Æschere and the brief reversal of the Danes' new-found good
fortune; and perhaps, because of Beowulf's actual absence from
the hall, cf. ll. 1299-1301, and consequently the symbolic
absence of grace from the building, it also presages the
final apocalypse of Ingeld and Hrothulf. Both digressions
on Cain, then, provide the archetypal reversal of good fortune
through sin and are placed in immediate contrast to human,
good fortune to signify the ever-present threat of reversal.
The episode concerning Hama and Hygelac, ll. 1197-1214, offers the same lesson we found in the contrast of Sigemund and Heremod. Because he fled the battle humbly and prudently, Hama prospered and his good fortune, symbolised perhaps by the necklace, was maintained. Not so Hygelac, to whom this symbol of grace and prosperity has been given; he, because of pride, for wīenco l. 1206, reverses his own good fortune by initiating a war in Friesland. Like Heremod, he created his own bad fortune, reversing his previous good fortune through sin. We meet Heremod again, ll. 1709-1722, where we perceive once more the reversal of his grace-inspired good fortune; and we find a contrasting reversal in the digression on Modthryth, ll. 1931-1962, who was doubtless damning herself through the murder of innocent men, but appears to have become womanly and virtuous through Offa's love. The digressions concerning Hama and Hygelac, Heremod and Modthryth all illustrate a reversal of fortune; the digression concerning Hama and Hygelac occurs when Beowulf receives treasures from Hrothgar, including the Broensure necklace, which serves to indicate that his continued good fortune depends on a virtuous attitude toward wealth. The second digression on Heremod prefaces Hrothgar's sermon on the reversal of grace-given good fortune through sin, and foreshadows the dilemma caused by Beowulf's later reversal of good fortune, represented by the dragon. The episode concerning Modthryth's reversal of impending bad fortune, after what may be a sea voyage symbolic of baptism, perhaps
reinforces the assumption that Beowulf's good fortune will remain intact after his arrival in his native land.

There remain now four digressions, each illustrative of a change in fortune and germane to the theme of grace that I have demonstrated. The account of Beowulf's metamorphosis from weakling to hero, ll. 2183-2189, indicates a reversal of bad fortune directly after a straightforward statement of his grace-inspired virtues in ll. 2177-2183. The cause of fortune's reversal is emphatically God's generosity. A longer digression concerns the last survivor of the race whose treasure is guarded by the dragon, ll. 2232-2270, in which we find that the prosperity of the nation was reversed and all their joys were lost. Perhaps their sin was avarice, symbolised by the treasure hoard, and we can see in this episode a reversal of good fortune which contrasts to the reversal of bad fortune accorded to Beowulf. Moreover, we may see in the digression on the last survivor a foreshadowing of the condition of Wiglaf, the last of the Waegmundings, who burns and buries the treasure as the previous last survivor buried it, and who faces a war of annihilation from the Swedes and Merovingians in his leadership of the Geats. Surely his good fortune, the prosperity of the nation under Beowulf's rule, has been reversed just as the last survivor's was. Again in the digression recounting Beowulf's escape from Friesland, ll. 2354-2367, we have an account of the Geats' reversal of good fortune and the image of Beowulf as the last survivor, and although he
escaped with thirty suits of armour, his fortune has been defeat. Likewise the lament of the bereaved father who is left childless, ll. 2444-2464, pictures the reversal of good fortune for the last survivor who expects no improvement in his lot. Not only does this digression in conjunction with the others just mentioned foreshadow the reversal of Wiglaf's good fortune, it seems to apply specifically to the childless Beowulf of ll. 2729-2732, who has not been granted the good fortune of having an heir.

The effect, then, of the digressions has been to exemplify the polarities of graced destiny and the destiny allotted to sinful, fallen man. Damnation and physical distress are caused by an omission of grace, and only a positive divine emanation may improve the lot of Adam's heirs. The operation of fate, as either wyrd or grace, follows a pattern of sin or virtue in those that it governs, and although alternation between good and bad fortune is evident, it is clear that man is not the victim of any but his own vacillations. Fate and fortune in this poem are not irresponsible supernatural forces, but the just rewards for the merits of man; it may be noted in brief conclusion, that although as noted by the Wanderer, wyrd bid ful aræd,\(^{15}\) it is the souls of mankind that turn the Wheel of Fortune.

APPENDIX I
APPENDIX I

GRACE

The terms for grace suggested by Dr. Hamilton have, admittedly, alternate translations in Old English. My basis for accepting these items as expressive of "grace" has been their collocation with "deity"-items or their implicit reference to a benign action on the part of a supernatural force, which, in a Christian frame of reference must be an allusion to God. The following justification for each item employed in the discussion of grace, in so far as the poet establishes them as manifestations of divine charity, draws basically upon the resources of the Bosworth-Toller dictionary.

äþ is given by Bosworth-Toller (p. 47) a dual meaning of (1) "honour" and (2) "kindness", "mercy" or "help" (cf. Clark Hall and Meritt, p. 23). Of the six occurrences of this item or its compounds mentioned in this chapter, half refer to äre or áratafum as emanations from God to Beowulf-ll. 316-317; 381-382 and 1270-1273. Since the first two instances of this word seem to identify it as "grace", and this is reinforced just before the defeat of Grendel's dam, we may infer that the remaining uses of the word, all of which are in reference to Beowulf's salvation of others, -11. 457-458, 464 and 2377-2379, are likewise expressive of "grace".

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Bosworth-Toller favour a rendering of "grace" for est (p. 259), which is borne out by Clark Hall and Meritt, p. 107. Both dictionaries, however, suggest "delicacies" as an alternate. Of the three occurrences of this term, all are in reference to Beowulf, and two of them attribute the est to God: ll. 945-946, concerning Beowulf's birth, and 3074-3075, which relate the possibility of his salvation from the treasure's curse.

My suggestion of frōfor as a term for "grace" is not immediately sanctioned by Bosworth-Toller, but they offer a rendering of "Holy Ghost" for frōfor gæst, gæst, p. 340, which is echoed by Clark Hall and Meritt, p. 140. Eight occurrences of frōfor reveal that six times it is an emanation from God: for the first Beowulf, ll. 13-14; for man in general, by implication, ll. 183-188; twice for Beowulf, ll. 625-628, 696-698; and Grendel is pictured without frōfor by the judgement of God, ll. 972-979. Finally, Beowulf's frōfor of ll. 1270-1273 is seen to come from God, and stands in apposition to two other items used for "grace"—āre and gifu. The two remaining incidences of this term are Scyld's frōfre of l. 7, which may be explained by the later amplification of his son's grace, and Beowulf's frōfre to the Geats expressed by Hrothgar ll. 1707-1709, which parallels once again the case of the first Beowulf.

Bosworth-Toller render gif and gifu as "grace", p. 474, as do Clark Hall and Meritt, pp. 153-154. The implications of the compounds gifstōl and gifhealle have been discussed
in the chapter itself. The geofena attributed to Beowulf
ll. 1173-1174 is explained about a hundred lines later by
the poet's statement of Beowulf's gife from God ll. 1270-1271,
in conjunction, as noted before, with two other items of
"grace"-lexis. The remaining attribution of geofum to Offa I,
ll. 1957-1958, may be seen as a parallel to the geofena and
gife of Beowulf just now discussed.

The many uses of the adjective gyfebe in its variant
forms, all of which denote a favour or blessing, unfortunately
bear no markers of divine association unless we consider
that those things which are or are not "given" are exclusively
within the demesne of God, and thus that the "giving" is an
action of grace. The coast-guard points out that victory in
battle is "given", ll. 299-300, and in ll. 555-558 and
818-820 we see that Beowulf is "granted" his victories over
the sea-monsters. Hrothgar points at the anonymous giver's
identity ll. 955-956, when he attributes forgyldan as an
action from God to Beowulf. Later Beowulf is "given"
ll. 2490-2491, but when he is not in a state of grace
we see that he is "given" neither a solo victory over the
dragon, nor a son, ll. 2682-2684 and 2730-2732 respectively;
although it must be confessed that this evidence was used to
support the postulation that Beowulf was not at this time in
a state of grace, there is, I think, enough evidence of his
faithlessness to keep this argument from being circular.

The final item, hyldo, occurs three times. Bosworth-Toller
recommend "grace" as a translation, p. 581, as do Clark Hall
and Meritt, p. 201. In each case the item is strongly linked to a divine source, as the grace of Beowulf is seen early in the poem as Metodes hyldo, l. 670, which is also true in the case of the slave who is pictured bearing Waldendes / hyldo, ll. 2292-2293, in his successful intrusion into the dragon's lair. The final use of this item is in connection with the possibility of Beowulf's being saved from the treasure's curse, ll. 3051-3057, where, in speaking of God, the poet observes -he is manna gehylde- l. 3056.

Thus it can be demonstrated that existing dictionaries and the Christian bias expressed by the poet support our rendering the terms discussed in this appendix as "grace".
APPENDIX II
APPENDIX II

THE HÆL LEXIS

Bosworth-Toller give the following variations of hæl
and suggest interpretations pp. 499-500:

1) hæl, es (n.) - omen, auspice
2) hæl, e (f.) - health, salvation, ...
3) hæl, (adj.) - safe, whole, sound
4) hælæan (v.) - to heal, ...
5) hælend - healer, Saviour, Jesus
6) hælu, -o (f.) - health, safety, salvation

and on p. 504 they offer (7) hāl as "whole...safe...honest..."

Clark Hall and Meritt, p. 165, equate hǣl (1) with hæelu (6)
and hāl (7). An underlying principle concerning the use and
force of these words becomes evident in the close associa-
tion of the word for "omen" with those words for "salvation"
and "safety", as we see a supernatural quality in all three
in a Christian framework. God as hælend is the giver of
this grace, and his actions in saving mankind may be described
by the verb hælæan (cf. Dream of the Rood, l. 85b); His gifts
are seen as hǣl and hælu - either omens or actual salvation.
In the adjective hāl we can construe a state of grace
(salvation), and are immediately reminded of the adjective
for "holy" - hālig, which certainly, if anything, denotes a
state of grace. Thus, I believe, we may safely render the
above items as different forms of "grace" without ignoring
or doing injustice to any alternate or secondary translations.
APPENDIX III

COURAGE-LEXIS

As I have indicated (Chapter II), the lexis used for bravery is by no means confined to words indicating mental fortitude; other qualities of courage are used by the poet to describe the individuals in the poem. The intellectual/spiritual set is based on (1) möd, i.e. mödig, felamödig, stilmöd and súilmöd, while mödbraece means "courage" as does möd alone; (2) ferhá, i.e. collenferhá, ferhafrecan, and súlfentarhá; and (3) hige, i.e. higebítig, prísthýdig, súlhtigende and hearðhícende. As I have noted, there seems to be a mutual connotation for mind- and spirit-lexis in these words, but the subordination of mind to spirit seems evident in an implicit causal relationship of spiritual to intellectual strength.

The adjectives used for courage that are not mind-based denote physical qualities that complement courage, i.e. from suggests strength (Klaeber, p. 335); dēor and heard imply a severity or fierceness (Klaeber, pp. 316, 353), while a suspicion of daring or even audacity is found in dyrstig (Klaeber, p. 318) and frēcne (Klaeber, p. 334); hwaet and snell propose the quality of speed and vigour (Klaeber, pp. 361, 400). The adjective cēne and the substantive cēnāu imply, beyond physical might, the quality of being clever or learned (Klaeber, p. 312). Naturally, a full spectrum of abilities
are used to describe the brave warrior, and these attributes range from the most cerebral to the most physical to demonstrate the scope of this virtue. While almost all of those items listed above betray some mental state, their force is not focused on this characteristic; the dichotomy of body and soul seems to be observed in the definition of courage.

An interesting phenomenon occurs in that bravery-lexis built on status or rank roots: *bregorof*, *cyningbald* and *earl*—or *dryhtscipe*. If we remember the *gifstol* theory propounded in the first chapter, it may be safe to assume that nobility, or more exactly, royalty, implies an unusually large allotment of grace, and it may be argued that the royal or noble aspects of courage imply an excellence bred of propinquity to the source of grace. It might also be argued that these aspects of bravery suggest an egregious quality of virtue, and thereby, perhaps, of social desert in recognition of this excellence (cf. Danes' sentiment concerning Beowulf, ll. 856-861), rather than an allusion to Divine Right.
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