Blackwell *Guides to Criticism*

OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

A Guide to Criticism with Selected Readings

John D. Niles

WILEY Blackwell

Old English Literature

Blackwell Guides to Criticism

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Preface and Acknowledgements

In a broad sense of the term, the criticism of Old English literature (from Greek *kritikē* 'the critical art') began when certain pioneering English scholars of the sixteenth century published the first printed editions of works dating from the Anglo-Saxon period, accompanying those editions with remarks of their own so as to facilitate the reader's understanding. If those scholars gave a spin to the texts they edited, something similar can be said of the transmission of knowledge in general since the beginnings of time.

In the more narrow sense in which the term is used today, the criticism of Old English literature can be said to have begun in the first half of the nineteenth century, when men of letters including the English scholar William Conybeare, the Danish poet, scholar, and clergyman N.F.S. Grundtvig, and the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote appreciative commentaries on Old English poetic texts, calling attention to the aesthetic merits of those texts or, at times, noting what they believed to be their formal or stylistic defects. These writers, together with others of this general period, also translated Old English poems or passages into one or another of the modern languages, another form of homage and critique.

Not until the mid-twentieth century did the criticism of Old English literature come into its own. What is perhaps most striking about the criticism that had been undertaken up to that time is its invisibility, when compared with the criticism of literature of more recent date. When René Wellek brought out his multi-volume *History of Modern Criticism* in the years 1955–1992, for example, the fifth and sixth volumes of that work, published in 1986 and titled respectively *English Criticism 1900–1950* and *American Criticism 1900–1950*, included not a single notice of the criticism of Old English literature. It is as if this literature did not exist as a subject of critical inquiry.[1] Perhaps this conspicuous blank in what is otherwise a commendable set of volumes resulted from spot-blindness on the part

[1] Not much had changed in this regard even as late as the year 2000, when volume 7, titled *Modernism and the New Criticism*, of the collective edition *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* came out, covering literary criticism published during the period from 1900 to 1950. The only notice of Old English literature taken there (at p. 88) is a one-line allusion to Ezra Pound's translation of *The Seafarer*.

of its author, who could not be expected to have covered all topics; but perhaps it also tells us something about the place of Old English in the field of literary studies up to the mid-twentieth century.

This place was clearly a marginal one. While study of the Old English language had long been valued as a branch of philology and historical linguistics, and while Anglo-Saxon historical studies were being pursued with vigour (particularly in the United Kingdom), the criticism of Old English literature tended to be viewed as something like a contradiction in terms. The great tradition of English literature was widely – and, in a sense, correctly – thought to have begun with Chaucer, Malory, and other writers of the late medieval era, not with the Anglo-Saxons, for the relation of Old English literature to the poetry and prose of later periods was hard to discern. Twentieth-century literary critics therefore tended to direct their gaze to the period extending from Chaucer onwards while leaving Anglo-Saxon studies to the philologists and historians.

Such prejudices began early and have died hard. To cite just one example, the first incumbent of the Chair of English Language and Literature at the University of London, appointed in 1828, was the Reverend Thomas Dale, an evangelical clergyman. Dale's view of Old English literature was coloured by his desire to inculcate high moral character among his students. In 1845 he wrote:[2]

> The most complete poetical production extant in this language is the romance of *Beowulf*, a kind of Saxon *Iliad*, which has recently been edited by an accomplished Saxon scholar [by John Mitchell Kemble, in 1833 and 1835–37], and is further remarkable as being the earliest composition of an heroic kind in any vernacular language of Europe. It is characterized by the usual strain of Saxon sentiment, representing the drunken carousal as the chief of joys, and courage in the field as the first of duties, and with scarcely a recognition of the existence of a second sex. If to be poetical is to be imaginative, man is never likely to become so till he has learned to write on woman. The Saxons never learnt this […]. The reason of this may be sought in nature; they who delight in bloodshed will ever be the few, and they who degrade intelligence by intoxication will rarely be the many […]. And where is love without woman, and what is poetry without love?

What the Reverend Dale refers to in this address as 'the few' – those who 'delight in bloodshed' – are those who attribute much value to works like *Beowulf*. 'The many' are those who, like himself and his right-minded students, appreciate the beauties, subtleties, and moral qualities of the literature of later eras. While 'the few' will degrade their intelligence through scenes of carousal and carnage, 'the many' will admire writings that feature love and romance.

A binary opposition is thus confirmed that has been influential ever since, though rarely voiced so bluntly as here. One of its implications is that no texts dating from the Anglo-Saxon period can qualify as poetry worthy of that name, since poetry by its nature consists

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[2] T. Dale, introduction to H. Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1845), p. xxii, as cited by D.J. Palmer, *The Rise of English Studies* (London: Oxford University Press), 24, with typography slightly modernized.

of writings that have to do with complex ideas and refined sentiments. Subsequent studies in departments of English, once such departments gained a secure place in modern universities, were thus long defined by a split between the many scholars and teachers who cultivated the English literary tradition from Chaucer on, and those who dealt with the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxons. Scholars on one side of this divide tended to emphasize the courtly dimension of their subjects; on the other side, the heroic.

One of the aims of the present book is to undermine this false binary opposition. This is not difficult to do given the actual sophistication of a good deal of Anglo-Saxon literature, as well as the high quality of recent research into that sector of the past. A complementary aim is to call attention to the critical controversies that have emerged as the literature of that early period has been made subject to exacting scrutiny.

The critical selections that are featured at the end of Chapters 2–11 focus not just on individual literary texts, but also on such related topics as early medieval literacy, textuality, and orality, as well as questions of style, genre, gender, and theme. Efforts have been made, as well, to acknowledge the ways that the criticism of Old English literature is implicated in historical studies, religious studies, anthropology, and art history, among other disciplines. All the same, some lines had to be drawn if only for reasons of space. The full interdisciplinary scope of Anglo-Saxon studies is thus only partly made clear, even though I would be the first to argue that an openness to the perspectives offered by a wide range of disciplines is a prerequisite to sound research in this field. It is my hope that readers whose interest is sparked by anything in these pages will undertake more sustained research on their own, using the present book as a point of departure.

One selection, the essay by Joshua Byron Smith on Borges in Chapter 11, was commissioned for the present volume some few years ago, and I am grateful to the author for his patience in awaiting its eventual appearance in print. Another essay, a classic one by the Swiss scholar Ernst Leisi on the semantics of material wealth in *Beowulf*, appears here in Chapter 5 in English translation for the first time. These essays, as well as certain others, are presented in their entirety. If certain other essays featured in the volume are republished only in part, this is solely because of constraints of space.

Quotations of Old English poetic texts cited in the main body of the book are drawn from the collective edition The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records (ASPR) with the exception of *Beowulf*, which is quoted from *Klaeber's Beowulf*. When the authors of the reprinted critical selections observe a different practice, then those passages are left as is. The same is generally true of the bibliographical apparatus used by those authors, though minor adjustments have been made for the sake of clarity or consistency. Likewise, for the sake of greater clarity, a comma has been added to the title of the excerpted essay by M.B. Parkes.

In the reprinted readings, the authors' original notes are printed as footnotes. Where I have added explanatory notes, they too are supplied at the foot of the page, cued to the main text by superscript letters rather than numbers. Editorial comments are set off by paired square brackets. Deletions are marked by an ellipsis of three periods, normally set between square brackets.

A number of libraries have provided invaluable assistance while I have researched this book. I wish to express my particular gratitude to the staff at the research libraries of the University of Cambridge, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Colorado, Boulder. In addition, an appointment

as Senior Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin – Madison (2004–9) enabled me to research the book among colleagues who stimulated my thinking about the place of Anglo-Saxon studies within a wider world of thought and letters. Ancillary funding was provided by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Fund (WARF) through the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

My editors at Wiley Blackwell have been unfailingly helpful from start to finish, and their patience and sound advice have meant much to me. I am also grateful to a number of anonymous specialist readers, including those persons who evaluated the original book proposal as well as two reviewers of its penultimate draft. I regret that constraints of space have prevented me from adopting all of their constructive suggestions, though most have been incorporated into the book. As for the infelicities, errors, and shortcomings that remain, they are my own responsibility. I shall be happy to receive emailed notice of any corrections that should be made (email: jdniles@wisc.edu).

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- Brepols Publishers, Belgium, for an excerpt from Joyce Hill, 'Learning Latin in Anglo-Saxon England: Traditions, Texts and Techniques', which appeared in *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Abroad*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout, 2003), 7–29.
- Cambridge University Press, for an excerpt from M.B. Parkes, 'The Palaeography of the Parker Manuscript of the *Chronicle*, Laws, and Sedulius, and Historiography at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *ASE* 5 (1976): 149–71.
- De Gruyter Press (Berlin), publishers of the journal *Anglia*, for permission to publish an English translation of Ernst Leisi's essay 'Gold und Manneswert im *Beowulf*', which first appeared in *Anglia* 71 (1952): 259–73.
- The editors and publishers of *English Studies*, for an excerpt from Hugh Magennis, 'Images of Laughter in Old English Poetry, with Particular Reference to the *Hleahtor Wera* of *The Seafarer*', *ES* 73 (1992): 193–204.
- The editors and publishers of *Neophilologus*, for J.R. Hall, 'Perspective and Wordplay in the Old English *Rune Poem*', *Neoph* 61 (1977): 453–60.
- Oxford University Press, for an excerpt from Malcolm Godden, 'Apocalypse and Invasion in Late Anglo-Saxon England', which appeared in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to E.G. Stanley*, ed. Malcolm Godden, Douglas Gray, and Terry Hoad (Oxford, 1994), 130–62.
- Slavica Publishers, Inc., for Donald K. Fry, 'The Memory of Cædmon', which appeared in *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord*, ed. John Miles Foley (Columbus, OH, 1981), 282–93.
- The University of Chicago Press, for L.M.C. Weston, 'Women's Medicine, Women's Magic: The Old English Metrical Childbirth Charms', *MPh* 92 (1995): 279–93.
- The University of Toronto Press, for Edward B. Irving, Jr, 'Crucifixion Witnessed, or Dramatic Interaction in *The Dream of the Rood*', which appeared in *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown et al. (Toronto, 1986), 101–13.

Abbreviations

ACMRS	Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Aertsen & Bremmer	*Companion to Old English Poetry*, ed. Henk Aertsen and Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994)
Anglo-Saxon Styles	*Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003)
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
ASPR	The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, 6 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931–53)
Beowulf Handbook	*A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997)
Bessinger Studies	*Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honor of Jess B. Bessinger, Jr*, ed. Helen Damico and John Leyerle (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1993)
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
Blackwell Encyclopaedia	*The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999)
Bosworth-Toller	James Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford, 1898), with *Supplement* by T. N. Toller (1921) and *Revised and Enlarged Addenda* by A. Campbell (1972)
Brodeur Studies	*Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur*, ed. Stanley B. Greenfield (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1963)
Cambridge History	*The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
Cavill	*The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. Paul Cavill (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

Crick & Van Houts	*A Social History of England 900–1200*, ed. Julia Crick and Elizabeth Van Houts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
Damico & Olsen	*New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990)
DOE	*Dictionary of Old English*, ed. Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986 to the present); as of the end of 2015, letters A–G have been published
Donoghue	*Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, trans. by Seamus Heaney, ed. Daniel Donoghue (New York: Norton, 2002)
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile
EETS	Early English Text Society
EHR	*English Historical Review*
ES	*English Studies*
Essential Articles	*Essential Articles for the Study of Old English Poetry*, ed. Jess B. Bessinger and Stanley J. Kahrl (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1968)
Fry	*The Beowulf Poet: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Donald K. Fry (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968)
Fulk	*Interpretations of Beowulf: A Critical Anthology*, ed. R.D. Fulk (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991)
Godden & Lapidge	*The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
Greenfield & Calder	Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1986)
Greenfield Studies	*Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature: Essays in Honour of Stanley B. Greenfield*, ed. Phyllis Rugg Brown, Georgia Ronan Crampton, and Fred C. Robinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986)
Holy Men & Women	*Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996)
Howe	*Beowulf: A Prose Translation*, trans. by E. Talbot Donaldson, ed. Nicholas Howe (New York: Norton, 2002)
JEGP	*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
Johnson & Treharne	*Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*, ed. David F. Johnson and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
Joy & Ramsey	*The Postmodern Beowulf*, ed. Eileen A. Joy and Mary K. Ramsey (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2006)
Klaeber's Beowulf	*Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. R.D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008)

Klinck	Anne L. Klinck, *The Old English Elegies: A Critical Edition and Genre Study* (Montreal: McGill–Queens University Press, 1992; paperback edition with a supplementary bibliography, 2001)
Liuzza	*Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. R.M. Liuzza (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002)
LSE	*Leeds Studies in English*
MÆ	*Medium Ævum*
Magennis & Swan	*A Companion to Ælfric,* ed. Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan (Leiden: Brill, 2009)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Mitchell & Robinson	*A Guide to Old English*, 8th edn, ed. Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)
MPh	*Modern Philology*
Muir	*The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, ed. Bernard J. Muir, 2 vols, 2nd edn (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000); first published 1994
Neoph	*Neophilologus*
Nicholson	*An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963)
Niles	*Old English Literature in Context*, ed. John D. Niles (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1980)
NM	*Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*
n.s.	new series
O'Brien O'Keeffe	*Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
OE	Old English
OEN	*Old English Newsletter*
o.s.	original series
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
PL	Patrologia Latina
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association of North America*
PQ	*Philological Quarterly*
Pulsiano & Treharne	*A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)
Readings: Beowulf	*Beowulf: Basic Readings*, ed. Peter S. Baker (New York: Garland, 1995). Also published as *The Beowulf Reader*, ed. Baker (New York: Garland, 2000)
Readings: Cynewulf	*Cynewulf: Basic Readings*, ed. Robert E. Bjork (New York: Garland, 1996)
Readings: Junius MS	*The Poems of MS Junius 11: Basic Readings*, ed. R.M. Liuzza (New York: Routledge, 2002)
Readings: MSS	*Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. Mary P. Richards (New York: Garland, 1994)
Readings: OE Prose	*Old English Prose: Basic Readings*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (New York: Garland, 2000)

Readings: Shorter Poems	*Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings,* ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (New York: Garland, 1993)
RES	*Review of English Studies*
Robinson	Fred C. Robinson, *The Tomb of Beowulf and Other Essays on Old English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993)
Saunders	*A Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. Corinne Saunders (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)
Speaking Two Languages	*Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies*, ed. Allen J. Frantzen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991)
SPh	*Studies in Philology*
s.s.	supplementary series
Stevens & Mandel	*Old English Literature: Twenty-Two Analytical Essays*, ed. Martin Stevens and Jerome Mandel (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968)
Stodnick & Trilling	*A Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Studies*, ed. Jacqueline Stodnick and Renée R. Trilling (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)
Toller Lectures	*Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Thomas Northcote Toller and the Toller Memorial Lectures*, ed. Donald Scragg (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003)

Part I

Main Currents in Twentieth-Century Criticism

1

Old English Studies 1901–1975

Literary criticism is scarcely an autonomous enterprise; rather, it is intimately connected with the intellectual currents of the era when it is produced. About these currents several things can be said. One is that they are usually in a state of flux and turbulence. Another is that they are a bit obscure to most persons until they have become passé. At that point they will become increasingly subject to stereotyping by the thinkers of subsequent generations, who will often find it comforting to gaze back at those ideas with a mixture of condescension and contempt. This state of affairs is likely to continue until such time as the ideas in question have been dead and buried so long as to merit an act of archaeological recovery, at which point someone will rediscover them, with mild fanfare, as noteworthy contributions to intellectual history.

Regardless of the truth-value of these propositions, the criticism of Old English literature can be most meaningfully understood when it is seen as a development of – or, sometimes, a reaction against – trends that were influential at an earlier moment in history. The same comment applies to those prior trends. The present guide to criticism will therefore approach its subject by adopting a motto that is ignored at one's peril in literary studies: namely, 'Always historicize.'

Before considering some aspects of the criticism of Old English literature published during the last forty years or so, then, I will first review some leading work dating from the first three quarters of the twentieth century. The writings of the scholars of that period are of interest in their own right. If their work is ignored these days, then that may be owing less to its intrinsic merits (though it cannot all be said to be equally brilliant or meritorious) than to the fact that neither the students of today nor, far less, their teachers, can be expected to have read everything about everything.

Old English Literature: A Guide to Criticism with Selected Readings, First Edition. John D. Niles.

The Earlier Twentieth Century

In all respects but one, Anglo-Saxon scholarship was on a fairly sound footing by the beginning of the twentieth century.[1] By that time, the Old English language could be studied under trained professionals at more than four dozen universities located on at least two continents.[2] By the 1930s and 1940s, moreover, the foundations of the field were beginning to look rock solid. Philological scholarship undertaken on both sides of the Atlantic had gone far to establish the basis for understanding Old English texts at least as far as their linguistic and formal features were concerned. The close relationship of Old English religious literature to the much larger body of Latin Christian literature of the early Middle Ages had been fairly well charted as well, though more nuanced work of this kind remained to be done. Also well charted, as much as could be done given the scattered nature of the evidence, was the deep well, or whirlpool, of stories from the Northern past to which the allusions to legendary history in *Beowulf*, *Widsith*, *The Fight at Finnsburg*, *Deor*, and *Waldere* pertain.

By this time, the great majority of Old English texts that had survived into the modern period had been made available in reliable scholarly editions, thanks in part to two comprehensive series of editions of verse and prose undertaken in Germany, where the Anglo-Saxon period was approached as a branch of Germanic philology. These were C.M.W. Grein's *Bibliothek der angelsächische Prosa* and his and Richard P. Wülker's *Bibliothek der angelsächische Poesie*.[3] Moreover, certain of the freestanding scholarly editions that date from approximately this same period exemplify editorial practices that have stood the test of time. An example is Felix Liebermann's parallel-text edition of Anglo-Saxon laws, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*.[4] This magisterial three-volume resource has remained in standard use for over a century, though a consortium of scholars associated with the Early English Laws project currently plans to replace it.[5] Likewise, the scholars Albert S. Cook, Frederick Tupper, and R.W. Chambers produced outstanding editions of poems from the Exeter Book of Old English poetry, thus setting high standards for the editing of verse. These editions covered respectively the first three items in the Exeter Book (known today as the Advent Lyrics, Cynewulf's signed poem *The Ascension*, and *Christ in Judgement*);

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1 The history of Old English scholarship up to 1901 is treated in my companion volume *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England 1066–1901: Remembering, Forgetting, Deciphering, and Renewing the Past* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).

2 J.R. Hall, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Nineteenth Century: England, Denmark, America', in Pulsiano & Treharne, 434–54 (at 449).

3 *Bibliothek der angelsächische Prosa*, ed. Christian W.M. Grein et al., 13 vols (Cassel, 1872–1933); *Bibliothek der angelsächische Poesie*, ed. Richard P. Wülker, 3 vols (Cassel, 1881–98). This latter publication represented a revision of the two-volume edition with the same title that Grein had produced in 1857–58.

4 Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols in 4 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903–16). The centennial of the publication of this work has recently been the occasion of a celebratory volume, *English Law before Magna Carta: Felix Liebermann and 'Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen'*, ed. Stefan Jurasinski, Lisi Oliver, and Andrew Rabin (Leiden: Brill, 2010). In the first of these chapters Rabin provides a brief biographical tribute to Liebermann.

5 For information on the current laws project see www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk.

the complete set of riddles; and *Widsith*.[6] Each of these editions remains a treasure-trove of information sifted by a scholarly mind of great distinction. When one takes into account as well that Eduard Sievers's authoritative German-language grammar of the Old English language, his *Angelsächsische Grammatik*, had been in existence since 1882;[7] that a complete and, for that time, an authoritative dictionary of the Old English language was at last completed in the year 1921, when T. Northcote Toller brought out the second volume of his and Joseph Bosworth's *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*;[8] and that in 1934 Ferdinand Holthausen brought out a reliable etymological dictionary of Old English, one that has since been supplemented though never replaced,[9] then it is clear that Old English philological research was solidly anchored by the end of the first third of the century.

The quality of historical scholarship, too, reached a high level during roughly this same period. This is true both of research focusing on textual sources (chronicles, charters, wills, and other documents) and work in such ancillary fields as archaeology, art history, material culture, and place-name studies. Exemplary research in all these areas was conducted in Germany and Scandinavia.[10] The most influential continental scholar to be writing on *Germanistik* during this period – that is, on Germanic antiquities studied along the capacious philological lines established by Jacob Grimm by the mid-nineteenth century – was Andreas Heusler, a philologist and literary historian of the first rank.[11] Indispensable guides to research in this area were provided by the entries in Johannes Hoops's *Reallexikon*

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[6] Albert S. Cook, *The Christ of Cynewulf: A Poem in Three Parts* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1909); Frederick Tupper, Jr, *The Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Boston: Ginn & Co, 1910); and R.W. Chambers, *Widsith: A Study in Old English Heroic Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912). Cook and his scholarly milieu are the subject of a discerning study by Michael D.C. Drout, 'The Cynewulf of Albert S. Cook: Philology and English Studies in America', *English Studies* 92 (2011): 237–58.

[7] Eduard Sievers, *Angelsächsische Grammatik* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1882 and subsequent editions). This was translated into English by Albert S. Cook as *An Old English Grammar* (Boston: Ginn & Co, 1885); 3rd edn, 1903. The German edition is now superseded by *Altenglische Grammatik, nach der angelsächsische Grammatik der Eduard Sievers*, 3rd edn, ed. Karl Brunner (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1965).

[8] T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921). This volume represents an indispensable complement to the earlier one, titled *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collections of Joseph Bosworth*, ed. T. Northcote Toller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898).

[9] Ferdinand Holthausen, *Altenglisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1934); 2nd edn with a bibliographical supplement, 1963.

[10] A helpful review of nineteenth-century European scholarship is provided by Hans Sauer, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Nineteenth Century: Germany, Austria, Switzerland', in Pulsiano & Treharne, 455–71. Sauer takes note of landmark publications of the earlier twentieth century as well, demonstrating their connections with this earlier period.

[11] See especially Andreas Heusler, *Die altgermanische Dichtung* (Potsdam: Athenaion, 1926), 2nd edn, 1941; this treats Old English poetry alongside Old German and Old Norse literature. For a biographical tribute see Heinrich Beck, 'Andreas Heusler (1865–1940)', in *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, vol. 2, ed. Helen B. Damico (New York: Garland, 1998), 283–96.

der germanischen Altertumskunde, a four-volume encyclopedia featuring articles on all aspects of *Germanistik*. This publication has now been replaced by a magnificent collaborative second edition published in no fewer than thirty-five volumes.[12] Another major contribution to Anglo-Saxon studies in this wider sense was Vilhelm Grønbech's three-volume study *Vor folkeæt i oldtiden* (*The Culture of the Teutons*), published in Danish in 1909–12 and translated into English somewhat later.[13] This wide-ranging inquiry into ancient social institutions such as the feud, marriage, and gift-giving has retained much of its value despite being based on an obsolete concept of the essentially unitary culture of the early 'Teutonic' (or 'Germanic') peoples. Of additional importance was a study of *Beowulf* by the Swedish scholar Knut Stjerna, published posthumously in 1912, that correlated that poem's references to material culture to finds in prehistoric Swedish Iron Age archaeology, thus filling out our knowledge of 'the world of Beowulf' while at the same time confirming the credibility of the poet's descriptions of weapons and other material objects.[14] Recent discoveries have extended such archaeological connections as these well beyond Swedish soil.

In England, steady advances in historical scholarship pertaining to the Anglo-Saxons reached a high water mark with Frank Stenton's 1943 landmark study *Anglo-Saxon England*.[15] Stenton (1880–1967) was educated at Keble College, Oxford, and was later appointed professor of history at Reading University (1926–46), where he also served as Vice-Chancellor. His detailed account of the period from late Roman Britain up to the establishment of the Norman state was then – and remains today – a remarkable work of synthesis, based as it is on the author's competence in political and constitutional history, social and economic history, the history of Christianity in early Britain, and such other sources as numismatics and place-name studies. One can scarcely conceive of an historian living today who could write a book of similar scope without being dependent on Stenton at many points. Complementing Stenton's historical research was that of Dorothy Whitelock (1901–82), whose year of birth happened to coincide with major celebrations held in Winchester in 1901 to commemorate the

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[12] *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. Johannes Hoops, 4 vols (Strassburg: Trübner, 1911–19); 2nd edn 1968–2008 (Berlin: de Gruyter). The second edition includes a certain number of articles written in English.

[13] Vilhelm Grønbech, *The Culture of the Teutons*, 3 vols in 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), translated by W. Worster from *Vor folkeæt i oldtiden* (Copenhagen, 1909–12).

[14] Knut Stjerna, *Essays on Questions Connected with the Old English Poem of Beowulf*, trans. and ed. John R. Clark Hall (Coventry: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1912). This English publication was based on independent articles published originally in Swedish.

[15] Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943; 3rd edn, 1968). For an assessment of Stenton and his commanding place among British historians of his era, see Henry Loyn, 'Anglo-Saxon England', in *A Century of British Medieval Studies*, ed. Alan Deyermond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7–26. Another tribute, co-authored by Michael Lapidge and Stenton's wife Doris M. Stenton, is included in *Interpreters of Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 247–83.

millennium of the death of King Alfred the Great. The edition of Anglo-Saxon wills that Whitelock completed in 1930 demonstrated her mastery of early medieval documentary sources.[16] Equally at home in both literary and historical scholarship, Whitelock was appointed Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at the University of Cambridge in 1957, holding that post until her retirement in 1969. Leaving aside her other significant publications, her book *The Beginnings of English Society* is admired by many as the best short social history of the Anglo-Saxon period.[17] A third English scholar of this period to make invaluable contributions to Anglo-Saxon studies was N.R. Ker (1908–1982), who has been characterized as 'the greatest scholar that Britain has ever produced' in the field of manuscript studies.[18] Born in London though of Scottish family background, Ker graduated from Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1931, and in succeeding years he was appointed successively Lecturer in Palaeography (in 1941) and then Reader in Palaeography (in 1946) at Oxford. His 1941 study *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* sought to reconstruct the holdings of medieval libraries whose contents had since been dispersed or lost. His greatest contribution to Old English scholarship was to come a decade and a half later in the form of his 1957 book *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*.[19] This supplanted, after an interim of 250 years, the catalogue of manuscripts containing Old English that the antiquarian scholar Humfrey Wanley had completed in 1705. Folded into the Introduction to Ker's book is a succinct guide to Anglo-Saxon palaeography.

The contributions to Anglo-Saxon studies made by other scholars based in the UK have been celebrated elsewhere.[20] Work done by several of them will be noted here in due course.

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[16] *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. and trans. Dorothy Whitelock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930). Whitelock's career is reviewed by Henry Loyn in his study 'Dorothy Whitelock, 1901–1982', in *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, vol. 1, ed. Helen B. Damico and Joseph B. Zavadil, (New York: Garland, 1995), 289–311; by Loyn in Lapidge, *Interpreters of Early Medieval Britain*, 427–37; and by Jana K. Schulman, 'An Anglo-Saxonist at Oxford and Cambridge: Dorothy Whitelock (1901–1982)', in *Women Medievalists and the Academy*, ed. Jane Chance (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 552–63.

[17] Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1956; 2nd edn, 1968).

[18] A.I. Doyle, 'Neil Ripley Ker, 1908–1982', in Lapidge, *Interpreters of Early Medieval Britain*, 473–82 (at 482), quoting from an obituary published in the *Bodleian Library Review* in 1983.

[19] N.R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1941; 2nd edn, 1964); *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957). Supplements to Ker's *Catalogue* are listed in the Select Bibliography at the end of the present book. Ker is the subject of a biographical tribute by Kevin Kiernan, 'N.R. Ker (1908–1982)', in *Medieval Scholarship*, vol. 2, ed. Damico (New York: Garland, 1998), 425–37. See also Richard W. Pfaff, 'N.R. Ker and the Study of English Medieval Manuscripts', in *Readings: MSS*, 55–77.

[20] Particularly in Lapidge, *Interpreters of Early Medieval Britain*. This book consists for the most part of obituaries, reprinted from *Proceedings of the British Academy*, of medievalists active during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially during the period 1900–1950.

Literary Criticism: A Slow Start

One area of Old English scholarship in which only intermittent progress was made during the first half of the twentieth century was literary criticism. To a large extent, persons who wrote about Old English literature were doing so in a belletrist manner, praising the poetry, in particular, for its real or imagined virtues and castigating its real or imagined vices. Approaches of this kind tended to shed their appeal as the century progressed. In addition, early twentieth-century criticism tended to be rooted in attitudes that were rapidly losing their persuasive power. Since many critics were subject to late Romantic influences as embodied in such a book as Francis T. Palgrave's *Landscape in Poetry*,[21] what especially captivated their attention were depictions of nature in its wilder forms. Criticism tended to focus on images of heroic men battling either the elements or each other, when they were not carousing. Moreover, some of this criticism was still anchored in nineteenth-century solar mythology, which tended to allegorize works of imaginative literature as representing the conflict of summer versus winter or of the sea versus the land. Interpretations along such lines began to look increasingly passé in an era when earlier modes of perception were being assaulted by Fauvism, Cubism, Vorticism, Surrealism, and other radical movements in the arts.

Another factor slowing the emergence of literary criticism in the current sense of that term was the connection, among some writers though not all, of Anglo-Saxon studies with racialist modes of thought. At least until the outbreak of the First World War, certain writers were frank in their promotion of the idea that practially all good things that pertained to the English, from their language to their moral character and their free democratic institutions, could be attributed to their German heritage. A noteworthy study along such lines was Frances B. Gummere's book *Germanic Origins*, published in 1892 and, tellingly, reissued in 1930 under the less polemical title *Founders of England*.[22] Gummere (1855–1919) was for many years professor of English at Haverford College, Pennsylvania, having previously undertaken postgraduate studies at Harvard University and at the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau, where he earned the doctorate in 1881. In *Germanic Origins*, which was his major contribution to the field apart from his translations of Old English heroic poetry into a vigorous alliterative metre,[23] he argues that the English race, or 'our race' as he more inclusively calls it, is German to its core. In his view the Germanic-speaking ancestors of the English were of pure race, large physique, and passionate disposition, much as the Roman historian Tacitus had described them at the end of the first century AD. The free German was a warrior, 'and in the hour of rage or battle, his blue eyes flashed an uncanny fire' (p. 58). His bleak northern environs had an effect on his character: 'These swamps, these vast and sullen forests' made him 'of fitful and passionate temper, savage, inclined to

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[21] Francis T. Palgrave, *Landscape in Poetry from Homer to Tennyson, with Many Illustrative Examples* (London: Macmillan, 1897).

[22] Frances B. Gummere, *Germanic Origins: A Study in Primitive Culture* (New York: Scribner, 1892), reissued as *Founders of England*, with supplementary notes by Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr (New York: Stechert, 1930). My quotations are drawn from the 1930 edition, which is unchanged from the earlier one except for its title and some notes added by Magoun.

[23] Frances B. Gummere, *The Oldest English Epic: Beowulf, Finnsburg, Waldere, Deor, Widsith, and the German Hildebrand* (New York: MacMillan, 1909).

gloom or to unchecked revelry' (ibid.). At the same time, the free German honoured 'the sanctity of the household, and in consequence the inviolable character of marriage' (p. 137). He had a natural 'passion of bravery', and as a chief virtue he cultivated fearlessness in the face of death. At one point Gummere comments as follows about the alliterative metre in which virtually all Old Germanic verse was composed: 'The very meter of their poetry is the clash of battle, and knows scarcely any other note' (p. 232). Thanks in part to such praise as this, Anglo-Saxon studies took on a retrograde appearance in the eyes of scholars who, cultivating a cosmopolitan outlook, turned their critical attention elsewhere.

One factor that contributed to a growing division between Anglo-Saxon studies and later English literary studies was the split that occurred in the liberal arts curriculum at the University of Cambridge when Hector Munro Chadwick (1870–1947), who from 1912 to 1941 held the post of Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon, founded a new academic department focused on the integrative study of Old English language and literature alongside Celtic studies, Old Norse studies, and other kindred subjects including history, prehistoric archaeology, and social anthropology.[24] Chadwick is perhaps best known today for his book *The Heroic Age* (1912), which developed the thesis that every early civilization went through a process of evolution that resulted, at an early stage, in a tradition of heroic oral poetry. According to this view, *Beowulf* and other Old English heroic verse could best be studied alongside the Homeric epics, the Old Irish sagas, and similar works grounded in archaic social institutions.[25] Regardless of that debatable claim, Chadwick and other like-minded scholars were persuaded that the ancient literatures of the British Isles were best studied in an integrative fashion, and the influence of that idea remains strong today.

The academic unit founded by Chadwick at the University of Cambridge, which continues in existence as the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic (ASNC), has had a major role in advancing Anglo-Saxon studies within a broad interdisciplinary framework, launching the career of many a distinguished medievalist.[26] Its influence on the development of Old English literary criticism is another matter. Under Chadwick's arrangement of the disciplines, Anglo-Saxon studies fell outside the curriculum for students concentrating in English. Correspondingly, the study of Old English literature at Cambridge tended to remain untouched by the kinds of questions being asked by leading literary critics, including such a figure as F.R. Leavis (1895–1978), who served for some decades as Director of Studies in English at Downing College, Cambridge. It was Leavis more than any other British intellectual who was responsible for establishing literary criticism as a key element of mid-twentieth-century academic discourse. Although Leavis is associated with no one school of criticism, his writings staunchly proclaimed the value of the study of literature in

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[24] On Chadwick and his career see the tribute by J.M. de Navarro in Lapidge, *Interpreters of Early Medieval Britain*, 195–218.

[25] H. Munro Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912). A similar evolutionary theory underlies the wide-ranging work of comparative literary scholarship that H.M. Chadwick subsequently wrote in conjunction with his wife Nora Kershaw Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932–40).

[26] Some very distinguished ASNC graduates (including Bruce Dickins, Dorothy Whitelock, and Peter Hunter Blair) are enumerated by Michael Lapidge in his chapter on 'Old English' in Deyermond, *A Century of British Medieval Studies*, 363–81 (at 372–73).

its connection to modern life.[27] But Leavis and his followers had little to say about English authors prior to Shakespeare, while Chadwick's concept of Anglo-Saxon scholarship left little room for post-medieval studies. This division became less pronounced when Whitelock in the 1960s brought the Anglo-Saxon tripos back into the School of English, thereby opening up closer communication between Anglo-Saxonists and modern critics.

While the situation at Cambridge was a unique one, it was symptomatic of a larger phenomenon. There existed – and, to some extent, there still exists – an opinion, held by persons situating themselves on either side of an intellectual divide, that the critical methods appropriate to the study of modern literature and those applicable to Old English literature have little to do with one another, given the different character of these two historical periods. Such an attitude persists in certain circles even though some distinguished poets and fiction-writers of the current era have been deeply affected by their reading of Old English literature.[28]

Two Scholars Representative of their Eras

In order to trace how attitudes towards Old English literature shifted over the first fifty years of the twentieth century – and to trace how in some ways they remained the same – it will be helpful to compare two books published close to the years 1900 and 1950, respectively. Each of these studies shaped the reception of that literature in a manner that must once have seemed definitive. One is by the London-based clergyman Stopford A. Brooke (1832–1916), the other by the American university professor George K. Anderson (1901–1980). These two authors are worth singling out for attention in part because, for the most part, they gave voice to the received views of their respective eras, as opposed to striving for originality. In addition, each of these books was widely read by specialists and non-specialists alike, thereby influencing the tenor of subsequent criticism.

Stopford A. Brooke's survey *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest*, first published in 1898, was often reprinted during subsequent decades on both sides of the Atlantic.[29] A native of County Donegal, Ireland, Brooke attended University College, Dublin, before being ordained to the ministry in London, where he lived until his death in 1916. His success as a professional writer can be judged from the fact that sales of a primer that he wrote titled *English Literature* (first published in 1877) topped half a million copies during his lifetime. Significantly, Brooke withdrew from the Church of England in 1880, citing his inability to accept the Church's teachings on the incarnation. To the extent that he continued to preach the faith after that date, he maintained Unitarian sympathies.

Brooke's survey of pre-Conquest literature favours the secular and heroic elements of Old English literature at the expense of its religious ones. In its introductory chapter,

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[27] Various assessments have been made of Leavis's career and influence; see for example Michael Bell, 'F.R. Leavis', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 7: *Modernism and the New Criticism*, ed. A. Walton Litz et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 389–422.

[28] See Chapter 11, 'Translating, Editing, and Making It New', where twentieth- and twenty-first-century authors are discussed whose careers were transformed by their study of Old English.

[29] Stopford A. Brooke, *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest* (London: Macmillan, 1898), repr. 1899, 1903, 1908, 1912, etc.

Brooke writes in a well-informed manner about the isle of Britain and its ancient inhabitants, from the peoples of the ancient Stone Age to the respective arrivals of Celts, Anglo-Saxons, and Christian missionaries from Rome. Significantly, he speaks of the Anglo-Saxon settlers of Britain as simply 'the English', thus emphasizing the continuity of that people up to the present day rather than their continental Germanic origins. Like Gummere, however, he sees those incomers as having formed the nucleus of English national identity well before the arrival of Roman Christianity to Britain's shores. 'By that time', he writes, referring to the arrival of St Augustine's missionaries in the year 597, 'the special language, character, customs, ways of thought and feeling of the English people had so established themselves, that they remained […] the foundation power, the most enduring note in our literature from the poems of Cædmon to the poems of Tennyson, from the prose of Ælfred to the prose of today' (pp. 19–20). Brooke thus sees no need to credit the Christian church with having had a transformative impact on either the character or the literature of the English.

With a confidence that may now seem excessive, Brooke characterizes the English as having been in their origins 'a singing folk' (p. 39). Moreover, he asserts that the earliest English-speaking inhabitants of Britain had worshipped 'the Heaven and the Earth, the Father and Mother of all things, and their son, the glorious Summer, who fought with the Winter and the Frost Giants' (p. 41). Brooke thus views certain Old English healing charms as pagan survivals that bear no more than a thin veneer of Christianity. His manner of reading *Beowulf* is along similar lines. He postulates that even though in its present form this work reflects the shaping presence of an eighth-century poet as well as some Christian editing, the main body of the poem arose on the Continent in the form of heathen sagas and lays. Following the German scholars Karl Müllenhof and Ludwig Ettmüller, Brooke identifies the hero of *Beowulf* as, in origin, the ancient god Beowa, 'the god of the sun and of the summer'. The hero's battles against Grendel and Grendel's mother, correspondingly, represent in their core meaning the ancient struggle of summer versus winter. The dragon episode is annexed to the same supposed struggle, 'the oldest myth in the world' (p. 59). Brooke associates Grendel and his mother with indigenous inhabitants of the northern regions who, fleeing from invaders, took up their abodes 'in the dark woods and moors, among the cliffs and caves, beyond the strip of cultivated land along the sea-shore' (p. 66). There they nursed their grievances, and venturing out from there they made horror-inspiring raids on the newer settlers. Brooke is indifferent to the fact that the *Beowulf* poet twice gives a different account of the origin of the Grendel creatures, ascribing them to the seed of Cain in a manner consistent with a large body of medieval learned writings.[30] As for Beowulf the hero, he represents for Brooke 'the English ideal of a prince and warrior of the seventh century' (p. 64). The hero's admirable moral qualities are encapsulated in his unbreakable courage in spite of Wyrd, whom Brooke identifies as 'the Fate Goddess of the North' (p. 64).

Literature on Christian themes receives little praise in these pages. Brooke speaks of the 'dull monotony' of the biblical verse paraphrase known as *Daniel*, for example (p. 148). In the poems of Cynewulf, likewise, 'we miss, with some regret, the bold, unconscious heathen

[30] Medieval traditions about the descent of monsters from the seed of Cain were discussed in detail as early as 1906 by Oliver F. Emerson, 'Legends of Cain, Especially in Old and Middle English', *PMLA* 21 (1906): 831–929.

note, the rude heroic strain' of earlier Germanic verse (p. 150). One poem of a religious character that Brooke singles out for praise is *Judith*, though what he finds uplifting in it is not its devotional spirit but rather its joyous treatment of the themes of liberty and patriotism. The ancient Jewish heroine Judith, to him, has a martial character 'like Joan of Arc'; and he adds, as a courteous tip of his hat to the imagined women of Anglo-Saxon England, that 'I do not doubt that there were many Englishwomen of the time capable of her warlike passion, and endowed with her lofty character' (p. 147). Another Christian poem that Brooke praises is *The Dream of the Rood*, which he admires for its blending of Christian doctrine with 'heathen war poetry and myth' (p. 101). His allusion here is to the use of heroic diction in a poem that, in his view, is indebted to the Old Norse myth of the death of Baldr. Ignoring this poem's manifest theological content, Brooke admires the way that Christ is imagined as a hero who meets his death unflinchingly, just as Beowulf does. 'It is the death and burial of an English hero' that the reader can identify with here (p. 101). As for the elegiac poems of the Exeter Book, in his view they have 'few if any connections with Christianity' (p. 152). Likewise, the Exeter Book riddles are 'heathen in heart' (p. 159), including certain ones that are 'of such primæval grossness' that, he infers, they must have been composed by a layman who lived a 'Bohemian' life, singing his riddles from hall to hall (p. 158). What Brooke must be alluding to here are the 'sex riddles', which, despite earlier thinking to the contrary, have recently been shown to have analogues in the medieval learned tradition.[31]

Old English prose has little interest for Brooke. What he most admires about the literature of this period is its poetic depictions of man plunged into the midst of a harsh natural world: 'What is most remarkable in the Elegies, as in many of the *Riddles*, is their pleasure in the aspects of wild nature' (p. 154). He cites for special admiration 'the fierce doings of the tempest and of the frost on the German ocean' in *The Seafarer* (whose Christian elements he views as an accretion), or 'the driving sleet and the snow sifted through with hail' of *The Wanderer* (pp. 154–55).[32] In keeping with a trend in early twentieth-century criticism, he sees in these scenes not just a fascination with untamed nature, but also a psychological correlative to the inner state of the poet. In his view, Old English literature deserves to be studied precisely for its parallels with a modern sensibility. This attitude exemplifies a common tendency in belletrist criticism; namely, to be quick to praise those features of a past or foreign literature that are thought to coincide with the sentiments of one's own time and place, while either ignoring or disparaging those elements that resist this kind of assimilation.

Offering a sharp contrast to Brooke's impressionistic style of criticism is George K. Anderson's survey *The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons*, published in 1949.[33] Born in 1901, Anderson spent his early childhood in China, Brazil, and Hong Kong before attending

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[31] Note Mercedes Salvador-Bello, 'The Sexual Riddle Type in Aldhelm's Enigmata, the Exeter Book, and Early Medieval Latin', *PQ* 90 (2011): 357–85.

[32] Rather than exploring images of untamed nature in Old English literature, Jennifer Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), directs attention to how poets depict nature in such a way as to define the leading traits of human society, as well as to highlight the workings of God in the creation.

[33] George K. Anderson, *The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), repr. in 1962 by Russell & Russell, New York.