'No word for it': Postcolonial Anglo-Saxon in John Haynes's *Letter to Patience*

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This article examines a number of allusions to Old English, especially to the poem *The Wanderer*, in John Haynes's award-winning poem *Letter to Patience* (2006). A broad historical contextualisation of the use of Anglo-Saxon in modern poetry is offered first, against which Haynes's specific poetic Anglo-Saxonism is then analysed in detail. Consideration is given to the sources – editions and translations – that Haynes used, and a sustained close reading of sections of his poem is offered in the light of this source study. The representation of English as an instrument of imperialism is discussed and juxtaposed with the use and status of early English to offer a long historical view of the politics of the vernacular. It is argued that Haynes's poem, set partly in Nigeria, represents a new departure in the use it finds for Old English poetry, in effect constituting a kind of 'postcolonial Anglo-Saxonism'.

John Haynes's book-length poem of 2006, his *Letter to Patience*, is noteworthy for its use of Anglo-Saxon (also known as Old English) and its allusions to literary works in that language.[1] In part, therefore, *Letter to Patience* constitutes an example of Anglo-Saxonism, a phenomenon which can be defined as the post-Anglo-Saxon appropriation and deployment of Anglo-Saxon language, literature, or culture, an appropriation which is often difficult to separate from the simultaneous reception and construction of ideas about actual Anglo-

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[1] John Haynes, *Letter to Patience* (Bridgend, 2006). In this article I use the term 'Anglo-Saxon' in preference to 'Old English', because I wish to invoke the discourse of race and ethnicity that is often attached to the former term, and which Haynes's Anglo-Saxonism disrupts.

Saxon culture.[2] It is often assumed that Anglo-Saxonism is a conservative or reactionary discourse concerned with stabilising and policing English, British or even Anglo-American senses of identity. Certainly Anglo-Saxonism has operated in the service of such agenda, most particularly during the nineteenth century, while in other periods Anglo-Saxonist reflexes have been driven by imperatives no less politicised, such as legitimising the break of the English church from Rome, or checking the British monarchy and promoting parliamentary liberty, as a tranche of good work has shown.[3] In contemporary British politics, discourse that invokes the idea of 'Anglo-Saxon' is still largely the preserve of the far right, where the construct is usually deployed as a marker of whiteness. This paper will argue that by orienting Anglo-Saxon towards postcolonial Nigeria, and observing what happens when the linguistic root of Englishness travels – when the valency of terms like 'native' and 'migrant' becomes complicated – *Letter to Patience* subverts established patterns of Anglo-Saxonism and opens up a rather novel possibility for postcolonial Anglo-Saxon afterlives.

Some preliminary introduction is required to both poem and poet. Although Haynes has had a long career as a published poet, it is fair to say he was a relatively neglected figure on the mainstream contemporary British poetry scene when *Letter to Patience* was

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[2] On the idea that 'Anglo-Saxon' is itself a linguistic construct, one not widely taken up in 'the Anglo-Saxon period' and then only under specific circumstances, but reintroduced during the Renaissance, see Susan Reynolds, 'What do we mean by "Anglo-Saxon" and the "Anglo-Saxons"?', *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985): 395–414. The *OED* entry first records its use in English in 1602.

[3] See Eleanor N. Adams, *Old English Scholarship in England from 1566–1880* (New Haven, 1917); Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981); Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons and Anglo-Saxon* (Montreal, 1982); Carl T. Berkhout and Milton McC. Gatch (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Scholarship: the First Three Centuries*, eds. (Boston, Mass., 1982); Clare A. Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (New Brunswick, 1990); Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, 1990); Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles (eds), *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity* (Gainesville, 1997); Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg (eds), *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2000); Joanna Parker, *'England's Darling': The Victorian Cult of Alfred the Great* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 82–127.

published by Seren in 2006.[4] From 1970 to 1988 he had lived in Nigeria, where he was a lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University, returning then to the UK to look after his father. Begun in 1992, *Letter to Patience* was Haynes's first book collection to be published in the UK since his return. Although something of an outside candidate, *Letter to Patience* unexpectedly won the prestigious Costa award for poetry (formerly the Whitbread), a prize that attracts many column inches in the British press. Haynes, the 'newcomer' in the eyes of the British literati, became the poetry sensation of 2006 and the volume was widely and warmly reviewed in all the major literary papers, with Jeremy Noel-Tod, for example, comparing Haynes favourably to Muldoon, Heaney and Hill in *The Guardian*.[5]

Even from the barest account of Haynes's life, it is apparent that *Letter to Patience* makes use of many autobiographical details: the poem takes the form of a fictional letter to a southern Nigerian woman called Patience, who has been a politics lecturer at Ahmadu Bello, in the Hausa north of the country, but who has given up her job as a result of junta pressure, and instead owns and runs *Patience' Parlour*, a bar frequented by local radicals. The letter writer, a white Englishman, was once a customer and friend of Patience, but has returned home with his Nigerian wife to nurse his dying father. While the actual book took Haynes fourteen years to write, its conceit is that the fictional letter is written in a single sitting, during the course of one night, between the hours of 1 a.m. and daybreak, from rural England. Time, and the measuring of time, is important to the poem, which repeatedly draws attention to the fact that although the letter writer and Patience are separated by vast distance and circumstances, they share the same clock time, as the zero meridian threads Greenwich to West Africa. During the period of daylight adjustment for British Summer Time England and Nigeria occupy the same time zone (Nigeria observes West Africa Time). At its beginning the letter notes:

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[4] For biographical information on Haynes, see the poet's website: <http://www.jhaynestab.co.uk/>, accessed 21 August 2011.

[5] Jeremy Noel-Tod, 'Rolling Across the World', *The Guardian*, 16 September 2006; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/sep/16/featuresreviews.guardianreview10>, accessed 21 August 2011.

> now everyone's asleep, the BBC
> World Service News is on its perfect line
> along that line once ruled invisibly
>
> across the globe to where that watch of mine
> ticks on the inside of your wrist. Mosquito-
> thin red second hand, you can refine
>
> us to a single *now* jerk *now*, zero
> meridian, across the black glass sky
> with its own grid of panes and stars'[6]

Periodically *Letter to Patience* returns to this co-temporality, and to the idea that controlling the instruments for measuring time is a form of exercising imperial power:

> The times shown on our watches are the same.
> Across the map those strangers drew a net
> of pure Pythagorean lines to claim
>
> time as their own, and hold it still, and set
> the farthest places in the head at rest.   (*LTP*, p. 21)

This temporal preoccupation manifests itself at the formal and structural level; the poem is divided into fifty-two cantos, the number of weeks in a yearly cycle. In subject matter the letter ranges from personal to political history, from childhood memories to myths from traditional African literature, and includes, as we shall see, meditation on Anglo-Saxon poetry and language. As is evident from the foregoing extracts, the poem is written in *terza rima*. Haynes often heavily enjambs this verse form over stanza-, as well as line-, breaks, achieving an idiomatic fluency rare for contemporary English handlings of *terza rima*. Patience herself, the apostrophised addressee of the poem, is a figure part allegorical: the poet entreats for patience, to discipline himself to her virtue, and perhaps also to advocate it. Patience too, is one of the key virtues expressed in Anglo-Saxon poetry and a major theme of *The Wanderer*, one of *Letter to Patience*'s intertexts. Its speaker remarks *wita sceal geþyldig* ('the wise man must be patient'), and even the poem's opening line can be interpreted as a counsel of patience: *oft him anhaga are gebideð*

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[6] Haynes, *Letter to Patience*, p. 11. All subsequent references are given in parentheses in the main body of the text, using the abbreviation *LTP*.

('often the solitary man waits for mercy').[7] *Letter to Patience* makes direct use of Anglo-Saxon only in canto XLIX, although its themes and images find understated anticipation and amplification elsewhere in the poem. Canto XLIX's use of Anglo-Saxon differs fundamentally from what I suggest has become something of a dominant mode of poetic Anglo-Saxonism, and this article now turns to outline that trend before returning to *Letter to Patience* to illustrate its departure from the line of that emerging tradition.

Whereas Anglo-Saxon literature was once the preserve of the antiquarian scholar, throughout the twentieth century Old English poetry gradually became a resource that modern poets turned to in their own work with steadily increasing frequency. This change of circumstances was due not only to the pull of the original material, which was becoming more widely known through its inclusion on the syllabus of university English literature degrees,[8] but also because of the influence of Ezra Pound's translation of *The Seafarer*.[9] Over time a body of Anglo-Saxonist poetry has built up that we might call 'the New Old English'.[10] One of the most common things that this body of work does with Anglo-Saxon is to imitate and reproduce, or even assimilate, its linguistic texture, its metre, its rhetoric and technique: to voice the sound, or the imagined sound of Anglo-Saxon within Modern English poetry.[11] A few extracts, presented in chronological order, will illustrate this now fairly well established tradition of

[7] *The Wanderer*, ed. R. F. Leslie (first published Manchester, 1966), rev. edn (Exeter, 1985), lines 65b and 1. *Gebidan* can mean 'to experience', as well as 'to wait (for)'.

[8] On the history of Anglo-Saxon as a component of university English literature courses, see D. J. Palmer, *The Rise of English Studies* (London, 1965); J. R. Hall, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Nineteenth Century: England, Denmark, America', in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (Oxford, 2001), pp. 434–54.

[9] Ezra Pound, 'The Seafarer', in 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris', *The New Age*, 10 (1911): 107, rpt. in *Collected Shorter Poems*, 2nd edn (London, 1984), pp. 64–6. For analysis of Pound's translation, see Chris Jones, *Strange Likeness: The Use of Old English in Twentieth-Century Poetry* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 27–38.

[10] Chris Jones, 'New Old English: The Place of Old English in Twentieth- and Twenty-first-century Poetry', *Literature Compass*, 7 (2010): 109–119.

[11] On the idea of 'aural allusion' to Anglo-Saxon, and the treatment of the whole poetic corpus as an intertext, rather than any single work, see Chris Jones, ' "Where now the harp?" Listening for the sounds of Old English verse, from *Beowulf* to the twentieth century', *Oral Tradition*, 24 (2009): 485–502.

Anglo-Saxonist poetry, and testify to its presence across the Anglophone world. Canadian poet Earle Birney, for example, does not hesitate in drawing together the politics and the poetics which are often association with the term 'Anglo-Saxon' in his 1942 poem 'Anglosaxon Street':

> Here is a ghetto   gotten for goyim
> O with care denuded   of nigger and kike
> No coonsmell rankles   reeks only cellarrot
> attar of carexhaust   catcorpse and cookinggrease
> Imperial hearts   heave in this haven
> Cracks across windows   are welded with slogans
> There'll Always Be An England   enhances geraniums
> And V's for Victory   vanquish the housefly[12]

A few years later, Auden draws on Anglo-Saxon to form the metrical bedrock of his war poem *The Age of Anxiety* (1947):

> Now the new*s. Night raids on*
> *Five cities. Fires started.*
> *Pressure applied by pincer movement*
> *In threatening thrust. Third Division*
> *Enlarges beachhead. Lucky charm*
> *Saves sniper. Sabotage hinted*
> *In steel-mill stoppage. Strong point held*
> *By fanatical Nazis. Canal crossed*
> *By heroic marines. Rochester barber*
> *Fools foe. Finns ignore*
> *Peace feeler. Pope condemns*
> *Axis excesses. Underground*
> *Blows up bridge. Thibetan prayer-wheels*
> *Revolve for victory. Vital crossroads*
> *Taken by tanks. Trend to the left*
> *Forecast by Congressman. Cruiser sunk*

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[12] Earle Birney, *The Collected Poems of Earle Birney*, ed. John Newlove, 2 vols (Toronto, 1975), I, 74–5. See also M. J. Toswell, 'Earle Birney as Anglo-Saxon *Scop*: A Canadian "Shaper" of Poetry?', *Canadian Poetry*, 54 (2004): 11–36. Available online at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/canadianpoetry/cpjrn/vol54/toswell.htm#2>, accessed 22 August 2011.

> *In Valdivian Deep. Doomed sailors*
> *Play poker. Reporter killed.*[13]

A year later W. S. Graham, a Scottish poet domiciled in Cornwall, memorialised his friend the primitivist painter Alfred Wallis in a language derived in large part from the Anglo-Saxon elegies:

> Worldhauled, he's grounded on God's great bank,
> Keelheaved to Heaven, waved into boatfilled arms,
> Falls his homecoming leaving that old sea testament,
> Watching the restless land sail rigged alongside
> Townfulls of shallows, gulls on sailing roofs.[14]

The American poet W. S. Merwin turns to a similar poetic idiom when he describes the sea creature in his poem 'Leviathan' (1956):

> This is the black sea-brute bulling through wave-wrack,
> Ancient as ocean's shifting hills, who in sea-toils
> Travelling, who furrowing the salt acres
> Heavily, his wake hoary behind him,
> Shoulders spouting, the fist of his forehead
> Over wastes gray-green crashing, among horses unbroken
> From bellowing fields, past bone-wreck of vessels,
> Tide-ruin, wash of lost bodies bobbing
> No longer sought for, and islands of ice gleaming,
> Who ravening the rank flood, wave-marshaling,
> Overmastering the dark sea-marches, finds home
> and harvest. Frightening to foolhardiest
> Mariners, his size were difficult to describe:[15]

Contemplation of contemporary attitudes to waste disposal and the 'throwaway' culture fostered by mass production prompts Richard Wilbur in 'Junk' (1961) to think first of the fragmentary Anglo-Saxon poem *Waldere*, cut up and glued into a later book binding (and providing 'Junk' with its epigraph), and then of the metrical system barely preserved in those scraps of waste parchment:

[13] W. H. Auden, *Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson, 2nd edn (London, 1991), pp. 454–5. For discussion of this passage, see Jones, *Strange Likeness*, pp. 114–17.

[14] W. S. Graham, 'The Voyages of Alfred Wallis', in *New Collected Poems*, ed. Matthew Francis (London, 2004), p. 87. See also Jones, ' "Where now the harp?" ', pp. 494–6.

[15] W. S. Merwin, 'Leviathan', in *Green with Beasts* (New York, 1956), pp. 10–11.

An axe angles
> from my neighbor's ashcan;

It is hell's handiwork,
> the wood not hickory,

The flow of the grain
> not faithfully followed.

The shivered shaft
> rises from a shellheap

Of plastic playthings,
> paper plates,

And the sheer shards
> of shattered tumblers

That were not annealed
> for the time needful.[16]

To bring these examples up to date, in the same year that Haynes's poem was published Seamus Heaney had recourse to an essentially similar set of qualities as those of the 'New Old English' tradition when addressing the subject of the 9/11 attacks in a meditation on a fireman's helmet:

> As if I were up to it, as if I had
> Served time under it, his fire-thane's shield,
> His shoulder-awning, while shattering glass
>
> And rubble-bolts out of a burning roof
> Hailed down on every hatchet man and hose man there
> Till the hard-reared shield-wall broke.[17]

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it ought to be sufficiently suggestive of a shared mode of Anglo-Saxonist poetry, a poetry that is concerned to express the acoustic landscape of Anglo-Saxon poetry, to *sound* Anglo-Saxon. All the foregoing poems draw attention to their oral/aural performance as heavily accentual, alliterative and densely compound-freighted. To a degree they suppress articles, some pronouns, and other small, unstressed particles that commonly occur

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[16] Richard Wilbur, 'Junk', in *Advice to a Prophet and Other Poems* (London, 1962), pp. 15–17.

[17] Seamus Heaney, 'Helmet', in *District and Circle* (London, 2006), p. 14. See also Chris Jones, 'From Heorot to Hollywood: reading *Beowulf* in its third millennium', in *Anglo-Saxon and the Modern Imagination*, ed. David Clark and Nicholas Perkins (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 13–29.

in a relatively analytic language like Modern English. Unlike the mainstream of traditional English accentual-syllabic verse, the prosodic contours of these poems are not concerned with the regular and even distribution of unstressed syllables, but with the patterning of stress-based cadences. Moreover they often delight in such effects as consecutive-falling stressed syllables, or 'bunched stress' in David Curzon's phrase.[18] In the language of accentual-syllabics this would be accounted for as a high frequency of spondees, something considered anomalous in traditional mainstream metrical English poetry,[19] and indeed, the effect is achieved in part by that very elision of particles noted earlier. In essence this mode of Anglo-Saxonist poetry celebrates a noisy riot of ear-grabbing special prosodic effects, and actively seeks to disrupt the decorum of traditional English verse, while at the same time emphatically insisting on its own Englishness, by recourse to poetics which have at least some claim to the status of an indigenous, or 'native' art. To write, then, in this way, is to make a formal argument about literary history, and about the place of Old and Modern English in relation to one another; it is to position one's own poem within the *longue durée* of English literature and to appropriate some of the cultural capital of that *longue durée*.

Canto XLIX of *Letter to Patience* makes extensive use of Anglo-Saxon elegy, although not at all in a way analogous to those examples offered above as typical of New Old English:

> Outside, the almost coming first light shows
> things as the shadows of themselves before
> colour, thickness and English names enclose
>
> their shapeless ghosts inside their shapes once more.
> No word for it, except the glossary
> of Sweet's *Old English Reader*, has this word-store

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[18] In *The Word Exchange: Anglo-Saxon Poems in Translation*, ed. Greg Delanty and Michael Matto (New York, 2011), p. 528.

[19] Fussell's view is conventional when he writes that spondees are used not as 'base feet' but for 'substitution'. Paul Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic* Form, rev. edn (New York, 1979), p. 20. For a more detailed analysis of how Pound first adopts and adapts Anglo-Saxon prosodic effects through his 'Seafarer' translation, before translating them to his own poetry, see Jones, *Strange Likeness*, pp. 31–7 and 45–9.

word for what seems now a more third worldly
kind of time, the-hour-before-dawn: *uhta*.
That guy a thousand years ago, maybe,

gone schizoid with remorse, or just a hearer
of voices, was voices, still is, still rows
across his moody ocean. *Anhaga*,

somebody who's hedged in, who also knows
how not being dead when others are, is to:
'experience the curving sky one goes

towards as one's own curving skull.' 'Untrue!
Untrue!' they shout, 'No belly-aching yet
ever changed any coward's Fate.' On cue

they float in rippling mail on the sea fret
towards him as he's screaming their names straight
into their faces, as he blubbers: 'Let

me just explain!' and they disintegrate
into the almost coming dawn. A con.
A sentence from Boethius on Fate.

'And you dream. That the Führer's hand rests on
your hair again. You're his, you're his, you swear.
Then wake remembering high stone walls gone

to ruin, the work of giants, standing there
abandoned completely. You watch the breeze
blow dust like your own breath into that air.

Here Fate finished them off as if to please
the need for closure in a narrative
and leave nothing. Except some elegy's

hit and miss flights from lip and to lip, some native
pagan lay altered to make it flow
out of the quill of some monk trying to give

some soul a Christian course he couldn't know
was there. Download it. There's the parchment, stains
and all. *Anhaga: hedged around,* and so

enclosed – caught in the bone cell of the brains.
An which is one, and *haga:* hedge, akin
to hawthorn, hodge, Hodges, Hay, Hayward, Haynes,

> that ghost in the machine nobody's in,
> that Haynes the Englishman, his aspirate,
> his diphthong, his nasal, his final thin
>
> voiced sibilant, his lips and tongue estate,
> his squirl of ink, one with the Windies bat
> and Fulham wizard, thorn and leaf, the great
>
> house built of sugar and slavery. *That,*
> *this, here, there, I, you*. Abi, yu deh grin,
> Patience. Your feet even in heels are flat. (*LTP*, pp. 63–5)

Clearly the poem is entirely unconcerned with adapting metre, or producing a phonetic texture that is densely (or even faintly) Saxonist. It does, however, drop two untranslated nuggets of Anglo-Saxon – *uhta* and *anhaga* – into its modern English *terza rima*, initiating a process of glossing, and a performance of the discourse of the lecture theatre. For as the poem voices Anglo-Saxon, the speaker simultaneously refers to the source text in which he has come across these verbal *objects trouvée*: Sweet's *Old English Reader*. In this way canto XLIX is not only an example of an Anglo-Saxonism, it also stages the beginning of the reception study that accompanies that afterlife; it places some of the scholarly paratextual apparatus that might accompany an academic textbook like Sweet's *Reader* – references, glosses, discursive exposition – at its centre, rather than at its end. A critic might be tempted to argue here that edges or margins become centre, and to try to link such a flourish to the postcolonial relationship between England and Nigeria which the poem investigates throughout. But postcolonial studies is awash with tenuous and sometimes glib analogies like this, and it is important not to confuse the rhetoric with which we carry out literary studies with the object of our studies. It is also necessary to note that the dialogue between poem and gloss, a dialogue so pervasive throughout *Letter to Patience* that it threatens to undo the binary opposition on which that dialogue is premised, is continued in a set of endnotes, *Waste Land*-style, which further clarify the subject of canto XLIX, 'that guy', as speaker of the Old English *Wanderer* (*LTP*, p. 77). These endnotes position Haynes's poem, like those poems in Sweet's *Reader*, within a material context that clearly has educational designs on its audience (a westerner, ignorant of, but interested to learn about Nigerian politics

and culture, seems to be the imagined reader of these notes). Indeed, we might consider canto XLIX less a version of, or adaptation from, *The Wanderer*, and more of a kind of verse commentary on that text.

A more helpful observation, then, might be that this poem displays a sensitivity to the processes of fashioning and maintaining identities, including those of language communities, and of the materials and methods by which the past is claimed as the grounds for ongoing ethnic and linguistic category formation. *Letter to Patience* is hyper-aware of the becomingness of English, and the use of English language and literature as a pedagogical tool in managing that becomingness.[20] So the process of acquiring knowledge, or practising a discipline (here Anglo-Saxon studies), becomes the main focus of display in canto XLIX, rather than the end product or use of that process of acquisition, as is the case in most of the other Anglo-Saxonist poems quoted earlier. While other New Old English poems might try to colonise and domesticate the sounds of Old English within contemporary verse, canto XLIX employs an almost oppositional strategy of not fully resolving its source material into the body of the poem; in this respect it resembles Eliot's use of foreign allusions in *The Waste Land*, more than it does Pound's 'Seafarer'.

Just as Haynes does not presume detailed knowledge of Nigeria in his imagined reader, but does assume a curiosity to learn, so his endnotes clarify certain aspects of canto XLIX's allusion to Anglo-Saxon. There Haynes puts forward a reading of *The Wanderer* as dramatising a transition 'in the protagonist, from an authoritarian and militaristic group ethos to solitary Christian contemplation about the purpose of life', and also draws our attention to the fact that, like *The Wanderer*, this canto is a journey poem which invokes a dream (as

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[20] See, for example, canto VII's presentation of the speaker's 'empire making boarding school' (pp. 17–19); Vatsa's vision of a state-sponsored Writers' Village in canto XVII (pp. 29–30); canto XXI's allusions to literature which has shaped perceptions of Africa by both African and non-African writers (pp. 33–4); canto XXII's depiction of a blackboard used to teach villages to spell and speak words like 'loot', 'rifle' and 'boot' (pp. 34–5); schoolboy conjugations of English and Latin verbs in canto XXXIX (pp. 51–2); the relationship between naming and possessing territory explored in canto XLI's lecture theatre (pp. 54–5); the sense in canto LI in which Pidgin assumes a role in relation to standard English 'full of grammah' similar to that English once had with Latin: what was once vernacular and demotic can become imperial and elite (pp. 66–7).

are, in fact, the previous two cantos). This is a clear invitation to read canto XLIX alongside its signalled intertext: in effect to do some old fashioned 'source study' and close reading. To do this will require very precise identification of the intertext in question.

That Henry Sweet's is actually a 'Reader' of *Anglo-Saxon*, rather than of *Old English*, is an indication that when the poet composed canto XLIX he was working (rather appropriately, given that both *The Wanderer* and *Letter to Patience* are concerned with memorialising) from memory. Indeed, in private correspondence Haynes has told me that he can no longer find his text of Sweet, but that he studied Anglo-Saxon from it, at first on his own, in a second-hand copy acquired when he was about twenty-six; he then continued with the subject when he went to Southampton University.[21] This would make the year 1962; accordingly this article uses an edition of Sweet that would have been available before that time, but still in circulation: the thirteenth edition revised by C. T. Onions.[22] Sweet/Onions differs from modern editors in small matters of punctuation and word division, and in a few emendations, all of which affect the way one construes the sense of the poem, but more importantly it marks sections of the poem as direct speech: lines 1–7 are spoken by a narrator; lines 8–63 are set as direct speech; lines 64–91 return to the narratorial voice; lines 92–110 are again in direct speech (whether or not the same voice as before is ambiguous); the final five lines are once again determined to be in the voice of a narrator. To illustrate the extent to which the designation of speech/narrative is an interpretative act, rather than a fixed textual fact, we can compare Bernard Muir's more recent edition of *The Exeter Book*. This also begins a passage of direct speech at line 8, but has this continue without the interruption of a returning narrative voice until line 111. Lines 92–110 it construes as an embedded speech, quoted by the speaker who begins at line 8.[23] Haynes has indicated that he also made use of Roy Leslie's edition of the text (which agrees with Muir's edition with respect to direct speech, until line 112, which it decides marks the beginning of a final, four-line

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[21] Personal communication with Haynes, 24 August 2010.

[22] *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, rev. C. T. Onions, 13th edn (Oxford, 1954). *The Wanderer* is on pp. 148–51 of this edition.

[23] *The Exeter Book*, ed. Bernard Muir, 2nd rev. edn, 2 vols (Exeter, 2000), II, 215–19.

passage of direct speech to the poem's end), as well as R. K. Gordon's prose translation (which decides the speech of the poem as Muir's edition does), and Michael Alexander's verse translation (which follows Sweet/Onions in terms of speakers).[24]

Recent scholarship is beginning to express unease about modern punctuation conventions, which demand unambiguous editorial interpretation and the absolute decision of a passage as speech/non-speech. Carol Pasternack, for example, emphasises how ambiguous the boundaries between different voices are in *The Wanderer*, and suggests that rather than dramatising one or more speakers, as if characters in a novel, what the poem instead does is to present a polyphony of fluctuating movements and porous speaking positions, which it is the audience's task to complete.[25] Without recourse to such scholarship, Haynes's treatment of *The Wanderer* shows a similar awareness of these issues, possibly alerted to them by his drawing on several editions (and memory of editions) and translations which settle the speech divisions differently, but no doubt also due to his sensitivity as a reader and re-worker. For the same potential richness of ambiguity is realised in the voicing of polyphony in canto XLIX, as we listen to several different voices: first the italicised voice of the speaker of the Anglo-Saxon poem, 'that guy', himself hovering between being voices or being 'just a hearer of voices'; then the narrator of the canto mediating between two, or perhaps three positions of direct speaking, one of which is plural; this is followed by another section of direct speech beginning at stanza nine with opening inverted speech marks which are never closed (' "And you dream') – the start of stanza eleven could verbally signal a transition back to the narrative voice while ironically discussing 'the need for closure in a narrative'; finally, the last stanza blurs the letter-writer's voice both with the italicised (and therefore 'foreign') Modern English voice of,

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[24] Personal communication with Haynes, 24 August 2010. 'The Wanderer', in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, trans. R. K. Gordon (London, 1926), pp. 81–3; *The Earliest English Poetry*, trans. Michael Alexander (Harmondsworth, 1966); *The Wanderer*, ed. Leslie (1966; 1985).

[25] Carol Braun Pasternack, *The Textuality of Old English Poetry* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 33–59. Pasternack argues, for example, for a reprise of the first voice at lines 58–60, during the second 'movement' of these voices. See also Gerald Richman, 'Speaker and Speech Boundaries in *The Wanderer*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 81 (1982): 469–79.

perhaps, a grammar book,[26] and with the roman typeface (and therefore naturalised) Pidgin of another voice (perhaps mimicking Patience herself): 'Abi, yu deh grin'. These words are glossed in the endnotes as 'you may well grin', just as Sweet's endnotes gloss the difficult passages of *The Wanderer*. In its staging of voices, canto XLXI produces a voicing effect remarkably like Pasternack's description of *The Wanderer* as polyphony.

That we can and should look for quite close correspondences between canto XLIX and *The Wanderer*, such as these structural parallels in voicing, is underscored by the history of Haynes's commitment to that text; Haynes had earlier published verse translations of *The Wanderer* and *The Dream of the Rood* with his own unregistered Rag Press (set up when the poet was in Nigeria), and his forthcoming volume of poems *Accompanying*, which the poet has been kind enough to show me in advance of publication, will include a much re-worked free adaptation from *The Wanderer*. Canto XLIX therefore represents a mid-point in a long, sustained, and still continuing conversation with that Anglo-Saxon poem,[27] a conversation in which certain words and phrases recur like musical motifs: the sky as a curving skull and the speaker's lament as a 'belly-aching' (perhaps a gloss to the Anglo-Saxon's exhortation to bind fast the *breostcofan*: literally the 'breast-chamber' or 'heart'), are motifs that recur in all these stages of Haynes's work with *The Wanderer*.

Where canto XLIX differs from the preceding pamphlet translation and the forthcoming free variation, is that for a time the words *uhta* and *anhaga* become the very subject of the poem, a manoeuvre characteristic of the entire *Letter to Patience*, as language itself is one of the book's major subjects. Although their meaning is much discussed within the canto, these lexemes are, as noted earlier, first placed on the page untranslated and italicised to draw attention to their strangeness; they are pips of undigested alterity. *Uhta* and *anhaga* constitute an aesthetics of the untranslatable. One could say they make a virtue out of the impossibility of absolute translation, highlighting

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[26] I take '*That, / this, here, there, I you*' to echo the uttering of paradigms throughout *Letter to Patience*, but especially in canto XXIX.

[27] Haynes records that this conversation started in the mid-1970s with a version called 'A Single Man', published in an issue of the magazine *Stand*. Personal communication with Haynes 23 August 2011.

the opacity of language even to itself; this is all, in one sense, English, but even English sometimes needs translation to itself. The extent to which these words are 'native' English is, of course, a delicate issue, with some wishing to deny Anglo-Saxon the status of native English.[28] Yet *Letter to Patience* is highly sensitive to the nuances of the word 'native'; the poem after all is partly concerned with a white Englishman's sense of belonging to postcolonial Nigeria. This problem of the Englishness of Anglo-Saxon is exactly what the canto's typography probes; visually *uhta* and *anhaga* are more clearly foregrounded as foreign than is the Pidgin with which the speaker addresses Patience in the canto's final stanza. Although both need glossing, the linguistic root of the letter-writer's English appears more alienating on the page than the living outgrowth and mutation of that English, once transplanted to foreign shores. This raises a number of linguistic-political issues which merit full consideration as part of a deeper investigation of the Anglo-Saxon words which Haynes selects from *The Wanderer* for incorporation in his poem.

   Uhta occurs in its genitive plural form at line 8 of *The Wanderer*: *Oft ic sceolde ana uhtna gehwylce | mine ceare cwiþan* ('Often I had to speak my care alone at each [of] dawn[s]'). It is hard to capture the exact shade of *uhta* in a single Modern English word: Sweet/Onions glosses it 'early morning, dawn', whereas Leslie more precisely renders it as 'the hour before dawn'. Despite its reference to the better known Sweet's *Reader*, canto XLIX seems more indebted to Leslie's edition here, turning its gloss into a hyphenated, almost hyper-Germanicised compound: 'the-hour-before-dawn'. In doing so it indicates the partial failure of Modern English to name time, or at least this time, with precision and verbal economy. As the first two stanzas intimate, Modern English names can only enclose the real when it is clothed in the light of day. This conceit enacts an almost structuralist model of semiotics, and marries it with a sense of Platonic duality, in which a word (sign) consists of a shape (signifier) that encloses an otherwise shapeless ghost (signified). In passing we should note that Haynes's 'enclose' is a particularly well judged word here, falling in

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[28] See, for example, Valentine Cunningham, 'Goodbye to Beowulf', *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 12 May 2000; <http://www.timeshighereducation. co.uk/story.asp?storycode=151563>, accessed 6 September 2011, and James Fenton, *An Introduction to English Poetry* (London, 2002), p. 1.

the rhyming position of the third line of a stanza, for it perfectly describes how *terza rima* works, enclosing material within overlapping rhyme patterns. It is also a word that *anhaga* further develops, as we will see shortly, and which is subsequently amplified in the next canto, concerned with the enclosures of the common land of the English countryside.

Yet while 'enclose' might fairly be seen as an example of the precision of Modern English in action, canto XLIX depicts its own medium as failing to name precisely the 'almost coming first light': 'no word for it, except . . .' for a word that has long vanished from the language. Its ancestor tongue, on the other hand, is able to shape the inner ghost of things before they become themselves, as shadows. This image figures Anglo-Saxon temporally as the English in the hour before the dawning of Modern English's day in the sun: if not early English, then the stage immediately pre-English. Moreover, to the reader familiar with Anglo-Saxon, the language in which Haynes develops this image also recalls the language with which poem-making (that most sacral act of naming) is itself named in Anglo-Saxon: *scapen,* 'to shape', or 'to make' poetry. Furthermore this shaping takes place when the poet, according to a metaphor used in *Beowulf* and *Widsith*, unlocks his *wordhord*,[29] or his store of traditional-formulaic poetic vocabulary, a store which includes words such as *uhta* and *anhaga*.

In effect these opening stanzas argue that communicative superiority is not guaranteed by what some might style as linguistic 'progress' or 'evolution' from pre-modern to modern. Global, developed-world languages like Modern English are not necessarily more sophisticated than 'pre-developed' local languages, such as Anglo-Saxon undoubtedly was at the time of *The Wanderer*'s own shaping. On the contrary, in these stanzas canto XLIX comes close to courting a form of linguistic primitivism in suggesting that a language in its early stages of development might have more purchase on the world of referents than one that has 'evolved' over a longer period of time. Naturally this is important to a poem which sets up

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[29] Line 259 of *Beowulf* and line 1 of *Widsith*; see *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles, 4th edn (Toronto, 2008), p. 11; *Exeter Book*, ed. Muir, I, 238.

correspondences and parallels between Anglo-Saxon as ancestor of English, and Nigerian Pidgin as one of English's more recent descendants. This consilience of Anglo-Saxon and West African varieties of English is foregrounded by the poem's suggestion that this time of day, which Anglo-Saxon could name precisely and which Modern English cannot, is 'a more third-worldly / kind of time'. That is to say, canto XLIX likens the Anglo-Saxons' sense of *uhta* with 'African time', by which, as canto XXI notes, a seven o'clock seminar might be held at 'eight-thirty-ish, or ten fifteen' (*LTP*, p. 34). As the endnote to canto XXI records, 'African Time' is a phrase which expatriates have used to mock West Africans' lack of punctuality, but which might instead be understood to record a different sense of the passing of time, one not easily captured in the network of longitudinal, time-zone lines which other sections of *Letter to Patience* deal with, as this article has already noted. 'African Time' and 'Anglo-Saxon time' are, therefore, brought into harmony, as comparable temporal perspectives that do not respond well to measurement by the language of post-industrial, mechanical clock time, but which do themselves possess linguistic resources to describe time in ways that modernity finds difficult.

'Anglo-Saxon time', if we should so call this 'third-worldly kind of time', can also have an emotional meaning, which tends not to be invested in the modern sense of clock time (perhaps with the exception of midnight). With reference to *uhta*, for example, Leslie's edition of *The Wanderer* has a note to lines 8–9 explaining that 'early morning appears to have been a time of special misery' for the Anglo-Saxons, and notes several other occurrences of *uhta* or *morgensorg* ('morning-sorrow') in the poetic corpus where it often is associated with loneliness, isolation, exile, the terror of an imminent battle, or the revelation of a horror, such as Grendel's attack on Heorot, for example (*Beowulf*, line 126).[30] Leslie also cites Eric Stanley's influential article on Old English poetic diction, which first identified this symbolic use of time, noting that 'the early morning is a time of terror without solace'.[31] Haynes is clearly aware of this dimension of *uhta*'s meaning

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[30] *The Wanderer*, ed. Leslie, p. 71.

[31] E. G. Stanley, 'Old English Poetic Diction and the Interpretation of *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer* and *The Penitent's Prayer*', *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie*, 73 (1955): 413–66 (pp. 434–5). On this subject see also Karma Lochrie, 'Anglo-

beyond the merely horological, using it to develop his speaker as 'schizoid with remorse' and experiencing extreme anxiety within the curve of his own skull. In drawing out this semantic richness, and contrasting it with a specific (but not universal) poverty of Modern English, canto XLIX can be seen as advancing an argument about the limitations of an overly narrow modern, western-centric way of knowing the world through language. Pre-modern and postcolonial languages of temporality are seen here as analogously valuable counterfoils to such an 'enclosed' position of knowledge.

To turn to another type of enclosure, we again find that Leslie's explication of *anhaga* in line 1 of *The Wanderer*,[32] provides more detail seemingly pertinent to canto XLIX than the sparse gloss in Sweet/Onions ('recluse, solitary'). Leslie notes that Ferdinand Holthausen derived the word from *an* ('one, a single one', or 'alone, solitary') and *haga* ('dwelling, enclosure'), and also records Ida Gordon's proposed alternative etymology, which connects *anhaga* with *hogian*, 'to think', therefore 'one who meditates alone', which might have informed Haynes's presentation of his speaker, even though it does not make into the poem's explicit discussion of *anhaga*.[33] Canto XLIX's treatment of the word clearly does, however, draw on the information summarised by Leslie, whether or not on Leslie directly, to the effect that although *anhaga* developed over time to mean 'one who dwells alone' (and is, therefore, an exile), it is also, etymologically, 'one enclosed' or 'fenced in' alone. Consequently canto XLIX's solitary 'guy' is 'somebody who's hedged in', and '*hedged around*, and so / *enclosed* – caught in the bone cell of the brains'; in a multiplication of the Platonic dualities already set up by the poem, the *anhaga*'s solitary voice becomes a 'ghost' within that bone cell (both the speaker's own brain, and that of the monastic scribe who encloses him in language), just as the objects in the

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Saxon Morning Sickness', *Neophilologus*, 70 (1986): 316–18. For the incorporation of *uhta* into the language of the canonical hours, see Frederick Tupper, Jr., 'Anglo-Saxon *Dæg-Mæl*', *PMLA*, 10 (1895): 111–241 (pp. 146–52).

[32] *Oft him anhaga are gebideð* ('often the solitary one waits for/experiences mercy').

[33] *The Wanderer*, ed. Leslie, p. 65. While Leslie's edition gives the word's second occurrence at line 40 in the same form as the manuscript, *anhogan*, Sweet's edition simply emends to *anhagan* (*The Wanderer*, p. 66; *Sweet' Anglo-Saxon Reader*, p. 149).

landscape outside the letter-writer's room are ghosts enclosed within the shape of words, and enclosed within the hedges that will become more clearly visible in canto L. That the poet's own name, Haynes, is also derived from *haga* and cognate with English 'hedge', causes the speaker to self-identify with *The Wanderer*'s *anhaga*, reflecting on how he too is a product of language, while simultaneously expressing himself through language. In this development of the poem's theme there is perhaps even a glimmer of the Anglo-Saxon kenning for man at the beginning of *The Dream of the Rood*, also translated by Haynes for the Rag Press pamphlet, *reordberend*:[34] to be human is to be speech-bearing.

A short catalogue of other men also bearing the enclosing name of *haga* forms much of the closing section of the poem, just as one of the final movements of *The Wanderer* catalogues dead and departed individuals with the recurring indefinite pronoun *sum* ('one', 'a certain one', lines 81b to 84, *The Wanderer*), a repetitive pattern that canto XLIX also echoes with a homophonic pun on 'some elegy', 'some lay', 'some monk', 'some soul'.[35] This catalogue first names 'Haynes the Englishman', or 'Haines' the over-zealous, slightly foolish foreigner in the Martello tower at the start of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce's Haines is mocked in the opening chapter of *Ulysses* for speaking fluent Gaelic, the 'native' language of Ireland, England's first colony, while having less mastery over his own mother tongue of English. The catalogue continues with oblique allusions (which the endnotes clarify) to the nicknames of Desmond Haynes, a West Indian batsman, and Johnny Haynes, a former Fulham footballer and English captain, who eventually left to play for Durban in South Africa. These real and fictional Haines/Hayneses are all in some sense culturally displaced, or might legitimately feel a split sense of belonging; all either travelled across seas, or their people travelled across seas, following patterns of British colonial migration. They therefore double both Haynes the letter-writer/poet, an Englishman in postcolonial Nigeria who feels a sense of displacement on his return 'home' to

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[34] Line 3, *The Dream of the Rood*, ed. Michael Swanton, rev. edn (Exeter, 1987).

[35] This same technique of alluding to an intertext via an etymological pun is what leads Haynes to describe the ocean in canto XLIX as 'moody', calling up Anglo-Saxon *mod* 'heart, mind, spirit', which occurs at lines 41, 51 and 111 of *The Wanderer*.

England, and *The Wanderer*'s *anhaga*, in exile across seas after the loss of his community or *duguþ* (the most intimate circle of a lord's troop of warriors, and which Tacitus termed the *comitatus*).

This sense of exile and loss is foreshadowed in canto VI of *Letter to Patience* when Patience tells Haynes that after his return to England 'this bar is what you're going to miss', causing the letter-writer to reflect on whether this is true ('the bar, music, the beer?'), and whether his writing is really in fact 'an elegy' (*LTP*, pp. 16–17), the genre to which twentieth-century criticism has co-opted *The Wanderer*. In the poet's memory Patience's bar becomes *Letter to Patience*'s meadhall (*meoduheall*, in *The Wanderer*, line 27), the meeting-place for his former companions, from which he now feels exiled, like 'that guy' in the Anglo-Saxon elegy. These absent companions are doubled in *The Wanderer* by the parodic companionship of flocks of seabirds, whose calls are a poor substitute for the music of the meadhall, and who remind the poem's speaker more of the fellowship he misses, rather than provide substitution for that fellowship, when they swim into his view on waking from a dream of his lord in the hall (lines 45–8). This scene is incorporated into canto XLIX as the floating speakers of the voices in his skull, who appear 'on the sea fret' and then 'disintegrate / into the almost coming dawn'. We might well call the bringing-over and refraction of a passage of the 'source' text in this manner 'translation', but it is a form of translation closer in spirit to the *translatio* of the Middle Ages that also endorsed a degree of re-writing and making new, rather than the very faithful but less imaginative translation that we have come to expect from publishers' series of classics in modern translation.

It is perhaps worth noting here that the headnote to the text of *The Wanderer* in Sweet/Onions suggests that a better title for the poem would be 'The Exile', clearly also the position of the letter-writer. We should probably see this paratext in Sweet/Onions, or the scholarly tradition it condenses, as one of the intertexts on which canto XLIX draws, as much as the actual text of *The Wanderer* itself. For the headnote goes on to summarise the arguments for and against the integrity of the poem as is, and in connection with *The Seafarer* refers to the hypothesis that these poems were tampered with by Christian monks, a debate that becomes part of canto XLIX's material in stanzas eleven to thirteen. Here the word 'native' becomes a highly charged

node through which several trans-historical meanings are exchanged. In the scholarly discourse that has assumed a theory of composition of Anglo-Saxon poetry according to which pre-Christian, Germanic oral poetry is subjected to the 'improving' changes of literate Christian monks, 'native' expresses the value of 'authentic', or 'pure'. (Of course such valorisation of authentic, or pure native Germanicism would lead to politically brutal extremes in the twentieth century, something canto XLIX is not afraid to explore, as will be discussed shortly.) In the discourse of colonialism, 'native' can itself be a term of condescension towards aboriginal peoples (as in the phrase 'gone native'), whose culture is usually subjected within empire to the 'improving' changes of an educational system imposed by literate incoming (often missionary) foreigners wielding great cultural capital. Anglo-Saxon poetry, according to canto XLIX, has experienced similar vicissitudes of fortune in its passage out of oral or traditional 'native' culture and into literary culture, as has, say, much African poetry.

Sweet/Onions' headnote focuses our reading of the Old English poem in other ways relevant to its relationship with *Letter to Patience*, most notably in its description of the predominant theme of this and other elegiac Anglo-Saxon poetry as 'the mutability of earthly things'. This is indeed one aspect of the poem, its depiction of the transitory nature of human achievement, that canto XLIX particularly latches on to. *The Wanderer* presents an apocalyptic image of huge walls standing ruined and crumbling, the ancient work of a race of giants (*eald enta geweorc*). This image canto XLIX echoes when the speaker of stanzas nine and ten addresses a generalised second person pronoun as 'remembering high stone walls gone / to ruin, the work of giants, standing there / abandoned completely'. These ruins 'Fate finished off', just as the *wyrda gesceaft* ('the ordained course of fate', line 105) makes all the world under the heavens mutable in *The Wanderer*. Even the remediation of this image, straightforward as it seems, implicates the poem's Anglo-Saxonism within *Letter to Patience*'s wider treatment of postcolonial politics. For as the Anglo-Saxons only rarely built in stone (and then towards the end of what we now call the Anglo-Saxon period), most scholars believe that the real-world material objects which inform the subject matter of these lines in *The Wanderer* (there are textual sources too, of course), like similar

passages in the *Exeter Book* poem we call *The Ruin*, were the long-ruined and still-decaying masonry works put up by the Roman army during its occupation of the province of Britannia, and still visible across what had become the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England. These walls then, may suggest the former presence of an occupying imperial power, one whose dominion over a colony ultimately fails, but whose presence nevertheless remains, marking and shaping the landscape and culture of the former colony. Seen in relation to the deep cultural history underpinning this Anglo-Saxonism, the English, whether RP or Pidgin, that Nigerian characters of *Letter to Patience* utter is of a kind with the *amo*, *amas*, *amat* that the speaker had to recite by heart as a young boy in his boarding school – also now a ruin, its walls 'gone', having been destroyed by Vandals, like many buildings of the Roman Empire during the fifth century A.D. (*LTP*, p. 18) – and which Celtic British subjects presumably had to learn in the Roman province of Britannia in the same stone buildings which later became the ruins of *The Wanderer*. These verbal signs and shapes are all traces of an imperialism that cannot wield power forever, but which nevertheless re-structures the world it leaves behind.

Exercise and waning of power prompts consideration of Haynes's own précis of *The Wanderer* as dramatising a transition 'from an authoritarian and militaristic group ethos to solitary Christian contemplation about the purpose of life' (*LTP*, p. 77). This statement might remind us that, born in 1936, Haynes grew up in the shadow of a specific authoritarian and militaristic group ethos that had failed to impose itself across the world: fascism. Indeed memories and anecdotes of World War II abound throughout *Letter to Patience*, which is hardly surprising given that Haynes, like the de-colonising world which is *Letter to Patience*'s subject, was formed by the war against fascism and its aftermath, a war responsible for the condition of many a twentieth-century *anhaga* who knows about 'not being dead when others are'. Haynes's sense of the authoritarian and militaristic group ethos of the Anglo-Saxon *duguþ, or comitatus*, is refreshingly unsentimental and unromanticised, and *The Wanderer*'s dream of being reunited with his lord (lines 37–44, in which the speaker lays his head in his lord's lap) is given a sinister twist, by being morphed into a dream of intimacy with the twentieth-century leader of a particularly brutal idealisation of the Germanic *duguþ*: the Führer. Canto XLIX is

unafraid, then, to link the culture of Anglo-Saxon heroism to recent political and militaristic expansionism, and to racial subjugation, even as it finds attractions and advantages in the vocabulary of that culture.

In the introduction to this article I suggested that Haynes orients Anglo-Saxon towards postcolonial Africa. That is to say, through the fictional conceit of the verse epistle, Haynes sends Anglo-Saxon into, or towards Nigeria: an act of transmission. In one sense the far past is *translated* into the contemporary. In another sense, both past and present move, as the poem constantly reminds us, along the same zero-change time-line. As *Letter to Patience* is also concerned to remind us, other forms of English have been directed outwards from the imperial centre before, and accompanied by similar pedagogical textual materials to those which accompany Anglo-Saxon (and which *Letter to Patience* at times mimics) such as readers, text-books, glossaries and notes, as part of a programme of colonisation, cultural and literal. Yet this cross-ocean and trans-continental travel also puts us in mind of other migratory journeys Anglo-Saxon has made, or had visited on it: journeys like the one the protagonist of *The Wanderer* makes. For early in its history Anglo-Saxon crossed another sea to conquer, mark and enclose a territory in its immigrant phonemes. Its speakers too have been enslaved by a quasi-imperial power: it was famously a letter from Pope Gregory the Great, which he wrote after seeing Angles for sale in the slave markets of Rome, then centre of the known world, that began the first missions to Anglo-Saxon England,[36] with all the cultural and linguistic colonisation that process entailed. A similar justification would be made for missionary work in Nigeria around 1200 years later. Anglo-Saxon was subject to yet more linguistic conquest and attempted suppression in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries when its speakers became part of the Norman imperium: canto L picks up the terms 'hedge' and 'enclose' from canto XLIX and amplifies them to talk of the post-Conquest enclosure of the English countryside, by which the mainly Anglo-Saxon peasantry essentially had their commonland property stolen from them. *Letter to Patience* sets this process up as analogous to that in colonial Nigeria.

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[36] Book I, chapter XXIII, and book II, chapter I of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/bede.html>, accessed 13 September 2011).

Not only does Haynes avoid the assimilation of Anglo-Saxon poetics as part of a claim to cultural authority, as is the case with some other Anglo-Saxonist poetry, he clearly also refuses to deploy Anglo-Saxon as part of a narrative about the manifest destiny of English or Englishness, or to stabilise an essential and unchanging sense of Englishness, as is often the case with political Anglo-Saxonist discourse. Yet it is not the case that Anglo-Saxon is merely appropriated to the opposite cause, a politically correct, anti-imperialist narrative. Rather, *Letter to Patience* honestly and responsibly opens up the various ways in which English, Old and New, has travelled during the course of its history, how it has been both colonised and colonising, third-worldly and developed-worldly, probing its many conflicted political meanings, and marking its historical involvement with patterns of dispossession and disempowerment. Likewise, canto XLIX attends to the implicit and explicit moral and didactic functions to which Anglo-Saxon has been put, both for the audience of poems such as those in *The Exeter Book,* and for students who have studied it around the globe as the origin and explanation of what is still too often complacently thought of as 'The Triumph of English'.[37] Canto XLIX acutely portrays how intertwined, and alike, the histories of colonising and colonised languages are, and in doing so marks a new significantly new departure from previous uses of Anglo-Saxon in modern poetry. Concerned, as it partly is, with lack in Modern English, *Letter to Patience*'s use of Anglo-Saxon probes the sense in which English has failed in history in precisely the same moments, and even in the same ways, as it triumphs. There may indeed be 'no word for it', but *Letter to Patience* counsels us that where language cannot precisely capture such a nuanced moment of recognition, a word, nevertheless, is available to us, as to the *Wanderer*-poet: patience.

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[37] This was the title of an influential history of the English language: Basil Cottle, *The Triumph of English: 1350–1400* (London, 1969). For the unfortunate truth that histories of English are still told according to triumphalist narratives, see Melvyn Bragg, *The Adventure of English: The Biography of a Language* (London, 2003).

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