

Ides, Aglæcwif: That's No Monster, That's My Wife!
Uncovering the Origins of Grendel's Mother

by Jennifer Smith
14 May 1999

Grendel's mother has often been relegated to a secondary role in *Beowulf*, overshadowed by the monstrosity of her murderous son. She is not even given a name of her own. As Keith Taylor points out, "none has received less critical attention than Grendel's mother, whom scholars of *Beowulf* tend to regard as an inherently evil creature who like her son is condemned to a life of exile because she bears the mark of Cain" (13). Even J. R. R. Tolkien limits his ground-breaking critical treatment of the poem and its monsters to a discussion of Grendel and the dragon. While Tolkien does touch upon Grendel's mother, he does so only in connection with her infamous son. Why is this? It seems likely from textual evidence and recent critical findings that this reading stems neither from authorial intention nor from scribal error, but rather from modern interpretations of the text mistakenly filtered through twentieth-century eyes.

While outstanding debates over the religious leanings of the *Beowulf* poet and the dating of the poem are outside the scope of this essay, I do agree with John D. Niles that "if this poem can be attributed to a Christian author composing not earlier than the first half of the tenth century [...] then there is little reason to read it as a survival from the heathen age that came to be marred by monkish interpolations" (137). Just as the poet's contemporary audience was thrown into a schizophrenic state by the pull of a pagan past against the newer teachings of Christianity, the poet himself was put to task to successfully blend these religious ideologies into a complex yet effective plot that appealed to his audience precisely because they were attempting to reconcile their own beliefs. Tolkien writes of the "muddled heads of early Anglo-Saxons" (19), and Niles asserts that "the result of this unsettling mixture of elements is a terrifying

uncertainty as to just what these creatures are” (138). Unsettling in an entertaining way for the Anglo-Saxon audience as the poet must have intended, but unsettling in quite another way for modern scholars.

Niles thus describes the dichotomy within the characterization of Grendel and his mother: “On the one hand they recall the night-striders of Germanic folk-belief [...] On the other hand, they are the devils of Christian belief” (138). He concludes, therefore, that both are literally evil. This is *the* point of contention I see in the translation of the character of Grendel’s mother. I agree, based on the textual evidence and the oral tradition of the poem, that “in Grendel change and blending are, of course, already apparent [...] and his] parody of human form becomes symbolical, explicitly, of sin” (Tolkien 36). He is a monster. However, attempts at such blending in the character of Grendel’s mother yield a far more complex character whose true nature has escaped many scholars. The reason for this is the tendency of scholars to assume obvious connections and embellish translations for dramatic effect.

Why do scholars assume Grendel’s mother is monstrous? The answer is twofold. First, she is read as monstrous because Grendel is; however, in examining the Old English text edited by Howell Chickering, Jr., never is Grendel’s mother described as physically monstrous nor does she attack unprovoked. Second, her battle with Beowulf, an epic hero, is of epic proportions. Although she is physically described as being *idese onlicnæs*, “in the likeness of a woman” (1351)¹, once she assumes a role similar to that of Beowulf—as avenger and warrior—her actions, and she herself, are translated by many scholars, including Chickering, as monstrous. Grendel’s mother has to be a worthy opponent for Beowulf; thus, her character carries shades of magnificence—she lives in a cave underwater, she takes Æschere’s head (though the actual act is

not described), and her fight with Beowulf is fierce—just as Beowulf exhibits elements of the fantastic, but he is never described as evil or monstrous.

E. G. Stanley discusses the parallels between *Beowulf* and the other manuscripts contained in MS Vitellius A xv: *The Wonders of the East*, the *Letter of Alexander the Great to Aristotle*, and the *Liber Monstrorum*. These manuscripts all mention monsters and elements of the marvelous. It is probable, as Stanley suggests, that the *Beowulf* poet knew of and possibly used themes and motifs from these other manuscripts as well as from oral tradition (5). But where is the mention of a monstrous mother? There is none. And Stanley agrees that the attempt by scholars to reconcile the Christian and pagan elements of the poem has not been as successful as the attempts made by the poet himself and his audience: “[This] has led some modern critics to look away from the reality of the monsters, to make them *be* wholly the powers of darkness towards which they *tend* (and from which Grendel’s race is derived)” (6).

Chickering’s translation is based on previous scholarship, and he assures us that he has not blindly accepted the text of the existing manuscript nor treated incaustiously later versions of it because such practices lead to strained interpretations and limit reasonable conjecture (43). However, he does note, “For the corrupt spots, there is simply no way of confirming editorial conjectures” (43). Thus, not only does he perpetuate, blindly and incaustiously, the traditional view of Grendel’s Mother within the obvious context of Christianity, but he also goes further in his translation than most scholars. I believe he has done Grendel’s Mother a grave disservice by not questioning his emendations, questioning her origins, or getting to the bottom of this mere. The fact that we are told nothing of her origins or of her life before Grendel is significant. James Hala remarks: “The mother is thus inscribed into the origin of her son as a silence. This aporia in the text creates for her the illusion of an origin, and thus upholds the patriarchal economy of the

narrative” (6). Thus, that is where I believe we must go—to speculate from whence Grendel’s Mother came and to explore the complexity of her character and its misinterpretation—in order to paint a more accurate picture of her function in *Beowulf*.

Misreading Grendel’s Mother: Displacing Her Humanity

Jane Chance posits that the episode with Grendel’s Mother can be extended to approximately a thousand lines between 1251-2199 (Norton 43-55) to be of almost equal length to the episodes detailing Beowulf’s encounters with Grendel and the dragon. However, Chance sees this extension creating a problem. By including the scenes of “Hrothgar’s sermon and Hygelac’s court celebration, Grendel’s Mother hardly dominates these events literally or symbolically as Grendel and the dragon dominate the events in their sections” (“Structural Unity,” 248). I disagree with Chance. The episode involving Grendel’s Mother does encompass the lines noted not only because the greater part of these lines establishes her humanity and powerful presence, but in the end there is also a connection made between Grendel’s Mother and Modthrytho that underscores the consequences of powerful women as seen by both Anglo-Saxons and modern audiences. Grendel’s Mother is indeed powerful and proves threatening to Beowulf before, during, and even after their battle. In this way she certainly dominates her episode and continues to do so even after Beowulf strikes his death blow.

When we are first introduced to Grendel’s Mother, we are given some pertinent yet often misread information about the nature of her character:

[...]þaette wrecend þa gyt
 lifde aefter laþum, lange þrage,
 aefter guð-ceare. Grendeles modor,
 ides, aglaec-wif yrmðe gemunde[...]. (Chickering, 1256b-59)

This passage is at the root of the misreading of her character. In 1259b, the terms *ides* and *agltec-wif* are traditionally translated as “woman, monster woman.” Taylor disputes the latter translation,

saying that "a closer examination of the term *aglcecwif*, one which takes into account the context in which the term appears, reveals that this otherwise unattested nominal compound warrants a much more literal reading" (15). He presents the translations of several scholars, including Dobbie and Kuhn who translate *aglcec* as "formidable (one)" or "fighter, valiant warrior" since it is also applied to Beowulf (15). Thus, "warrior woman" is a more approximate translation of the Old English.

Its complementary term, *ides*, is also part of the misreading. Is it simply an ironic inversion of the Germanic ideal as Chance asserts (*Woman as Hero*, 97)? Mary Kay Temple does not think so. She notes that an element of extraordinariness exists in the term so that "the word is applied less frequently to ordinary women than to poetic and scriptural heroines" (11) and, Taylor adds, to "all ladies of the nobility, irrespective of their notoriety (or lack thereof)" (18). Temple also notes that it is significantly applied to women who are "parents of men whose deeds had great impact on human history, whether for good or ill" (14). I would add, also, women who display aggressiveness and a powerful presence. As the other royal women in the poem show no such aggressive tendencies or powerful presence—Hygd is young and submissive and Freawaru is powerless to prevent her fate—the term *ides* is not applied to them as it is to Weahltheow, Hildeburh, and Grendel's Mother. It does, however, show up later in this episode when it is applied to the only other woman in the poem strong enough to support it: Modthrytho. Temple observes: "The poet refers to them [Grendel's Mother and Modthrytho] both by the same word, as if to suggest that the Grendel-kin are not so far from the human order as the dwellers in Heorot would like to think" (14).

In the *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Stith Thompson lists under the heading "Cruel Sacrifices" the folk motif of "women given to devastating monster as wife to appease it" (entry S262.1). Although Thompson notes that this motif shows up in the folklore of several countries, the first of note is Ireland. Given the motif's geographic proximity and its striking resemblance to the happenings in *Beowulf*, it is very likely that this motif was known to the poet as he pulled from the folklore of oral tradition when

writing *Beowulf*. Working from this premise and textual evidence, I wish to present a new view of Grendel's Mother, who has been unfairly portrayed as an inhuman monster. In fact, I believe her to be a very human woman forced upon the monster who was Grendel's father, the symbolic progeny of Cain, possibly by the Danish ancestors of Hrothgar, in an effort to appease this monstrous father's rampant destruction, which Grendel himself later mimics. While there is no way to prove this lineage, it does seem highly plausible based on the existence of this particular folkloric motif and on the textual evidence that Grendel's Mother is no monster.

In a translating *ides, aglcecwif* then, we can tie in this secondary, but I believe significant, reading of this passage which looks back to the origins of Grendel's Mother. As Taylor suggests, *ides* as applied to Grendel's Mother presents us with a noble, human character. If we then read the first part of the compound, *aglcec*, as "attacker" and the second part of the compound, *wif*, using its secondary meaning "wife" (Bosworth and Toller, 1217-18), we may read this half-line as the introduction to "the attacker's wife," calling up her origins as a human sacrifice to appease Grendel's Father. She is also, as I translate the Old English text, a "noble woman, [a] warrior woman" who assumes the role of avenger for Beowulf's murder of her son, monster or no. Thus, Taylor muses, "the *Beowulf*-poet uses the term *ides* to pay Grendel's mother the highest compliment at his disposal, for it is through his use of the term that the *Beowulf*-poet commends Grendel's mother for performing a brave deed" (22). And, he notes, "at the moment that Grendel's mother is called *ides aglcecwif* by the *Beowulf*-poet, there is no information available to the audience of *Beowulf* to indicate that Grendel's mother is an inherently evil creature" (20). Such characterization is certainly lost in Chickering's translation, "Grendel's mother, / a monster woman" (1258b-59a). He condemns her to the obvious Christian allusion before she even enters into the action of the poem.

Misreading Grendel's Mother: Displacing Her Gender

Temple calls Grendel's Mother "a creature denied full humanity" (14). I would agree that she is denied any humanity at all by scholars and translators in the manner of Chickering. By allowing her to reclaim her humanity, Grendel's Mother can restore her links to the pagan world—as mother, woman, queen of her hall, and avenger—in balance with her aggressive, powerful eruptions that link her to the epic tradition and to the Old Norse concept of the Valkyrie. Temple says that Grendel's mother is "rendered even more terrifying by [her] distorted resemblance to humanity" (14), and I believe this also serves to diminish her appeal and powerful presence as a women warrior. Trying to render a truer picture of Grendel's Mother, by comparing text to translation, gives rise to such ambiguities in her humanity and gender that will forever haunt us as scholars and critics.

Just as her humanity is called into question from the moment we meet her, so, too, is her gender. Perhaps the poet intentionally clouded this aspect of her character to play up the question of her humanity as a reflection of the Danes' desire to repress the heinous sacrifice their ancestors perpetrated against Grendel's Mother. By taking away her humanity and her gender, her identity is taken away as well. She becomes a caricature of evil, at least in translation, and is no longer a threat to exposing the Danes' secret. They can dismiss her as an outcast due to her monstrous lineage, and in fact, they may even have believed her monstrosity once she mated with Grendel's Father. Thus, having already stripped her humanity away, Chickering now deprives Grendel's Mother of her gender:

Aris, rices weard, uton hraþe feran,
 Grendles magan gang sceawigan.
 Ic hit þe gehate: no he on helm losað,
 ne on foldan fæþm, ne on fyrgen-holt,
 ne on gyfenes grund, ga þær he wille. (1390-94)

[Arise, guard of kingdoms, let us go quickly, and track down the path of Grendel's kinsman! I promise you this: he will find no escape in the depths of the earth, nor the wooded mountain, nor the bottom of the sea, let him go where he will.] Here, as in other lines, such as 1260a (*se þe*, "he who"), Chickering uses masculine words to describe Grendel's Mother. In the passage above, he calls her Grendel's "kinsman," even though he uses the feminine form of the word in his glossary (407). He then, as he does in line 1260a, continues to refer to her using masculine pronouns.

As he progresses towards her act of revenge and eventual battle with Beowulf, Chickering does not deviate from choosing words that fit the traditional translation of Grendel's Mother as an ambiguously-gendered progeny of Cain. He uses "claws" for *clommum* ("clutches," 1502a, my translation) and *fingrum* ("fingers," 1505b, my translation). He calls her a "sea-wolf" for *brim-wylf* (1506a), which given the fact that emendation to the text was necessary, could also be translated as "fierce sea" (my translation) following *brim* which is "sea" (Bosworth and Toller, 125), and *wylfen*, which is "fierce" (Bosworth and Toller, 1285). Thus, Grendel's Mother did not pull Beowulf underwater, but the fierce current of the sea did and held him in its clutches (1506-09a). One of the more debatable choices in Chickering's translation comes when he tells how Beowulf presented the gold hilt to Hrothgar, the hilt that Beowulf retrieved from the mere once Grendel's Mother was dead:

[...]ond þa þas worold ofgeaf
grom-heort guma, Godes andsaca,
mordres scyldig, ond his modor eac[...]. (1681b-83)

[...]once the fierce spirit, long God's opponent, guilty creature, *and his murderous mother* had quitted this world(...). (my italics)] In comparing his translation with the Old English text above, it is apparent that nowhere in the text is Grendel's Mother called "murderous." In fact, as I translate the passage, it reads: "And then the man fierce of heart, God's adversary, the one guilty of murder, quit this world, and his mother did, also." Marijane Osborn and Kevin Crossley-Holland agree that it is Grendel who is accused

of murder and not his mother. Chickering's translation misses the final, folkloric layer that I believe the poet added to his text as a reflection of his skill and his recognition of his audience's knowledge, beliefs, and taste.

If we assume he was also drawing upon the oral folkloric tradition of the poem, then it can be seen that the poet served many purposes in his characterization of Grendel's Mother. Beowulf, as a hero, must overcome a formidable adversary, one who must not be perceived to be as good or as just as the hero; these two objectives are easily met by presenting Grendel's Mother as a warrior and as a potentially evil figure. But what skill is reflected in that? I would argue that the poet added yet another layer to the character of Grendel's Mother by introducing the folkloric motif mentioned earlier and then joins the layers by presenting the opportunity for the Danes' secret (of marrying one of their women to Grendel's Father) to be justifiably erased by Beowulf.

Gillian Overing contends that as Grendel's Mother is "barely identifiable as human, she also makes a doubtful female" (*Women of Beowulf*, 223). She continues: "I have chosen not to discuss Grendel's mother separately precisely because she is not quite human, or, rather, she has her own particular brand of otherness; her inhuman affiliation and propensities make it hard to distinguish between what is monstrous and what is female" (*Women of Beowulf*, 230). Yet several other scholars were able to do just that: Chance, for instance, as well as Helen Damico. In her study of the Valkyrie-figure of Old Norse heroic poetry, Damico draws comparisons between the Valkyries and three of the women in *Beowulf*—Wealththeow, Grendel's Mother, and Modthrytho—acknowledging "the authority held in Germanic mythology by those divinities whom Grimm classifies as half-goddesses, a generic group of half-mortal, half-supernatural beings called *itīs* in Old High German, *ides* in Old English, and *dís*, plural *dísir* in Old Norse" (38). She notes that Grendel's Mother "follows the customary portrayal of the Valkyrie as a deadly battle-demon[...]she is

ambisexual, as are the *skjaldmeyjar* whom Saxon describes as possessing the "bodies of women[...but] the souls of men" (46).

Perhaps the poet's use of this motif helps to explain the gender ambiguity that Chickering explains through the use of Christian terminology; yet only one time in the Old English text does a term appear in connection with Grendel's Mother that alludes to the alleged evil and supposed biblical lineage of Grendel and his mother. In line 1679b, they are called *deofla*, "devils, diabolical persons, false gods." This, I believe, should not be taken literally as an allusion to Christianity. Rather, it is an overt example of the poet's attempt to link the many layers of Grendel's Mother into a coherent whole. *Deofla* functions as a metaphoric allusion to illustrate the depth and breadth of her power as female warrior and as a justified, formidable opponent of Beowulf.

Feminist theorist Judith Butler, in discussing gender theory, notes that "to stray outside of established gender is in some sense to put one's very existence into question" (615). This is precisely the case with Grendel's Mother. And as Butler further observes, "What we call an essence or a material fact is simply an enforced cultural option which has disguised itself as natural truth" (622). Grendel's Mother is not a Christian devil or pagan monster, but rather, as Damico points out, she is an *ides*, a quasi-supernatural figure not ambiguously-gendered but possessing the body of a woman and the soul of a man, *atol aese wlanc* (1332a), "terrible, exulting in carrion" (my translation), which thus makes her a complete warrior figure in line with that of the Valkyrie and certainly makes her a worthy opponent for the epic hero, Beowulf.

Misreading Grendel's Mother: Displacing Her Rights

Elaine Tuttle Hansen observes: "Like Grendel, [his mother] represents an earlier, more primitive world, where woman must fight when her men have been killed" (114). If we are to believe that Grendel's Mother is a literal ancestor of Cain, condemned to exile by God, then she also is condemned

by nature of her relation to him. Thus, as a monster and an outsider to society, to the *comitatus*, she is not entitled to the rights of the blood feud, so Beowulf is justified in killing her as he is justified in killing Grendel for his crimes. Chance agrees: "It is monstrous for a mother to 'avenge' her son (2121) as if she were a retainer, he were her lord, and avenging more important than peace making" (*Woman as Hero*, 101). Thus, Beowulf is exonerated; after all, he is the hero. However, I do not subscribe to the theory that she is an ancestor of Cain, literal or symbolic, as I mentioned above. I believe in her humanity; thus, while Grendel is clearly in the wrong, not so is his mother.

Grendel's Mother has no male kin, no kin at all according to the text, remaining to take up this blood feud, so she has to step up and become Grendel's avenger (Hansen, 114). As Alexandra Hennessey Olsen points out: "In the Old Norse context, it is clear from portraits like Aud in *Laxdælasaga*, Hervor in *The Waking of Angantyr*, and Guthrun in *Atlaqviða* that women are expected to act in the absence of male relatives[...]so that when necessary the role of avenger is played by women as well as men" (322). Therefore, Grendel's Mother is justified in her revenge. Taylor agrees: "The bravery and thus the inherent nobility of Grendel's mother becomes clear when, in the absence of a male counterpart, she ventures to Heorot alone and unarmed, one formidable woman against a host of warriors, to avenge the murder of her only son" (21). The following lines, in fact, speak to real human heartache, to the desperation and loneliness of mother who has lost her son: "*wolde hire bearn wrecan, / agano æferan*" (Chickering, 1546b-47a).

Conclusions: The Modthrytho Connection

Chance asserts that Grendel's Mother and her episode underscore the concept of the peace-weaver, represented by the queens Wealhtheow, Hildeburh, and Hygd (*Woman as Hero*, 99). For example, as Wealhtheow passes the cup to Beowulf both literally and symbolically, Grendel's Mother passes the narrative to those queens right before and within the final section of her episode. Chance

links this function of Grendel's Mother to that of Modthrytho: "Both antitypes of the peace-weaving queen behave like kings[...]they represent *previous* inversions of the peace-weaver and cup-passer" (*Woman as Hero*, 106, her italics). However, they are linked not only by this function, but, as Damico notes, they are also linked by their actions as warriors, as Valkyries (*Wealhtheow*, 180).

In a current feminist reading of canonical literature, it was observed that throughout literary history "power [i]s unfeminine and powerful women [a]re, quite literally, monstrous" (Schweickart, 204). Modthrytho, who is guilty of murder unlike Grendel's Mother, is certainly portrayed as monstrous, matching crime for crime the evil of her first husband, Heremod (1931b-43). She has power, yet she abuses it. In this way, she differs from Grendel's Mother. However, as Damico suggests, once Modthrytho marries Offa, she is seemingly transformed from an evil to a virtuous queen (*Wealhtheow*, 180). Damico describes this archetypal transformation as that of "fierce war-demon to gold-adorned warrior-queen" (*Wealhtheow*, 49). Thus, while Chance contends that at the end of this episode Modthrytho becomes one of the peace-weavers in opposition to Grendel's Mother, Modthrytho does not really relinquish her power as the following passage reveals:

þæt **hio leod-bealewa** læs gefremede
 inwit-niða, syðða ærest weard
 gyfen gold-hroden geongum cempan,
 ædelum diore[...]. (1946-49a, my bold)

I translate the words *hio leod-bealewa læs* as "she performed *less* malice against the people." Only less malice; therefore, she didn't stop entirely. In this way, she echoes Shakespeare's Kate in *Taming of the Shrew*, who yields to her lord and is seen by society as redeemed and appears to fall into line with societal expectations. Overing notes:

[Modthrytho] begins by rocking the boat, by challenging, even inverting the values of the prevailing symbolic order[...]she is then 'cured'[...]Modthryth[o] causes a temporary shudder of discomfort, followed by a generalized sigh of relief that the disorder she threatens has been contained and that things are once more under the control of the masculine economy. (103)

Her powerful presence in the poem is an echo of that of Grendel's Mother. And like Grendel's Mother, Modthrytho's "complicity—also a form of mimicry—in the masculine objectifying, destructive mode, however, also demonstrates her dual role as[...]both heroine and victim, whose ambiguity is part of her power to disturb" (Chance, *Language*, 105).

Chance suggests that Modthrytho's ambiguity remains unresolved and unexplained (*Language*, 106). I disagree. Whereas Modthrytho is embraced by society, Grendel's Mother does not rejoin society. Modthrytho appears to lose her power; Grendel's Mother gains power after Grendel is killed. In fact, her presence is so powerful that her story is told firsthand and is full of action. To further quell the threat of Modthrytho, her story is delivered secondhand. Thus, they appear to be opposites, and yet, paradoxically, they are the same. Based on the wording in the passage above, I believe Modthrytho does not lose nor give up her lord-like power any more than Grendel's Mother does. Like Shakespeare's Kate, I see Modthrytho's submission to her husband, to society, and to the narrative as a ruse to give the illusion of authority to the others in the poem in an effort to preserve her own power and keep it safe from society's wrath.

Grendel's Mother, portrayed as inhuman perhaps to cover up the Danes' marrying of her to Grendel's Father, is not allowed to transform within the text. Even though Modthrytho's actions were more severe, Modthrytho is still perceived as human and Grendel's Mother is not. This is the heart of their connection and the reason I believe Grendel's Mother continues to dominate her own episode even until the very end. By including Modthrytho's story, the poet is presenting us with two powerful women and their drastically different outcomes as if to say to the women in his audience that not conforming to societal rules will result in death. This form of social commentary is a theme that continues to be repeated in literature even today, with gender often replaced by race as the crux of the argument. Such a powerful presence seems to serve its purpose

within the confines of the text, but the illusions of authority are turned upon the audience, and the poet seems to say that such women, such outsiders, have no place in real life.

Grendel's Mother, however, proves even more powerful as her connection to Modthrytho demonstrates by its implication of conform or die; this underscores and continues her threat and her powerful presence. It appears that the poet is using local folkloric motifs along with both religious (pagan) and societal allusions to create the character of Grendel's Mother as a warning to his audience much as fairy tales and fables draw on similar oral traditions to create similar characters to teach lessons to children. However, the poet does not stop there for that would be too obvious a tactic for his skill. He has one more thought to leave us with: Modthryth's ruse. With this complication entered in the episode, I believe the poet finally says that while some may resist such powerful female figures, there is hope for those who learn to operate within the system, within the male economy, without sacrificing their power. We are left with the same irony voiced by Shakespeare's Kate when she has finally learned how to remain herself within the approved limits of society (Barton, 107):

I am asham'd that women are so simple
To offer war where they should kneel for peace,
Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,
When they are bound to serve, love, and obey. (161 -64)

Notes

¹ All references to the Old English text of *Beowulf* are taken from Chickering's edition.

However, unless otherwise noted, modern English translations are mine supported by the Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon dictionary.

Works Consulted

- Alexander, Michael, ed. *Beowulf*. London: Penguin, 1995.
- Barton, Anne. Introduction to *The Taming of the Shrew*. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton, 1974. 106-09
- Bosworth, Joseph, and T. Northcote Toller. *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. London: Oxford UP, 1898.
- Butler, Judith. "Variations on Sex and Gender: Beavoir, Wittig, and Foucault." *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. New York: Longman, 1998. 612-23.
- Chance, Jane. "The Structural Unity of *Beowulf*. The Problem of Grendel's Mother." *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*. Ed. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990. 248-61.
- . *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1986.
- Chickering, Howell D., Jr., trans. *Beowulf*. New York: Doubleday, 1977.
- Crossley-Holland, Kevin, trans. *Beowulf*. New York: Farrar, 1968.
- Damico, Helen. "The Valkyrie Reflex in Old English Literature." *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*. Ed. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990. 176-90.
- . *Beowulf's Wealththeow and the Valkyrie Tradition*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1984.
- Davis, Robert Con, and Ronald Schleifer. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. New York: Longman, 1998.
- Hala, James. "The Parturition of Poetry and the Birthing of Culture: The *Ides Aglæcecwif* and *Beowulf*." *Exemplaria* 10 (1998): 12 pp. 4 May 1999 <[http:// web.english.ufl.edu/exemplaria/halafram.htm](http://web.english.ufl.edu/exemplaria/halafram.htm)>.
- Hansen, Elaine Turtle. "Women in Old English Poetry Reconsidered." *The Michigan Academician* 9 (1976-1977): 109-117.

- Niles, John D. "Pagan Survivals and Popular Belief." *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*. Ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991. 126-41.
- Olsen, Alexandra Hennessey. "Gender Roles." *A Beowulf Handbook*. Ed. Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1997. 311-22.
- Osborn, Marijane, trans. *Beowulf*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1983.
- . "The Great Feud: Scriptural History and Strife in *Beowulf*" *PMLA* 93 (1978): 973-81. Rpt. in *Beowulf Basic Readings*. Ed. Peter S. Baker. New York: Garland, 1995. 111-25.
- Overing, Gillian. *Language, Sign, and Gender in Beowulf*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1990.
- . "Recent Writing on Old English: A Response." *Æstel* 1 (1993) 11 pp. 4 Apr. 1999
<<http://members.aol.com/menelis/AEstel1/Overingl.html>>.
- . "The Women of *Beowulf*." *Beowulf Basic Readings*. Ed. Peter S. Baker. New York: Garland, 1995. 219-60.
- Schweickart, Patrocino. "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading." *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. New York: Longman, 1998. 197-219.
- Seeborn, Frederic. *Tribal Custom in Anglo-Saxon Law*. London: Longmans, 1911.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Taming of the Shrew. The Riverside Shakespeare*. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton. 1974. 110-42.
- Shippey, T. A. "Recent Writing on Old English." *Æstel* 1 (1993) 9 pp. 4 Apr. 1999
<<http://members.aol.com/menelis/AEstel1/Shippeyl.html>>.
- Stanley, E. G. "*Beowulf*." *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*. Ed. Eric Gerald Stanley. London: Nelson, 1966. 104-40. Rpt. in *Beowulf Basic Readings*. Ed. Peter S. Baker. New York: Garland, 1995. 3-34.
- Taylor, Keith P. "The Inherent Nobility of Grendel's Mother." *English Language Notes* 31.3 (1994): 13-25.

Temple, Mary Kay. "Grendel's Lady Mother." *English Language Notes* 23.3 (1986): 10-15.

Thompson, Stith. *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. Vol. 5. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966.

Tolkien, J. R. R. "Beowulf. The Monsters and the Critics." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 22(1936): 1-53.