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# Applications of the Halle-Keyser Theories of Metrical Stress

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APPLICATIONS OF THE HALLE-KEYSER

THEORIES OF METRICAL STRESS

(TITLE)

BY

GARY FORRESTER

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THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
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## PREFACE

This paper represents an attempt to determine whether or not there is a relationship between the metrical complexity of Old English and Middle English verse and the subject matter of the verse. The study is confined to selected passages from Beowulf and to two of The Canterbury Tales, and therefore the conclusions must be considered as tentative due to the limited scope of the study.

The analysis of the metrical complexity of the verse is based upon the theories developed by Morris Halle and Samuel Jay Keyser in their book English Stress: Its Form, Its Growth, and Its Role in Verse. Their theories, in turn, are partly based on the still unfinished work of Mrs. Ann Reed, a student at Brandeis University who is in the process of compiling a complete set of scansions for the Beowulf manuscript and for other Old English verse.

I wish to thank Mr. Halle and Mr. Keyser for the letters I received from them offering encouragement and advice for my research. I also wish to give a special thanks to Mrs. Reed, who was kind enough to send me her list of scansions for Beowulf, as well as a great deal of other helpful information.

Finally, I wish to thank Professor Dennis Baron of the Eastern Illinois University Department of English who introduced me to the work of Halle and Keyser and acted as my adviser throughout my study.

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## INTRODUCTION

In English Stress: Its Form, Its Growth, and Its Role in Verse, Morris Halle and Samuel Jay Keyser have developed theories which account for the verse of Beowulf and for iambic pentameter. The theory for Beowulf is the following (pp. 153-4):

### (a) ABSTRACT METRICAL PATTERN RULES

- (i) A verse line is composed of a first and second half-line
- (ii) The first half-line is composed of  $(X)^*X$
- (iii) The second half-line is composed of  $X(W)^*$

### (b) CORRESPONDENCE RULES

- (i) Each X corresponds to a single S

OR

One X in a half-line may correspond to an S and a W in either order

DEFINITION: If in two or more stressed syllables the zero or more consonants that precede the vowel are identical or begin with an identical consonant or s-cluster, the syllables alliterate

- (ii) Syllables in S positions alliterate; syllables in W positions do not alliterate

### (c) CONDITIONS

- (i) No half-line is shorter than two syllables
- (ii) If a line contains a line-internal clause or sentence boundary, the boundary must coincide with that of the half-line

The Halle-Keyser theory for iambic pentameter is stated as follows (p. 169);

(a) ABSTRACT METRICAL PATTERN

(W)\*SWSWSWSWS(X)(X)

where elements enclosed in parentheses may be omitted and where each X position may be occupied only by an unstressed syllable

(b) CORRESPONDENCE RULES

- (i) A position (S,W, or X) corresponds to a single syllable

OR

to a sonorant sequence incorporating at most two vowels (immediately adjoining or separated by a sonorant consonant)

DEFINITION: When a fully stressed syllable occurs between two unstressed syllables in the same syntactic constituent within a line of verse, this syllable is called a "stress maximum"

- (ii) Fully stressed syllables occur in S positions only and in all S positions

OR

Fully stressed syllables occur in S positions only but not in all S positions

OR

Stress maxima occur in S positions only but not in all S positions

In both theories, the parentheses indicate that the enclosed material is not necessary in order for the line to be deemed metrical. If a star follows the parentheses, the line is more complex when the enclosed material is not used in the scansion.



In Appendix II I have given several examples which demonstrate how each theory is applied.

One of the more interesting features of these theories is that they provide a method for determining the metrical complexity of any given line of Old English verse or of any line written in iambic pentameter. That is, as later alternatives of the abstract metrical pattern rules and correspondence rules are needed in order to consider a line metrical, the line is correspondingly more complex. This principle is based on the fact that, in the development of the theories, Halle and Keyser have "stated the abstract metrical pattern and correspondence rules in such a fashion that later alternatives subsume earlier alternatives."<sup>1</sup>

It is this notion of complexity which forms the basis of this study. My aim has been to determine whether or not there is a relationship between the subject matter of a given section of verse and the metrical complexity of that section.

For Beowulf, Halle and Keyser have assumed an inverse relationship between the metrical complexity of a line-type and the frequency of occurrence of that line-type. This inverse relationship is generally supported by the scansion provided by Mrs. Ann Reed,<sup>2</sup> although there is some discrepancy between theoretical expectations and the actual distribution. Halle

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<sup>1</sup>Morris Halle and Samuel Jay Keyser, English Stress: Its Form, Its Growth, and Its Role in Verse (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 157.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

and Keyser have imposed two further restrictions upon the theory for Beowulf which explain most of the discrepancies:

FOR THE BEOWULF POET:

- (a) Later alternatives of the abstract metrical pattern rules increase complexity less than later alternatives of the correspondence rules
- (b) In the first half-line, three-entity sequences are always more complex than two-entity sequences<sup>3</sup>

The latter is thought to be the result of a "local phenomenon," a tendency for the Beowulf poet to avoid long first half-lines, while the first restriction is a recognition of the fact that the theory is descriptive, not prescriptive, and that in order to maintain the expected relationship between complexity and frequency this restriction must be accepted. The theory cannot be expected to determine strict mathematical order for the frequencies of the line-types; it can, however, describe the general relationship between complexity and frequency.

In my analysis, I have considered the entire 3176 lines scanned by Mrs. Reed as the control group (six of the 3182 lines given in the Klaeber<sup>4</sup> text are not included in Mrs. Reed's study). For quick comparisons, I have ranked the line-types (see Table 1) in the order of actual frequency, thereby accepting the inverse relationship between complexity and frequency. Since the major item of comparison is the metrically simplest line-type, SS/SW,

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>4</sup>I have used the Beowulf text edited by Fr. Klaeber (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1922).

and since this line-type is also by far the most frequent, the precise relationship between complexity and frequency will not be a factor of major importance. The ranking of the line-types in Table 1 is therefore acceptable.

For the theory for iambic pentameter, the same method of determining complexity can be applied; that is, as later alternatives of the two correspondence rules are used, the complexity of the line increases. In this case the complexity can be determined with greater accuracy. The number of times that a later alternative of the correspondence rules is used determines the numeral assigned to the line to describe its complexity. A line which is consistent with both of the first alternatives, and which has an initial syllable not receiving primary stress, has complexity zero; the greatest complexity Halle and Keyser have discovered in a line of iambic pentameter is nine.

One problem that might be mentioned here is that, for iambic pentameter, the inverse relationship between complexity and frequency does not exist as it does for Beowulf. The most frequent line-type for iambic pentameter seems to be of complexity one or two, not zero as we might expect. This fact seems to raise the question as to whether or not a line-type of complexity two is really more complex than a line type of complexity one. Or, granting that the theory does correctly account for complexity, why is it that the complexity norm for "good" iambic pentameter is greater than zero? Perhaps the theory is actually suggesting a method for evaluating the quality of the metrical aspect of iambic pentameter; that is, "good"

iambic pentameter is made up of certain variations in metrical complexity, the average of which is close to complexity two.

Another problem, this one presented by the Beowulf theory, was in evaluating the complexity of whole lines. Because the basic metrical unit of Old English verse is the half-line, the theory is naturally concerned with determining the nature of each half-line as a separate unit. Halle and Keyser provide no method for determining the complexity of a whole line, although their frequency chart, which they use to justify their contention that there is a natural relationship between metrical complexity and frequency of occurrence, lists only whole lines.

One might ask, for example, why line-type SW/SW occurs 405 times while line-type SS/S occurs only 277 times, even though the former is metrically more complex than the latter (according to the theory)? Why, also, does line-type SW/S occur more often than either SS/SWW or SS/WSW? (In presenting these questions, I have taken into consideration the two added restrictions for the Beowulf theory. They are not relevant to these examples.) These questions are raised solely to point out some possible flaws in the theory; because my figures are based on a comparison with the actual frequency rather than with the theoretical expectations, such flaws would not affect my findings.

Using the actual frequency of occurrence chart as compiled by Mrs. Reed as the control unit, I have chosen the following sections of Beowulf for comparison: (a) the "philosophical

digressions"--those passages in which either the narrator or one of the characters pause to reflect upon the broader implications of a situation; (b) the dialogue sections, which are indicated by quotation marks in the Klæber text; and (c) the "action" sections--those passages which significantly advance the narrative. With regard to the "action" sections, it has been necessary for me to rely heavily on my own judgement in determining which lines would fall under that heading. I have not included those lines or passages which (a) merely describe a person or group of people moving from one place to another; (b) are part of a dialogue or song recounting past exploits or adventures; or (c) provide background information. Most, but not all, of the "action" lines are related to the three battles involving Beowulf and the events surrounding those fights. The actual lines considered in each of the three sections are listed in Appendix I.

The study of Chaucer's iambic pentameter is confined to two of The Canterbury Tales, The Reeve's Tale and The Prioress's Tale.<sup>5</sup> I chose to compare these tales with the expectation that the metrical complexity of the two would differ significantly for one or more of the following reasons: (a) there is a marked dissimilarity between the two characters, the Prioress and the Reeve; (b) the types of tales told by the Prioress and the Reeve are quite different; (c) The Prioress's Tale is written in rime royal, while The Reeve's Tale is written in rhymed couplets;

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<sup>5</sup>I have used the Chaucer text edited by F. N. Robinson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1957).

and (d) The Reeve's Tale has many sections of dialogue, including large sections of the strange Northern dialect of the young clerks. With these possible explanations in mind, I began the Chaucer portion of this study with the hope that I might be able to arrive at some tentative conclusions about the nature of Chaucer's iambic pentameter.

## CHAPTER I

### APPLICATIONS OF THE HALLE-KEYSER THEORY FOR OLD ENGLISH

As stated in the introduction, the study of Beowulf concerns three groups determined by their content: the dialogue sections, the "philosophical digressions," and the "action" sections. The dialogue sections make up the largest group by far. As indicated in Table 1, there were 1194 lines classified as dialogue, or a little more than a third of the entire epic. With such a large body of lines, it might be expected that the percentages of line types would be very similar to those for the entire poem; any deviations could be considered more significant than they would be for a smaller group.

A look at Table 1 does show some significant differences from the control group, but the figures are so mixed that any immediate conclusions are not possible. The simplest line-type, SS/SW, occurs in 31.5 percent of the lines of the whole poem; for the dialogue sections, the figure is 27.5 percent, which represents a possibly significant difference of four percent. But if we rush to the conclusion that the dialogue sections are metrically simpler than the rest of the poem, we are quickly stalled by the fact that the next line-type (in order of simplicity and/or frequency), S/SW, occurs more often

in the dialogue sections than in the whole poem: the figures are 23.0 percent and 20.9 percent, respectively. For the third line-type, SW/SW, the percentage is lower in the dialogue sections by 3.3 percent; for the fourth line-type, SS/S, the percentage is higher in the dialogue sections by 4.1 percent. For the remaining line-types, the results continue to vary but are not statistically significant.

No conclusions can be drawn, of course, from such figures. Another possible approach would be to attempt to determine whether or not the situation or the character speaking might affect the metrical complexity of the dialogue sections, perhaps with more conclusive results. I have not made such a detailed study, although I did scan Mrs. Reed's tables to see if any trends might be immediately observable. This closer look yielded the following interesting fact: in the speeches of the Danes in the early part of the poem, when Beowulf is stopped by the coast-guard and later introduced to Hrothgar, there is a remarkably low percentage of SS/SW line-types. In those speeches--by the coast-guard, Wulfgar, and Hrothgar--only 24 of the 145 lines (16.5 percent) are of type SS/SW. This low figure seems to indicate that the meter of lines of formal, introductory dialogue is markedly more complex than that of the whole poem.

This hypothesis is further supported by the fact that Unferth's speech (beginning with line 506) marks the return of the percentage of SS/SW line-types to the expected level. Eight of the 23 lines in this speech are of type SS/SW. Unferth speaks at a rather boisterous celebration at the mead-hall--



he is, according to Beowulf, drunk at the time--and the speech itself is filled with many action lines as it describes the swimming contest between Breca and Beowulf. (As we shall see later, the action lines tend to be metrically simpler than lines with little or no action.)

Other than this, there seem to be no significant tendencies in the dialogue sections. There is, for example, no apparent relationship between an individual speaker and the metrical complexity of his speeches. Yet the very low percentage of SS/SW line-types in the introductory dialogue passages appears to justify the hypothesis stated above, which, if verified by studies involving other Old English verse, could lead to important observations concerning the nature of Old English meter.

The second group of lines considered for comparison was the "philosophical digressions." An example of the type of line included in this category is Beowulf's statement in reply to Unferth (lines 572b-573):

unfǣgne eorl,      Wyrd oft nered  
                               }    þonne his ellen deah!

Also included were longer passages, either stated by a character or presented by the narrator, which comment on the universal aspects of some specific event.

As with the dialogue sections, the philosophical digressions provide no clear deviations from the control group, and no definite conclusions are possible. There might be some significance to the fact that, according to Table 1, the four simplest line-types make up 79.3 percent of the philosophical passages,

as compared to 73.9 percent for the whole poem, a difference of 5.4 percent. Although these figures are not sufficient to justify any broad conclusions, they perhaps do indicate a slight tendency for the philosophical digressions to be metrically simpler than other sections. A look at the remaining line-types and their percentages reveals no other deviations which might be considered important.

For the third group of lines considered, the "action" lines, the results are far more conclusive. As shown in Table 1, 45.2 percent of the 217 lines classified as action lines are of type SS/SW. This represents a difference of 13.7 percent when compared to the percentage for the whole poem, a clearly significant figure. The explanation for this is probably a simple one, and most likely it is true to one degree or another for most verse: that is, a complicated metrical structure would slow the fluidity of a description of fast-moving action; therefore, the meter is kept simple so that the action portion of the narrative can proceed without complication. Another possible explanation is that the Beowulf epic grew out of an oral tradition--action sections, being easier to recall, would be more likely to be passed on in a simple, unchanged form. In any case, the large difference in frequency for SS/SW line-types is worthy of note. Such findings could provide the basis for more precise statements of the theory in general and the idea of complexity in particular.

The figures for the action lines in Table 1 call for one other observation: because line-type SS/SW is far more frequent

among the action lines than it is for the entire poem, we might expect that the other line-types from the action sections would be less frequent; yet this is not entirely true. Line-types SS/SWW and SS/WSW, for example, occur in 8.7 percent of the action lines, as compared to 4.5 percent of the lines of the whole poem. This is noteworthy because line-types SS/SWW and SS/WSW, along with types SS/S and S/SW, rank next in order of simplicity to SS/SW according to the Halle-Keyser theory, yet in actual frequency they rank eighth and ninth, respectively. It is possible that these facts indicate a tendency for line-types to be distributed in better accordance with theoretical expectations if the Old English verse under consideration contains a relatively high degree of action. Such a tendency would, of course, lend support to the Halle-Keyser theory and its method of determining complexity.

The general picture for the comparisons of dialogue, philosophical, and action sections with the whole of Beowulf offers mixed results. On the negative side, we can say that there seem to be no significant deviations in line-type frequency for the dialogue sections, with the possible exception of the tendency toward complexity in the introductory sections involving the Danish court. On the other hand, the proportion of metrically simple lines is definitely higher in the action sections than it is in the other sections. The philosophical digressions provide no such clear-cut conclusions, although there does seem to be a tendency toward simpler metrical patterns in those sections.

TABLE 1  
DISTRIBUTION OF METRICAL PATTERNS IN BEOWULF

Stress Patterns (Ranked by Frequency)	Entire Poem		Dialogue Sections		Philosophical Digressions		Action Sections	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
SS/SW	999	31.5	329	27.5	33	34.4	98	45.2
S/SW	665	20.9	275	23.0	21	21.9	25	11.5
SW/SW	405	12.8	114	9.5	11	11.5	19	8.8
SS/S	277	8.7	153	12.8	11	11.5	17	7.9
S/S	200	6.3	83	7.0	5	5.2	5	2.3
WS/SW	137	4.3	53	4.4	4	4.2	10	4.6
SW/S	95	3.0	47	3.9	1	1.0	5	2.3
SS/SWW	77	2.4	16	1.3	2	2.1	12	5.5
SS/WSW	67	2.1	25	2.1	3	3.1	7	3.2
SSW/SW	38	1.2	23	2.0	1	1.0	2	.9
WS/S	33	1.0	16	1.3	1	1.0	3	1.4
SW/SWW	27	.9	4	.3	0	---	1	.5
S/WSW	25	.8	4	.3	0	---	0	---
S/SWW	21	.7	6	.5	0	---	4	1.9
WS/WSW	19	.6	6	.5	1	1.0	0	---
SS/WS	17	.5	8	.7	0	---	0	---
SW/WSW	17	.5	5	.4	0	---	2	.9
WSS/SW	13	.4	6	.5	0	---	2	.9
S/WS	9	.3	2	.2	0	---	1	.5
SSW/S	8	.3	5	.4	1	1.0	2	.9
SWS/SW	6	.2	4	.3	0	---	1	.5
WSS/S	6	.2	3	.3	0	---	0	---
SSW/SWW	4	.1	1	.1	0	---	0	---
SSW/WSW	3	.1	2	.2	0	---	0	---
WS/WS	3	.1	1	.1	0	---	0	---
SW/WS	2	.1	0	---	0	---	0	---
WS/SWW	1	---	0	---	0	---	0	---
SWS/S	1	---	1	.1	0	---	0	---
SSW/WS	1	---	2*	.2	1	---	0	---
Totals	3176		1194		96		216	

\*Mrs. Reed scans two lines as SSW/WS, but Halle and Keyser classify only one line as SSW/WS. The difference is perhaps due to later revisions by Mrs. Reed.

## CHAPTER II

### AN APPLICATION OF THE HALLE-KEYSER THEORY FOR IAMBIC PENTAMETER

As stated in the introduction, two of The Canterbury Tales, The Reeve's Tale and The Prioress's Tale, were chosen to provide an application for the Halle-Keyser theory for iambic pentameter. For this portion of the study, it was necessary for me to determine the scansion of the lines by myself. I have tried my best to follow the guidelines of Halle and Keyser, but it must be admitted that some degree of error, hopefully negligible, is to be found in the data. The most important difficulty, because of its frequency, was the final "e"--sometimes it is sounded and sometimes it is not. I used the following guidelines to deal with the problem of the final "e": (a) the final "e" is pronounced when it is needed to provide a necessary syllable of less than full stress; (b) the final "e" is not sounded when it is not needed for metrical consistency; and (c) the final "e" is generally not sounded when it occurs before words beginning with "h" or a vowel.

With these considerations in mind, and with the guidelines provided by Halle and Keyser, I determined that The Reeve's Tale is more complex metrically than The Prioress's Tale. As shown

in Table 2, there seems to be a significant break between complexity three and complexity four; that is, lines of complexity zero through three are found to occur in either approximately the same proportion in the two tales, or in a slightly lower proportion in The Reeve's Tale, while the percentage of lines of complexity four through nine is significantly higher in The Reeve's Tale than in The Prioress's Tale. 83.6 percent of the lines of The Reeve's Tale are of the types zero through three, while 90.1 percent of the lines of The Prioress's Tale are of these types; for the lines of types four through nine, the figures are 16.2 percent and 9.9 percent, respectively.

A closer look at the distribution of line-types provides an explanation for the difference in metrical complexity. The average complexity per line of The Reeve's Tale is 2.16, while the average complexity per line of The Prioress's Tale is 2.01; yet when the dialogue sections are omitted from consideration in The Reeve's Tale, the average complexity per line is 1.99, almost exactly the same as that of The Prioress's Tale. The average complexity per line of the dialogue sections of The Reeve's Tale is 2.44; this obviously accounts for the overall greater metrical complexity of The Reeve's Tale.

In addition, over fifty percent of the most complex lines (complexity four through nine) of The Reeve's Tale occur in the dialogue sections, even though these sections make up only 37 percent of the tale.

We can conclude, then, that the dialogue sections of The Reeve's Tale, composed largely of the Northern dialect of the

young clerks, are responsible for the greater metrical complexity of The Reeve's Tale as compared to The Prioress's Tale. Before any broader statements about the metrical complexity of Chaucer's dialogue sections could be made, a much larger body of the poet's work must be considered.

The figures also indicate that, disregarding any complicating factors such as the dialogue of The Reeve's Tale, the average metrical complexity per line of Chaucer's iambic pentameter is very close to 2.0. If this tentative conclusion is confirmed by a broader study, it could be very important in analyzing the nature of Chaucer's verse in particular and iambic pentameter in general.

TABLE 2  
 THE METRICAL COMPLEXITY DISTRIBUTION  
 FOR THE LINES OF  
THE REEVE'S TALE AND THE PRIORESS'S TALE

Metrical Complexity of Lines	<u>The Prioress's Tale</u>		<u>The Reeve's Tale</u>		<u>The Reeve's Tale</u>			
	No.	%	No.	%	Narrative Sections		Dialogue Sections	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0	10	5.0	25	6.2	15	5.9	10	6.6
1	66	32.7	125	30.9	85	33.6	40	26.5
2	73	36.1	126	31.2	84	33.2	42	27.8
3	33	16.3	62	15.3	37	14.6	25	16.6
4	11	5.4	40	9.9	21	8.3	19	12.6
5	6	3.0	15	3.7	10	4.0	5	3.3
6	1	.5	7	1.7	1	.4	6	4.0
7	1	.5	2	.5	0	---	2	1.3
8	1	.5	1	.2	0	---	1	.6
9	0	---	1	.2	0	---	1	.6
Totals	202		404		253		151	
Average Complexity Per Line	2.01		2.16		1.99		2.44	



## CHAPTER III

### CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, I have occasionally mentioned the need for additional work of a broader nature to confirm some of the findings of this limited study. I would like to reiterate this feeling, as well as to suggest further areas of application for the Halle-Keyser theories.

So far as I know, the Halle-Keyser theories are the first to provide a method for determining the relative complexity of a given line of verse, and this paper is the first attempt at applying this method to Old English and Middle English. There are many other applications of the theory which, though beyond my purposes here, could offer the ambitious researcher an open field of study in Old English and Middle English meter.

One area of study to which the theories might be applied is that of the emendations which have been suggested for both the Beowulf manuscript and the works of Chaucer. For Beowulf, the Halle-Keyser theory could eliminate some of the suggestions which do not conform to one of the possible metrical patterns; it could indicate the likelihood of other suggested emendations, based on the complexity of the possibilities according to the theory. For example, line 21 of Beowulf reads as follows in the Klaeber text:

fromum feohgiftum on fæder (bea)rme.

Kemble, in his 1835 edition of Beowulf, suggested that the last word should be "feorme" rather than "bearme."<sup>6</sup> This suggestion is impossible according to the Halle-Keyser theory, for the line would be of type SS/SS, and there are no such line-types provided by the theory. The suggested emendation "bearme," on the other hand, is highly likely, for the line-type is then SS/SW, the type expected in roughly one-third of the lines of the poem. A similar approach might be taken with regard to the emendations for Chaucer's iambic pentameter.

Another possible study which comes to mind is a testing of the relationship between syntactic complexity and metrical complexity. Halle and Keyser touch on this relationship in their discussion of the caesura, which they regard as "primarily a metrical entity postulated for purely metrical reasons."<sup>7</sup> Yet they also note that "the high degree of coincidence between half-line and major syntactic entity" is "a fact of great significance," although this coincidence cannot be regarded as a "defining feature."<sup>8</sup> These ideas about syntax, basic to the formulation of the Halle-Keyser theory for Old English, could be a starting point for a broader study of the relationship between syntax and meter for both Old English and Middle English verse.

The final suggestion I have for the application of the Halle-Keyser theories is for an extension of the study described in this paper. More of Chaucer's verse could be examined in an

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<sup>6</sup>Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Halle and Keyser, English Stress, p. 153.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

effort to determine what level of metrical complexity best represents excellent Middle English verse and how the subject matter affects the meter. Additional sections of Beowulf could be analyzed in the manner presented here, and this type of analysis could be applied to many other Old English poems as well. I hope that this study represents a small but important starting point in the applications of the Halle-Keyser theories for Old English and Middle English verse.

## APPENDIX I

Table 1 gives the total number of each stress pattern for each of the three sections of Beowulf considered. The specific lines considered are as follows: (a) for the dialogue sections, 237-257, 260-285, 287-300, 316-319, 333-339, 342-347, 350-355, 361-370, 372-389, 391-396, 407-455, 457-490, 506-528, 530-606, 632-638, 655-661, 677-687, 958-979, 1169-1187, 1216-1231, 1322-1382, 1384-1396, 1474-1491, 1652-1676, 1700-1784, 1818-1839, 1841-1865, 1987-1998, 2000-2151, 2247-2266, 2426-2509, 2510-2515, 2518-2537, 2633-2668, 2729-2750, 2794-2808, 2813-2816, 2864-2891, 2900-3027, 3077-3109, 3114-3119; (b) for the philosophical digressions, 20-25, 162b-163, 183b-188, 455b, 572b-573, 700b-702a, 1048b-1049, 1057b-1062, 1134b-1136a, 1384-1389, 1534a-1536, 2166b-2169a, 2291-2293a, 2444-2462a, 2526b-2527a, 2541b, 2574b, 2590b-2591, 2708b-2709a, 2857-2859, 2890b-2891, 3062b-3065, 3077-3078, 3174b-3177, 1002b-1008a, 1607b-1611; (c) for the action sections, 4-11a, 28-30, 34-36a, 43-49a, 80-81a, 115-125, 134b-137, 224b-228, 234-236, 306b-308, 325-331, 356-359, 399-404, 662-663, 671-674, 702b-703a, 710-711, 714, 720-727, 739-749, 758-761, 815b-821a, 1279-1282a, 1288-1299a, 1501-1507, 1518-1522, 1537-1546a, 1563-1568, 2312-2315, 2538-2540a, 2556b-2560, 2566-2570a, 2575-2583a, 2669-2680, 2688-2693, 2697-2708, 2809-2812, 3141-3148.

All of the above line numbers are based on the Klaeber text. The dialogue sections follow the punctuation indicated

in the Klaeber text; that is, I have strictly followed the quotation marks in the Klaeber text in determining which sections of Beowulf are to be classified as dialogue.

If a half-line is indicated as belonging to a section, I have included the whole line in forming Table 1. This convention has been necessary because Halle and Keyser give a distribution table for whole lines only, and my entire study of Beowulf has been based on whole lines.

The totals in Table 1 are slightly inaccurate due to the fact that Mrs. Reed was uncertain about four of the lines from the dialogue sections and one line from the action sections. I have omitted these lines from this study.

In Table 2, the dialogue sections of The Reeve's Tale are made up of the following lines: 4022-4045, 4047-4056, 4072-4075, 4078, 4080-4089, 4095-4099, 4101-4102, 4109-4113, 4120-4135, 4169-4192, 4201-4210, 4218-4220, 4236-4247, 4249-4250, 4251-4256, 4262-4272, 4286-4291, and 4307. All other lines of The Reeve's Tale are classified as narrative. (The line numbers are based on the Robinson text.)

## APPENDIX II

For those unfamiliar with the background of the Halle-Keyser theories for Old English and Middle English verse, a few examples might help to demonstrate how the theories work. The scansion for the first seven lines of Beowulf (using the Klaeber text) are as follows:

HWÆT, WĒ GĀR-DENa in gēardagum,	WS/S
þēodcýninga þrým gefrūnon,	S/SW
hū ða æþelingas ellen frēmedon!	S/SW
Oft Scýld Scēfing sceaþena þrēatum,	WSS/SW
mōnegum mægþum mēodosetla oftēah,	SS/SW
ēgsode eorl[as], syððan ærest weard	SS/S
fēasceaft fūnden; hē þæs frōfre gebād,	SS/SW.

Only those syllables which receive primary stress are marked; syllables in S positions alliterate, while syllables in W positions do not alliterate.

For iambic pentameter, alliteration is not important in determining the scansion of a line. Halle and Keyser use S, W, or X to denote a single syllable. In a perfectly regular iambic line, all of the fully stressed syllables would occur in S positions, while those syllables not fully stressed would occur in W positions (or in the optional X positions at the end of the line). Deviations from this correspondence, together with other complicating factors, increase the complexity of the line. The

first stanza of The Prioress's Tale is composed of the following seven lines (using the Robinson text):

<u>Ther was</u> in Asye, <u>in</u> a greet citee,	2
W S W S W S W S	
Amonges Cristene folk, a Jew <u>er</u> ye,	1
W S W S W S W S W S	
Sustened <u>by</u> a lord of <u>that</u> contree	2
W S W S W S W S W S	
For foule usure and lucre <u>of</u> vileynye,	2
W S W S W S W S W S	
<u>Hateful</u> to Crist and <u>to</u> his compaignye;	5
W S W S W S W S W S	
And <u>thurgh</u> the strete men myghte ride or wende,	1
W S W S W S W S W S X	
For <u>it</u> was free and <u>open</u> at eyther ende.	2
W S W S W S W S W S X	

A single underline denotes a position where an S is occupied by an unstressed syllable; each single underline marks an increase in the complexity of the line by one. A double underline denotes a position where a W is occupied by a stressed syllable; this increases the complexity by two. An underline connecting two distinct syllables indicates a vowel sequence which is the metrical equivalent of a single syllable; this also increases the metrical complexity by one.

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