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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Prose Style of the Book of Common Prayer

by

Elizabeth Jean Gooding

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the prose style of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer in order to understand how the book's distinctive prose style is created and how that prose style suits the book to the demands of formal public worship. As a means of understanding Prayer-Book prose, the thesis studies as well the prose of a revision of the Book of Common Prayer, The Alternative Service Book 1980.

The thesis begins with an overview of the historical and stylistic background to the Book of Common Prayer, a background that helps to explain the prose of the book. It then studies the construction of the Prayer Book's prose. Finally, it examines Alternative Service Book prose and its departures from the prose of the Book of Common Prayer.

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I. Introduction

The Book of Common Prayer, until recently the only prayer book of the Church of England, was developed in the sixteenth century and reached its final form in the seventeenth. The making of the book marked a historical, liturgical, and doctrinal milestone; and so the book can be studied as history, as liturgy, as church doctrine, even as translation. But it can also be studied from a literary standpoint, that is, for its quality of expression, for its way of using language to achieve its purposes. And there is good reason for studying the language of the Prayer Book. As the first book of church services in English and one used, moreover, for roughly four hundred years, and as a source of other Protestant services in English, it helped shape the English of public worship and our ideas about the kind of English that is appropriate for public worship. In short, it provides a standard for liturgical English, just as the Authorized Version of the Bible provides a standard for biblical English.

That liturgical standard was challenged in the 1960's when the Church of England began introducing modern-English alternatives to the Prayer Book. The alternative services were produced by the Liturgical Commission of the church through the sixties and seventies, and a selection of them was revised and became part of The Alternative Service Book 1980. The new services sparked both public debate and private grumbling, with their choice of language generating

considerable comment, much of it negative and lamenting the departure from the English of the Book of Common Prayer. The controversy surrounding the Alternative Service Book prompts an examination of both the language of the Book of Common Prayer, which commands such attachment, and the much-censured language of the alternative services.

This thesis undertakes that examination. It will investigate the prose of both the Book of Common Prayer and The Alternative Service Book 1980 in order to address the question of what kinds of prose are appropriate for formal public worship. It will begin with an overview of the historical and stylistic background to the standard 1662 version of the Book of Common Prayer. This overview will help to place in perspective the primary concern of this study, the prose style of that standard 1662 Prayer Book. The thesis will anatomize the prose of the Book of Common Prayer in order to understand how the prose style of the book suits the book's purposes. Finally, and secondarily, the thesis will examine the prose of The Alternative Service Book 1980 and the departure of that prose from the liturgical English of the Prayer Book.

II. Historical and Stylistic Background

i.

The history of the production of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549 and of the successive editions resulting in the book's 1562 final form is long, complex, and not the subject of this thesis. But the book was written in a particular age and for particular purposes, and some of the facts of its history and origin help place its prose style in perspective. The pertinent facts are as follow.

The first Book of Common Prayer was the culmination of a series of translations of Scripture and liturgy and reforms of liturgy. The fifteen years before its appearance saw the production of a considerable amount of officially sanctioned religious material in English. The Great Bible, a combination and revision of earlier English translations of the Bible, appeared in 1539. A number of English primers--personal devotional guides for the laity, containing psalms and prayers--appeared in the 1530's and 1540's, and an official primer was authorized in 1545. The King's Book, aimed at helping the clergy in the education of its flock, was published in 1543. Paralleling the production of religious material in the vernacular was a steady increase in the use of English in church. The Injunctions of 1538 directed that the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments be recited in English. Convocation in 1543 ordered that a chapter from the Great

Bible be read each Sunday at Mattins and Evensong. The Injunctions of 1547 ordered that the Epistle and Gospel at High Mass be read in English. Two English services were produced: the 1544 Litany, and the 1548 Order of the Communion, which provided English supplements to the Latin Mass. The Book of Common Prayer incorporated some of the reformed, translated material that preceded it and combined it with newly composed material and material translated from a variety of sources. Much of the book is loose translation of the medieval Latin service known as the Use of Sarum. As we shall see, both Latin and English sources noticeably influenced the Prayer Book's prose.

In the course of the religious and political upheavals between its 1549 first version and its final version of 1662, the Book of Common Prayer underwent a series of revisions. The first Prayer Book drew a volley of complaint. Its services differed from the old considerably enough to offend traditionalists; yet it retained enough of the old practices to offend reformers. A more clearly reformed second version of the book appeared in 1552 and was used until the accession of Mary to the throne. This 1552 book restructured the Communion and replaced the somewhat ambiguous Words of Administration with reformed versions. Elizabeth reintroduced the book in 1559 with slight but tactful changes, such as the combination of the 1549 and 1552 Words of Administration and the omission from the Litany of the plea for deliverance "from the tyranny of

the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities." A 1604 version produced in response to Puritan complaints about the Prayer Book abolished lessons from the Apocrypha, enlarged the Catechism to include sections about Baptism and Communion, and added six occasional thanksgivings and a prayer for the royal family. Following the reintroduction of the book after the Interregnum, a new revision was begun. The resulting 1662 book modernized grammar and vocabulary, added new prayers, and substituted passages from the 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible for nearly all the passages from the 1540 Great Bible. Despite this series of alterations, the 1662 version of the book is recognizably the same book as the 1549 original. Moreover, although its final form is that of 1662, the Book of Common Prayer is essentially sixteenth-century prose, modernized only slightly in the seventeenth century.

The purposes of the Prayer Book are bound up with its history and equally important to an explanation of its prose. The first Book of Common Prayer continued a general movement toward reform of liturgy and translation of Scripture and liturgy but was also a response to the more particular and immediate need for uniformity, convenience, and simplicity. It provided a single order of worship to replace the numerous variations then in use, and it conveniently enclosed that order within a single book. Moreover, it reduced in number and simplified the daily services and reorganized and simplified daily readings.

But the new book intended more than a better organization; its purposes were of course religious. Its 1549 Preface, entitled "Concerning the Service of the Church" in the 1662 book, states that the original and true purpose of common prayers was "a great advancement of godliness." That was the purpose of Bible readings: the clergy by reading and meditating on Scripture would "be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be more able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the truth"; the people by hearing Scripture "might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion." Godliness, then, is the general aim, while knowledge and the "stirring up" of religious ardour are frequently mentioned specific purposes. The essay "Of Ceremonies" states similar aims when it argues for only

> those Ceremonies which do serve to a decent Order and godly Discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified.

Once more, the aims of edifying and of "stirring up" religious feeling, as well as of encouraging godliness, are stated. These purposes, along with the sources and sixteenth-century origins of the Book of Common Prayer, help explain the nature of the prose style of the book.

ii.

The book's sources and the styles available at the time to its compilers furnished two main traditions from which the compilers could choose their styles. There was the native tradition of Anglo-Saxon prose and verse, with its heavy beat, frequent alliteration, and pairs of synonyms or words of related meaning. This tradition had flourished in earlier religious writing and would certainly have been familiar to the compilers. Equally important was the inheritance from Latin, both medieval and classical. This Latin inheritance influenced vocabulary, sentence structure, and rhythm. The Prayer Book's sources included material from both of these traditions, and characteristics from each stylistic tradition are evident in the book. Each side has its champions. C.S. Lewis and Ian Robinson stress the importance of the "native" English influences (Lewis 219; Robinson 57), while Morris Croll makes a case for the imitation of certain features of the Latin sources.

The simple fact that the bulk of the book was written in the sixteenth century explains a good deal about its prose style. The Book of Common Prayer was written in an age steeped in rhetoric, an age in which rhetoric comprehended the theory and art of communication. Its compilers--or Cranmer, to whom we might as well give credit for the book's compilation--almost certainly received a standard Renaissance training in classical rhetoric and held the traditional view that the purpose of language was

to persuade to action. They were trained to use the devices and strategies of rhetoric and they made extensive use of them. Often the Prayer Book's linguistic particulars can best be described in the terms of rhetoric. Rhetoric provided ways of finding material (inventio), ways of organizing material (dispositio), and ways of expressing material (elocutio). Most important to the compilers of the Prayer Book, who to some extent already had material and a way of ordering it, were the ways of expressing material. The compilers, in keeping with the age (Vickers 41), typically chose those figures which produced a noticeably patterned prose. The Book of Common Prayer constantly reflects its debt to this rhetorical tradition of noticeably patterned and symmetrical writing that was thriving at the time of its compilation.

The Prayer Book's language also reflects the purposes of its compilers. Most obviously, these purposes dictated the choice of English for the book. The original Preface complains of the ineffectiveness of Latin:

> And moreover, whereas St Paul would have such language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might understand, and have profit by hearing the same; The Service in this Church of England these many years hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understand not; so that they have heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit, and mind, have not been

edified thereby.

The use of English, then, furthers both education and religious devotion, which as we have seen are the aims of the book. But not just any English would further these aims. The original Preface states that the new services are "in such a Language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding both of the Readers and Hearers." But such a claim--for plain understandable English--cannot be taken at face value. For one thing, such claims were conventional at the time (Jones, "Simplicity"). For another, some of the book's purposes could not easily be achieved by too plain a style. The book surely enough had to be in understandable English--the plain style for teaching--but too plain a style would not further the aim of "stirring up" the hearers to devotion, would not make them "inflamed with the love of [Christ's] true Religion," would not work on "heart, spirit, and mind." Moreover, the "decent order" mentioned twice in "Of Ceremonies," meaning an <u>appropriate</u> order, seems to have meant to the compilers something like a <u>dignified</u> order. This also might well work against plain language. So, then, not all the purposes of the book would best be served by the merely plain and understandable language it lays claim to. A higher style than the plain style would more effectively move and persuade the hearers; moreover, formal public worship called not for a plain style but for a dignified and impressive style. So what was needed was a style that

was at the same time understandable and impressive: clear and understandable in order to teach, and impressive and moving in order to achieve an appropriate dignity and in order to move the flock to devotion.

Bound up with the book's purposes is the way it was to be used. The fact that it was intended to be spoken and heard made certain demands on its prose. At the simplest level, the words had to be heard distinctly by the congregation. At numerous points the rubrics in Morning and Evening Prayer reflect this concern and specify that readings and prayers shall be said by the Minister "with a loud voice," or "with an audible voice," or "distinctly with an audible voice." But the fact that it was prose meant to be read aloud dictated more than volume. The way the book was to be used dictated the use of what we might call "oratorical style" (Croll 325), which we find in prose "which owes its form to the necessities and customs of public speech" (328). Prose written to be spoken and heard is an entirely different kind of prose from modern essay-prose. Croll notes the modern tendency "to consider prose chiefly as it is addressed to the intellect, rather than as language spoken and heard" (327-328). This modern essay prose "lay[s] more stress upon verbal propriety, grammatical precision, logical order, and the intellectual effects of prose than upon its rhythm and oral beauties" (328). The prose of the Book of Common Prayer, though, is of the kind in which rhythm and oral beauty are of great

importance. And so being meant for the ear rather than the eye the book chose a style that had a strong rhythm; a sentence structure falling on the ear in regular portions; resonant phrases; devices of sound creating aural linkages between words and phrases. Or, in short, it chose a style that was aurally satisfying.

The style in which Cranmer wrote the Book of Common Prayer, then, was shaped by the book's origin and history, and by its purpose and function. The book's native and Latin sources provided two stylistic traditions from which the book could borrow. Its sixteenth-century origins explain its debt to rhetoric. Its purposes and the way it was to be used account for its use of an oratorical style. The book's background, then, furnishes explanations for the linguistic phenomena of the book. These linguistic phenomena, which together constitute the book's style, are the subject of the next chapter.

III. The Prose Style of the Book of Common Prayer

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is distinctive, impressive, and memorable. It is made so by its style, its way of expressing its burden of meaning, its selection and arrangement of its linguistic particulars. This chapter will catalogue those linguistic particulars and explain how they work together to create certain stylistic effects. Or, to put it another way, it will anatomize the prose of the book. It will begin by discussing the most general characteristics of Prayer-Book prose--the kinds of passages, and the rhythm of the prose--and work down through progressively smaller components of that prose: sentence structure, common kinds of phrases, and choices of word and sound. In this way we can see how the smallest stylistic particulars contribute to general stylistic effects, stylistic effects that suit the prose of the book to the demands of public worship.

To speak of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer is not to refer to everything found between the two covers of the book. The book contains material taken from elsewhere to be used as part of these services: it contains the Psalms and a few scriptural sentences from the 1539 Great Bible and sentences and readings from the 1611 King James Bible. Moreover, it contains other verse material besides the Psalms: the hymns and canticles of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Veni, Creator Spiritus from The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops,

Priests, and Deacons. It contains explanatory and directional material: three prefatory essays; the calendars; and the rubrics, the short passages directing and explaining the services. Usually the Articles of Religion, better known as the Thirty-Nine Articles, are also contained in the book, as is A Table of Kindred and Affinity, taken from the church canons. But even though they comprise the bulk of the book, these parts--the passages from English versions of the Bible, the verse material, the 'administrative' portions, and church regulations--are not what is usually referred to as the prose of the Book of Common Prayer. The phrase generally indicates the prose of the services only, and only that prose which appears originally or uniquely, or in its lasting English form, in the Prayer Book.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer consists of a number of kinds of passages throughout the various services of the book. Prayers make up a good portion of the book, as its title would suggest, and are constructed according to the pattern of invocation, petition, and conclusion. A Collect, for instance, begins with an address to God the Father, ranging in length and complexity from the brevity and simplicity of "God" (Collect for Whitsunday) or "O Lord" (Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent) to the more expansive and resonant "Almighty and everlasting God" (Collect for the Second Sunday after Epiphany). Frequently the address is expanded by a relative clause beginning with

"who," giving characteristics of God, as in "O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth" (Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday). Then follows the prayer's request, the thing sought, often beginning with an imperative and frequently with "grant," or "mercifully grant," or "we beseech thee to." Each Collect closes with one of a number of formulaic endings, invoking Christ ("through Jesus Christ our Lord,") and frequently mentioning as well the rest of the Trinity ("through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the same spirit, ever one God, world without end" [Christmas Day]). But prayer is only one of the kinds of prose in the Prayer Book, and other passages can be classified as exhortation, explanatory and instructional passages, exchanges between priest and congregation or part of congregation, confession, blessing, declaration, or creed. These different kinds of passages have differing purposes and emphasize different elements of style in order to further their purposes. For instance, blessings tend to be resonant. Creeds recite well. Exchanges between the priest and congregation tend to be simple. Declarations also are simple, but forceful and eloquent. But although the prose of the book is adapted to the specific liturgical purposes of these different kinds of passages, the book has an overall uniformity of style and it makes sense to talk of its style rather than its styles.

The broadest and most pervasive aspect of the Prayer Book's style is rhythm, the general movement of the prose. It is a general effect, created and controlled by a variety of more specific elements of the prose. Perhaps because it is so general and pervasive an effect, it is one of the most noticeable aspects of the Prayer Book's prose. Moreover, rhythm is important. Ian Robinson's remarks about the Authorized Version of the Bible are apposite:

> the rhythm, so far from being a kind of rhetorical optional extra, is the shape of the meaning. It tells the reader how to connect and stress, and makes the point of its sense in that connecting and stressing. The rhythmic climaxes are the climaxes of sense. (27)

Rhythm, then, is not a mere ornament, but is essential to the meaning of prose and to the understanding of that meaning.

But because of its general nature, prose rhythm can be difficult to discuss and describe. Obviously prose has rhythm; moreover, we can often sense a difference in rhythm from one text or passage to another, or discern that a particular work or kind of writing has a characteristic rhythm. But in the absence of a descriptive system such as we have in metrics to describe verse rhythm, the analysis of prose rhythm presents a problem. Although we sense prose rhythm generally, it is more subtle and complex than metre, and we cannot easily pinpoint its components.

Nevertheless we can say some things about the creation of prose rhythm in the Book of Common Prayer. Essentially, it is established within Prayer-Book passages and sentences by recurrence of structure, by repetition of word and sound, and by variation. More specifically, sentence structure and phrasing control and pace the flow of speech. Certain kinds of smaller structures such as prepositional phrases and pairs of roughly synonymous words tend to create patterns of stress that make for noticeable rhythmical effects, especially when these structures appear in quantity and in combination with each other. Repetition of word or sound reinforces and furthers these patterns of stress by connecting and emphasizing. Briefly and simply, these are the main determinants of the Prayer Book's distinctive rhythm.

Rhythm is particularly important to prose meant for the ear. It is especially important to the prose of the Book of Common Prayer, which must both move ("stir up") and teach ("edify") by means of an appeal to and through the ear. In fact, the demands of public speech may be a source of prose rhythm:

> prose as such is without rhythmic law, and . . . it becomes rhythmic only as it is submitted to the control of some convention, a convention ultimately determined by the particular customs of oral delivery. That is to say, all rhythm in prose is finally due, however subtle its

> variations may become, to certain regulated customs which have originated in the relations between a public speaker and his audience. (Croll 357)

As we shall see, the importance of the demands of public speech to the Prayer Book's prose is reflected in most aspects of the book's style.

i.

These demands of public speech are evident in the Prayer Book's handling of sentence structure. Its sentences tend to be very long: Collects and other prayers are often the length of a small paragraph; sentences of a hundred words or more are common. This is an obvious point, but worth considering. Such sentences need to be structured and paced; they need to be separated into manageable parts. For the ease of the speaker they should fall into phrases short enough to be pronounced without running out of breath; for the ease of the hearer into phrases short enough to be grasped by the mind. And the sentences of the book do meet these requirements. They are carefully structured and controlled rather than breathlessly run-on. They achieve a dignified and steady movement despite their length. This control is achieved in a number of ways. Some sentences utilize the firm prayer-structure. Some use standard organizational structures such as first/second/third; now/then; you/we. But rhythmic control is mainly achieved by a general

adherence to the rules of periodic style and specifically by the use of equal members.

The term "equal members" derives from the rhetorical theory of the period. A period is an independent unit of speech with a beginning and end; basically it is a complete sentence. It may consist of two or more divisions known as members or cola. The length of a member is governed by the laws of breathing; it is not generally longer than about twenty syllables (Croll 325). The parts of a period are arranged and constructed to create repetition, symmetry, and balance, which not only pace and structure the sentence but give it beauties of sound as well. In the device of equal members (isocolon), members are of roughly equal length and weight, which gives a balanced and steady movement to the prose. Sister Miriam Joseph quotes Henry Peacham:

> Compar, of the Grecians called Isocolon and Parison, is a figure . . . which maketh the members of an oration to be almost of a just number of sillables, yet the equalitie of those members or parts, are not to be measured upon our fingers as if they were verses, but to bee tried by a secret sence of the eare. (297)

Equivalencies in length and weight of members often combine with parallelism of structure, or repetition of word or sound, to further point effects of balance.

For obvious reasons having to do with the necessity of

breathing while speaking, the prose of public speech "is much more regular than essay prose in its periodicity" (Croll 328). Not only did the demands of public speech work in favor of equal members, but the age in which the book was written did too:

> [I]n a great deal of the formal prose of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries we should find [a] controlled, regular, and stately movement. The prose of this period of direct classical and medieval influence is chiefly distinguished as displaying, along with a comparative freedom from syntactic precision, a constant sense of the weight and length of rhetorical members. It is rhetorically construed, in short, rather than grammatically. (Croll 322)

As we shall see, the demands of public speech and the teachings of rhetoric united to shape Prayer-Book prose into these regular rhetorical portions.

Equal members and the steady movement of prose in the Book of Common Prayer are abundant. But as with most individual aspects of the book's style, it is often impossible to find examples that illustrate a particular stylistic aspect in isolation from other components of style. Particular linguistic forms combine and interact with each other, making such isolation difficult. Still, some passages better illustrate a particular feature than

others, and the Collect for the Second Sunday After the Epiphany is a good example of equal members: "Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord." A Commination furnishes another good example of the device: "Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, and taketh man for his defence, and in his heart goeth from the Lord." The steady regular movement gives the sentence a slow impressiveness, a gravity suiting its matter. A more complex example of this kind of sentence movement is the first sentence of the Exhortation to Confession from Morning and Evening Prayer:

> Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy.

The sentence breaks into four main parts marked by semi-colons. Leaving out the address, they are of 27, 26, 19, and 24 syllables. The third and shortest, though, reads more slowly because of the pauses between the adjectives, with the result that it feels roughly equal in

length and weight to the others. The controlled, careful movement of the sentence helps make persuasive the carefully reasoned argument for confession. The Prefatory Address from Matrimony offers an example of the creation of a steadiness of movement by the repetition of units of equal weight and length, combined with the formal structuring device first/second/third:

> First, It was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name. Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body. Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

These regular, articulated sentences are characteristic of much of the book's prose, commanding by their slow, steady weightiness the attention of the congregation and giving to the prose the weight and dignity that formal public worship demands.

Members equal in length and weight, giving a regular and steady movement to the prose, help to structure the prose and shape rhythm. But this regular movement of prose is only the beginning of rhetorical structure: it is the

base on which many more rhetorical devices build. Balance of form as well as balance in length of sentence portions characterizes the prose of the Prayer Book:

> The "harmony," "number," or "rhythm" of a period depends chiefly upon the relations between the members of which it consists: relations of length, form, and sound. In oratorical style there is always a tendency to arrange them in groups of two or more of approximately (but not exactly) the same length, and to point the effect of balance thus produced by similarity in the syntactic form of these members, by correspondences in sound between words in corresponding positions in them, and finally by parallel or related rhythmic movements. (Croll 325-326)

Oratorical prose such as we find in the Book of Common Prayer creates this effect of balance by means of the rhetorical figures of repetition--of length, structure, word, and sound. We have considered, in equal members, the repetition of length and will now turn to the repetition of structure.

The repetition of similar syntactic structures is common in the Prayer Book. Where it occurs, successive clauses have similar structures: the same parts of speech are placed in equivalent positions in two or more clauses; sometimes particular words are repeated in equivalent

positions in their clauses. The repetition of stress patterns and the balanced parallelism thus created are satisfying both to the ear and mind of the hearer. Repetition of similar syntactic structure, called parison in rhetorical theory, frequently combines with equal members, or isocolon. The combination is well illustrated in the Exhortation from the Visitation of the Sick:

> For he himself went not up to joy but first he suffered pain; he entered not into his glory before he was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with him in everlasting life.

These perfectly balanced clauses give an air of reasoned, considerate thought, of the careful elaboration of an idea. The contrasting pairs, "death" and "everlasting life," further the effect of balance. Repeated similar structures are often lists of petitions, each introduced with an imperative, as in this example from A Prayer for the Royal Family: "Endue them with thy Holy Spirit; enrich them with thy heavenly grace; prosper them with all happiness; and bring them to thine everlasting kingdom." A similar example is from the Collect for the 7th Sunday after Trinity: "Graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same." The repeated

parallel petitions build up a rhythmical pattern which, combined with the imperatives, lends force to the matter.

The Prayer Book is very fond of the repetition of structures, especially of paired clauses joined by conjunctions. It comes close to overusing the device in a prayer composed from a combination of similarly structured fragments of Scripture:

> give him a right understanding of himself, and of thy threats and promises; that he may neither cast away his confidence in thee, nor place it any where but in thee. Give him strength against all his temptations, and heal all his distempers. Break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure; but make him to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver him from the fear of the enemy, and lift up the light of thy countenance upon him, and give him peace. (A Prayer for persons troubled in mind or in conscience, Visitation of the Sick)

The pairing of similar clauses is sustained to the point where a sing-song rhythm threatens to overwhelm the sense. But the prayer is saved by variation: by the choice of a petition varied by the elaboration of "that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice" (Ps. 51:8); and by a final variation, the use of "and give him peace" (Num. 6:26), a

third wonderfully brief petition added to the final pair of similar clauses. The book's fondness for similar structures is such that it will repeat, ungrammatically but with no lessening of the logic of the statement, a structure used earlier: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and hath preserved you in the great danger of child-birth: You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God" (Churching of Women, my italics). This ungrammatical repetition recalls Croll's claim that much of the prose of the time is "rhetorically construed . . . rather than grammatically" (332).

The repetition of similar syntactic structures, a device we have seen used heavily, is very effective when used sparingly, as in the brief and compact proper Collects, where a simple parallelism stands out. The device is the main ornament in the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter: "O Lord, from whom all good things do come: Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ." But these balanced clauses are more than ornament, of course: their parallelism connects by structure and position what is connected by causality--thought and deed. Similarly, the Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Lent achieves a balance that is harmonious but reinforces the sense of the prayer: "Grant,

we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved." Here the balance, provided not by parallel coordinate clauses but by similarities in the order and form of the components of the clauses--prepositional phrase followed by verb phrase--and by the echoes of "worthily" and "mercifully" and "be punished" and "be relieved," helps make clear the contrast between the treatment we merit and the treatment we may receive. Many of the Collects illustrate the effectiveness of such simple parallelisms, both as ornament and as a way of making clearer the meaning of the Collect.

The repetition of similar syntactic structures achieves some of its most notable effects when slight variations in length or structure of parts are introduced. The General Confession at Communion illustrates this: "We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable." The last two clauses are identical in form until the end, when the corresponding "grievous unto us" and "intolerable" vary in form, the second stronger and giving a sense of definite finish. Variation in length can give a grand sense of expansion. "I, for my part, shall be ready; and, according to mine Office, I bid you in the Name of God, I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this holy Communion"

(2nd Exhortation to Communion). The syntactic parallelism of "I bid you in the Name of God" and "I call you in Christ's behalf" creates an expectation that a similarly brief clause is to be introduced with "I exhort you." Instead, the clause is varied and expanded by "as ye love your own salvation," the expansion giving a welcome sense of liberation. The Prayer Book generally uses parallelism of structure flexibly and skilfully, with variety, and in the service of both sound and meaning.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer, then, is a prose characterized by a steady movement, a balance between parts, and regular patterning. It is made this kind of prose by its use of rhetorical schemes, which, as Brian Vickers points out, "offered various conventional arrangements of words into patterns, visual and aural" (35). As in Shakespeare's prose, "[t]he most frequently used of these schemata verborum are all based on parallelism, either of sense (antithesis) or of structure" (Vickers 36). We have just seen examples of parallelism of structure; the book also uses a kind of balancing that is a precise balance between words and ideas rather than a general structural balance: a word is countered by its opposite rather than by another instance of the same part of speech. The Prefatory Address at Matrimony abundantly illustrates this:

> Dear beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this

> congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church. (my italics).

The balancing pairs are the main ornaments of this part of the Address; they also, of course, express the matter. Their similarity in form draws attention to their contrast in meaning. This is also the case in "We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness" (Burial Collect). But the primary use of antithesis is to further the effects of equal members and the repetition of similar structures. When each half of an antithetical pair is in a separate sentence portion, each half of the pair seems, in its opposition to its mate, to define and distinguish the portion it is in. The Prayer of Saint Chrysostom, for instance, furnishes an example of opposites--"in this world" and "in the world to come"--supplying both a contrast in thought and a way of reinforcing the demarcation of phrases: "granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting." Similarly in the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent (based on Rom. 13:12): "Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light." Antithesis points the effects of both equal members and repetition of similar

syntactic structures in the following: "O Merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this Child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him. Grant that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him" (Prayer before Baptism). The antithetical pairs, "the old Adam" and "the new man," "may be so buried" and "may be raised up," "all carnal affections" and "all things belonging to the Spirit," and "may die in him" and "may live and grow in him," coupled with sentence portions of similar length and structure, create a tremendously balanced, polished, and rhythmic result.

Further refinements of the balanced structure so commonly used in the Prayer Book are occasionally achieved by the use of mirrored and interlocking structures, which sharpen the effects of balance. The mirrored structure, or the rhetorical figure antimetabole, repeats key words in the reverse order from their first use. The device shapes and ornaments a simple exchange from Morning and Evening Prayer: "Priest. Praise ye the Lord. Answer. The Lord's Name be praised." The device lends a kind of logical inevitability to the admonition at the opening of the Churching of Women: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance . . . You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God." In the Third Exhortation at Communion it emphasizes unity: "then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ,

and Christ with us." In the 2nd Prayer at Public Baptism it expands on Christ's words: "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: So give now unto us that ask; let us that seek find; open the gate unto us that knock." The device of interlocking structure repeats matter in a way that sharpens its sense by switching the positioning of negatives. A well-known example comes from the General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done." Another instance comes from the Collect at Burial: "in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally." Mirrored and interlocking structures are noticeable devices, sometimes drawing attention to the puzzling or paradoxical. As well, by the employment of symmetry and repetition they create structures pleasing to the ear.

The stylistic norm of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer may be a regular, patterned, balanced prose, but the book also uses a simple, direct, sometimes even blunt prose. This is not surprising, for as Croll points out, "Variations . . . from the regularity of a pattern . . . are, it must always be remembered, the chief resources of the orator in his quest of rhythmic and expressive beauty" (326). As well as introducing variation by simplicity, the

Prayer Book also varies its sentence structure and rhythm by delaying an expected part of a sentence. These variations produce directness and emphasis.

In the midst of complexly patterned sentences are noticeably simpler sentences which, all the more so because of their position, possess a good share of the force of simplicity. The General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer illustrates this:

> Almighty and most merciful Father, We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us.

The sentence, "And there is no health in us," is a simple, forceful, emphatic culmination of a series of statements employing a number of artful devices: repetition of similar structure and of initial words, pairs of synonyms, alliteration, assonance, and interlocking structure. The sentence stands out in relief: it not only varies from the "we have" structure, but is devoid of ornamentation. It is the unornamented climax of a heavily patterned arrangement of clauses. The Absolution at Communion works similarly:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to

> all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; Have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The "Have mercy upon you" clause is the plainest, sparest way of expressing the meaning, of effecting the absolution; it appears even simpler and shorter surrounded as it is by longer, more ornate and patterned clauses. It also gains force and emphasis from its position so far from its grammatical subject, "Almighty God." A final example of spare but tremendously effective expression comes from the well-known words at Burial (based on Job 14:1-2): "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." The passage begins calmly and simply; the force of these two sentences is allowed to come from their meaning; stylistic embellishment is not needed. In this occasional reliance on simplicity, the Book of Common Prayer shows its debt to earlier English writing (Brook 70).

The Prayer Book also employs a simple style that explains doctrine, gives orders, makes declarations, and asks questions. As in the second sentence of this Exhortation from the Visitation of the Sick, this is a plainness that leaves no doubts about doctrine:

> Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly, that it is God's visitation.

It tells the people at Public Baptism, "Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that he will likewise favourably receive this present Infant" (Exhortation). At the Churching of Women it gives an order: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and hath preserved you in the great danger of child-birth: You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God, and say, [Psalm 116]." The clarity of this style suits declarations: "I pronounce that they be man and wife together" (Matrimony). Its simplicity also suits many of the questions asked of members of the congregation. Questions in A Catechism, particularly, are generally perfectly straightforward and unornamented: "What is thy duty towards thy Neighbor?" or, "What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?" This variation of the usually heavily patterned Prayer-Book prose is efficient and easily understood.

Plainness, then, is one variation of sentence structure; another is delay in supplying what is grammatically expected. We wait for the missing part, most frequently a verb, and it seems to fall with more force

when it arrives. This aural expectation gives greater force to the petition in many prayers with an expanded address, for instance in the Communion Prayer of Consecration, where the account of the redemption is grammatically part of the address:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his Holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again: Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee.

The petition seems more heartfelt after the long explanatory address that precedes it; it is with a sort of relief that our ears register the verb they have expected. Moreover, the expansion of the address educates and reminds the hearer about the significance and gravity of the request. A delayed and consequently emphasized principal verb frequently occurs in structures beginning "Forasmuch", as in the words from Burial: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear <u>brother</u> here departed: we therefore

commit his body to the ground" or in the opening address for Public Baptism:

> Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost: I beseech you to call upon God the Father.

This use of subordination and grammatical delay as a means of educating and emphasizing is typical of the Book of Common Prayer.

Two very effective examples of delay of expected sentence components are from the Absolution at Morning and Evening Prayer and the Invitation to Confession at Communion. The delayed predicate of the Absolution echoes the two-beat phrases that distinguish the expansion of the subject:

> Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and hath given power and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.

The Invitation to Confession places the tremendously simple

"Draw near with faith" in the emphatic position:

> Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways: Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

As Margaret Doody points out, in this passage the expansion of the subject ("Ye that do . . .") "defines the spiritual state, or the state of the will, which is an essential condition of the action" (114). The sentence, then, is an effective, and beautiful, embodiment of the theology of the passage. The delay of the grammatically expected lends such passages a quiet force.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is characterized by sentences whose steadiness of movement and balance between parts create a dignity of expression. They are written not for the eye, which sees them falling far down the page, but for the ear, on which they fall in pleasantly but not monotonously regular portions, and for the mind, which is able to grasp them in these portions. These regular, balanced, patterned sentences are varied by simplicity and by changes in sentence structure that effect changes in rhythm and emphasis. The prevailing rhythms of

the book, grounded in the sentence structure, are furthered and polished, as we shall see, by the book's rhythmic phrasal structures and skilful control of sound.

ii.

The Book of Common Prayer repeatedly uses certain kinds of phrases which, both in themselves and especially in combination with each other, create noticeable rhythmic effects. Three similar kinds of such rhythmic phrases are prepositional phrases with nouns; pairs of synonyms or words of near or related meaning coupled by a conjunction; and phrases in which adjectives and adverbs are used in abundance and usually paired each with their own noun or verb. The rhythm of the book's prose, initially difficult to explain, becomes less mysterious once we are aware of the capacity of these kinds of phrases to determine rhythm. The idea of a kind of phrase having a rhythmic quality might seem odd at first. But consider this rhythmic sentence from the King James version of the 23rd Psalm: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." The rhythm is created partly by the splitting of the verse into two even parts and partly by rhythmic phrases: "goodness and mercy," a pair, and "all the days of my life" and "in the house of the Lord for ever," prepositional phrases. Or consider this Prayer Book Collect:

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our

> supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Collect to be said after the Offertory at Communion)

The roughly synonymous pairs, the prepositional phrases, and the noun-adjective pairs, all of which set up alternations of stressed and unstressed syllables, give the prayer a strong rhythm. Two main parts separated by a semi-colon, each falling in turn into two parts, structure the Collect; and these regular portions of the prayer are further set off by the occurrence of a rhythmic phrase at the end of each. These three kinds of rhythmic phrases generally work together and in concert with other devices, but each will first be scrutinized separately.

The standard rhythmic prepositional phrase is a noun phrase consisting of a noun and a prepositional phrase with 'of', as in "the sins of the flesh" or "the book of common prayer." This structure has an obvious rhythmic appeal, stemming from its combination of unstressed (because rhetorically unimportant) preposition with stressed (because more significant) nouns. Examples of this kind of phrase are abundant: the prayer at Burial, for instance, provides "the souls of the faithful," "the burden of the

flesh," "the miseries of this sinful world," "the number of thine elect," and "the true faith of thy holy Name." Other kinds of prepositional phrases, of course, create similar effects: "armed with thy defence" (Prayer In the time of War and Tumults), "defended by thy mighty power" (Collect for the 5th Sunday after Epiphany), "cleansed from all their sins" (Collect for the 21st Sunday after Trinity). The Prayer Book's fondness for the rhythmic prepositional phrase is striking: although it occasionally uses an apostrophe to indicate possession, as in "Christ's body" (Address at Matrimony) or "thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution" (Prayer of Consecration at Communion), the book generally chooses the expanded prepositional phrase, as in "the hearty desires of thy humble servants" (Collect for 3rd Sunday in Lent) or "the secrets of our hearts" (Burial). It prefers the expanded possessive form for its rhythmic qualities. The expanded form, too, is more easily grasped by the hearer, because it places the noun first and then modifies it.

The petition of the Collect for the Third Sunday Before Lent illustrates the rhythmic effects of the prepositional phrase: "we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name." Each movement of the petition ends with a rhythmic prepositional phrase: "the prayers of thy people," "punished for our offences,"

"delivered by thy goodness," and "the glory of thy Name." These phrases delineate the regular movement of the prose; they mark by recognizably similar patterns of stress the ends of the portions of the prayer. Prepositional phrases often in this way mark the ends of clauses and longer phrases. As well as emphasizing the movement of sentences, rhythmic prepositional phrases also further the effects of repeated similar structures. The Collect for the Fifth Sunday After Trinity illustrates this: "Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord." The prepositional phrases "ordered by thy governance" and "serve thee in all godly quietness" have a similar rhythmic pattern, and the repetition of this pattern at the end of each clause reinforces the effect of balance achieved by the similarly structured clauses. This way of pointing and polishing sentence structures can be very effective. The Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent shows how the repetition of the characteristic rhythm of the prepositional phrase can serve as an important ornament in a simple Collect: "We beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord." The similar rhythms of the three expanded prepositional phrases--"the hearty desires of thy humble servants," "the

right hand of thy Majesty," and "our defence against all our enemies"--create a pleasing repetition of stress patterns. The prepositional phrase, then, plays a considerable role in the determination of the Prayer Book's prose rhythm.

The second kind of rhythmic phrase, the pair of synonyms, near synonyms, or words of related meaning, is one of the more immediately noticeable characteristics of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer and part of its inheritance from earlier English prose. The book often uses such pairs of English words to translate single Latin words from the Use of Sarum, the medieval rite that is a source for much of the Prayer Book. For instance, the Prayer Book's Collect for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany translates the ad protegendum of its source as "to help and defend." Two theories account for the doubling in the book: one maintains that the doubling is glossatory (Booty 172); the other that the doubling has a rhythmic quality (Lewis 217-218). Another possibility is that these pairs slow the meaning of the prose, giving the mind of the hearer a better chance to absorb and consider the thought. Whatever the reason for the frequent use of such doublings, they have an incontrovertible rhythmic quality, especially when in combination. As with the prepositional phrase, the rhythm comes from the combination of the stressed (because important) noun, verb, or adjective with the unstressed (because rhetorically unimportant) conjunction.

These rhythmic pairs are found on every page of the Prayer Book. The Prayer for the Church Militant, for instance, contains the following sentence:

> Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all Bishops and Curates, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments: And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear, and receive thy holy Word; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

The effect of this heavy pairing of words is rhythmic and emotional intensity. Similarly, an abundance of pairs gives force and a strong rhythm to the Absolution at Morning and Evening Prayer:

> Almighty God . . . who . . . hath given power and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.

But pairs of synonymous or related words are not always used so heavily and to create such emphasis. Often they are a minor ornament, making the passage where they occur slightly more patterned, balanced, and rhythmic. This is

the case in the Collect for the Third Sunday After the Epiphany, where pairings ornament an otherwise plain Collect: "Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord." Pairs of synonymous, nearly synonymous, or related words, then, help to create the Prayer Book's noticeable and characteristic effects of rhythm and balance.

The book's third kind of commonly used rhythmic structure is the phrase with adjective-noun or adverb-verb couplings. Like the pairing of synonymous words, this use of modifiers slows down the prose for the better understanding of the hearer and lends a pleasing rhythmic quality. The modifier adds an additional stress to the noun or verb, creating a rhythmic two-beat structure, as, for example, in "merciful Father" (Prayer from the Litany), "heavenly Father" (Prayer for Rain), "his wonderful conversion" (Collect for the Conversion of Saint Paul), "everlasting Life" (Collect for Saint Philip and Saint James's Day), and "mercifully hear" (Collect for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany). The Collect for the Twentieth Sunday After Trinity shows the effects of the repetition of these rhythmic two-beat phrases, here "thy bountiful goodness" and "may cheerfully accomplish", as well as a pair, "body and soul":

> O Almighty and most merciful God, of thy

> bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The rhythms contributed by these two-beat phrases are a good part of what keeps the prayer from rhythmic flatness. But adjective-noun and adverb-verb pairs sometimes do more than lend rhythmic vigour, however. In the beginning of the first post-Communion Prayer--"we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving"--they create the intensity demanded by the liturgical occasion.

Frequently modifiers expand prepositional phrases and synonymous pairs. A common form of the prepositional phrase has one or two adjective-noun pairs. There are many examples: "the holy estate of Matrimony" (Questions at Matrimony), "the truth of thy holy Word" (Prayer for the Church Militant), "the true faith of thy holy Name" (Prayer at Burial), or "the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing" (2nd Prayer at Baptism). This structure is used effectively at Burial to sustain the emotional and rhythmic pitch of the address: "Yet, O lord God most holy, O lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death." But in general, the Prayer Book is sparing in its use of the

prepositional phrase with two adjective-noun pairs, a phrase which is, after all, the classic bombast structure.

Synonymous or related pairs, like prepositional phrases, are often expanded by one or two modifiers. There are many examples: "everlasting joy and felicity" (A Prayer for the King's Majesty), "godly and quietly governed" (Prayer for the Church Militant), "truly repent and unfeignedly believe" (Absolution from Morning and Evening Prayer), and "a pure heart and humble voice" (Confession from Morning and Evening Prayer). Such modified pairs lend a rhythmic force to the Confession at Communion, helping to create a feeling of sincerity: "We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings." The Prayer Book's prose, then, is characterized by the abundant use of adjectives and adverbs, and this abundance has a considerable effect on prose rhythm. Along with prepositional phrases and synonymous pairs, these abundant modifiers help to create the resonant and impressive prose of public worship.

The importance of these three structures stems from their two-beat rhythm. In combination, as they often are, they set up a string of two-beat phrases, significantly shaping the rhythm of the prose. The Invitation to Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer is a notable example of this sustained use of rhythmic phrases--of pairs, prepositional phrases, and abundant modifiers:

> Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us

> in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me. . . .

The fixed two-beat rhythms of these phrases invigorate the prose by creating rhythmic patterns. These rhythmic phrases are in themselves determinants of rhythm, and they also work to emphasize and refine the larger patterns set up by the Prayer Book's sentence structure.

Two more characteristic Prayer-Book structures deserve brief mention, and they are the list of three or more words, and phrases in apposition. One of the well-known

passages of the Prayer Book illustrates the list:

> Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent)

Generally this structure is found at a climax of sense and its rhythm often represents a variation from the prevailing pattern. The device makes appropriately intense the Communion Prayer of Consecration: "who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." It contributes to the sense of culmination in the last of the nine sentences beginning, "Cursed . . ." in A Commination: "Cursed are the unmerciful, fornicators, and adulterers, covetous persons, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards, and extortioners." And in the Apostles' Creed a list of rhythmic noun-phrases produces a tremendously rhythmic and recitable last line, "I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting."

Apposition is most commonly found in the openings of

prayers. The usual prayer address apposes a number of descriptions of God, descriptions in themselves rhythmic, being composed of pairs, prepositional phrases, and phrases with an abundance of modifiers. Examples are abundant: "O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life" (Prayer at Matrimony), "Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men" (Confession at Communion), and "Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that flee to thee for succour, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead" (2nd Prayer at Baptism). Standard prayer closings also employ several rhythmic phrases, although not in apposition. These addresses and closings give resonance to the prayers of the book.

By now it is clear that the Book of Common Prayer does not choose the sparest way of expressing its matter. Motivated by a desire to duplicate in English the sonorous effects of its Latin originals, the book elaborates its matter by means of these expanded and resonant phrases. These phrases ornament, they emphasize, and they raise the prose to an appropriate pitch. But this elaboration has another result, and that is to make the matter of the book at the same time both more easily understood by its hearers and more theologically precise.

iii.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is

characterized not only by its choice of sentence structure and common kinds of phrase, but by its skilful manipulation of the smallest components of speech--of word and sound and stress. The book's attention to sound reflects its aim of an aurally impressive and dignified service. We have seen how its sentence structure and frequent use of certain typical phrases build a sturdy rhythmic base; now we will see how the tiniest units of the book's prose provide, by means of repetition of word and sound and manipulation of accent, a kind of aural polish to that base.

Repetition of initial words, or anaphora, is the most common kind of repetition of words in the Prayer Book. It frequently occurs along with repetition of sentence structure and it often functions as a structural device in a passage. In the address to the godparents at Baptism, the repetition of 'ye have' gives unity and force: "Dearly beloved, ye have brought this Child here to be baptized; ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive him. . . . Ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his gospel. . . ." Anaphora functions in a similar fashion in the second Exhortation at Communion: "I bid you in the Name of God, I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this holy Communion." And in the General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer--"We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and

desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us"--the repetition makes the recital of sins build up most powerfully to its grave, unbearable conclusion.

Repetition of any word lends an extra force and noticeableness to that word, thus emphasizing its meaning. Sometimes this repetition is part of, and reinforces, balanced structures. For instance, in the Collect for the Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Trinity the repetition of 'plenteously' draws attention to a cause and effect relation: "that they plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works may of thee be plenteously rewarded." Repetition also points out antithesis, as in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday After Trinity: "so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal." Here, the repetition of "things" draws attention to the antithesis, making the important contrast more noticeable. Repetition of words draws attention to meaning; it links in sound words that are linked in meaning. And as Joseph points out (307), the figures of repetition are especially useful in prose meant to be read aloud.

Repetition of end words often gives a pleasant finishing emphasis to a passage. The Prayer Book chooses to repeat a pronoun when it could instead use it only once

and have it apply to several other words. The questions at Matrimony repeat the pronoun for the sake of the loveliness their repetition helps to create: "Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?". At Public Baptism the end repetition of "them" combines with the earlier repetition of "he": "Ye perceive how by his outward gesture and deed he declared his good will toward them; for he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them." The result is an emphasis and delineation of the parallel clauses, suiting the sequence of actions being described.

As well as repetition of word, the Book of Common Prayer employs repetition of sound. One frequently used and simple device based on repetition of sound is alliteration. As a kind of repetition, it is a way of making something noticeable and emphatic. For instance in A Commination, it draws attention to this blunt passage by the repetition of p's, s's, and f's: "such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend." Being more noticeable, alliterating parts are more likely to register on the ear, and so alliteration can further meaning by singling out for attention important words, for

instance words with contrasting meanings. The General Thanksgiving illustrates this in its contrasting and alliterating phrases, "not only with our lips, but in our lives." Alliteration can point the effects of balanced structures, as it does in a part of the first Exhortation at Communion by means of the alliteration of d's, coupled of course with the pairing of "worthily" and "unworthily": "so divine and comfortable a thing to them who receive it worthily, and so dangerous to them that will presume to receive it unworthily." By its creation of emphasis, it furthers rhythm and can reinforce the effects of rhythmic prepositional phrases and doublets. For instance it makes more noticeable the pairs, "the changes and chances of this mortal life" (first Post-Offertory Collect), "to have and to hold" (Matrimony), and "most humble and hearty thanks" (first Exhortation at Communion). And it reinforces the pairs of prepositional phrases in "dispose the way of thy servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation" (first Post-Offertory Collect) and in "in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments" (second Post-Offertory Collect). In its ornamental capacity, it can function as the sole ornament in an otherwise spare collect. Generally, the Prayer Book uses alliteration with restraint and control, and in the service of both sound and meaning. The book's use of it stems from both stylistic traditions which nourished the book. Brook points out that alliteration is a frequent component of earlier English

religious writing (64), while Croll notes that the Latin originals of the book "are singularly rich in rhyme, alliteration, balance, and the other figures of sound which form the chief adornments of medieval Latin prose" (310).

A second figure based on the repetition of sound, assonance, occasionally achieves some interesting effects. A notable example comes from the Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us." The sombre 'o' sounds reinforce the sombreness and seriousness of the content. Assonance can also reinforce the cheerfulness of a hopeful message, as it does in the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent: "that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal." The 'i' sounds give an uplifting sound to an uplifting content. Of course, the sombre or joyous note is struck by the meaning of the passage, by what is said rather than by how it is said, but in passages like these the sound effectively echoes the sense.

The most frequent use of assonance, however, is simply to please the ear with repetition of sound. For instance, the Collect for the First Sunday After the Epiphany piles up 'e' sounds: "O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee." So too does the Prayer for the Church Militant:

> We beseech thee most mercifully [to accept our alms and oblations, and] to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord.

Assonance gives a pleasing unity to such passages.

Rhyme and partial rhyme are a third and particularly strong form of repetition of sound, although not very common. A Prayer for the King's Majesty furnishes a simple example: "grant him in health and wealth long to live." Rhyme reinforces similarity of structure, as it does with the two clauses beginning "take" and "make": "Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God" (Invitation to Confession, Communion). A passage from a prayer from early in the Visitation of the Sick delineates its equal members by final near-rhyming sounds: "Look upon him with the eyes of thy mercy, give him comfort and sure confidence in thee, defend him from the danger of the enemy, and keep him in perpetual peace and safety." These end-sounds are not obtrusive; in fact it is the similarity of structure of the clauses that draws attention. But the use of near-rhyme polishes the passage.

The use of two words stemming from the same root, known as polyptoton, provides the aural pleasure of similar sounds and invites the hearers to attend to the meaning.

This figure would probably have been more noticeable to Renaissance Englishmen than to us--connections between words like "spirit" and "inspiration" would have been quite obvious--simply because of the fluid state of their language. The Second Collect for the King, from Communion, provides a number of instances of root words: "God," "godly," and "godliness," and "governance," "govern," and "Governor." This device is often built around such frequently used words of the Prayer Book as 'life' or 'mercy.' It often has the intensifying effect of repetition: "Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful father" (Confession at Communion). And in one of the book's most notable example of polyptoton, the root words "holy" and "holiness" combine with the word play of "wholly" and "holy": "submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life" (third Exhortation at Communion). The use of words from a common root is yet another simple device of the Prayer Book used sparingly and in the service of both meaning and aural pleasure.

Finally, the Book of Common Prayer manipulates accent to create two different, noticeable patterns of stress. The first of these is the use of successive accented syllables, which C.S. Lewis, calling "collisions of strong syllables," attributes to the inheritance from Anglo-Saxon (219). Successive accented syllables occur at various

points in the Book of Common Prayer, and since their rhythm is a variation from prose's usual (irregular) alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, they emphasize, draw attention toward, make stand out. Several examples of these clusters of stress come at the beginning of the petitions of prayers. For instance, A Prayer for the Clergy and People, taken from Morning and Evening Prayer, reads, "Send down upon our Bishops and Curates . . . the healthful Spirit of thy grace." Similarly, the Collect for the Twelfth Sunday After Trinity reads, "Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy." But this stress pattern occurs at places other than the start of petitions: some of the most notable instances can be found in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent ("with great might succour us"), the Visitation of the Sick ("just men made perfect"), and the Whitsunday Preface ("with a sudden great sound"). These phrases are made particularly striking by the accumulation of stress.

Cadence, on the other hand, depends on the separation of stressed syllables. Cadence occurs when two or more successive accents of decreasing strength and diminishing frequency occur immediately before a pause. More simply, cadence is an arrangement of stress resulting in a falling rhythm. Croll gives a useful and detailed account of it and of its frequent occurrence in the Prayer Book. The second Collect at Morning Prayer illustrates the pervasiveness of cadence in the book:

> O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord [cadence], in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life [cadence], whose service is perfect freedom [cadence]: Defend us thy humble servants [cadence] in all assaults of our enemies [cadence]; that we, surely trusting in thy defence [cadence], may not fear the power of any adversaries [cadence].

As the above example suggests, cadences frequently coincide with the rhythmic pairs, adjective-noun phrases, and prepositional phrases of the book (Croll 335-336). It should be stressed, however, that cadence is not rhythm, but is a particular aspect of rhythm that provides the final lovely finish on the prose of the book.

As the preceding account suggests, the Book of Common Prayer was composed at a fortunate moment. Its access to a living tradition of rhetoric and of oratorical prose furnished it with the means to achieve its purposes through a prose at once clear and understandable, yet moving and dignified. This tradition, which provided the compilers of the Book of Common Prayer with an acute understanding of the effective manipulation of sentence structure, phrasing, and sound, furnished the Prayer Book with the means to communicate its burden of meaning in a way that is both emphatic and pleasing to the ear. As C. S. Lewis remarks, "There are of course many good, and different, ways both of writing prose and of praying" (221), but the Book of Common

Prayer just happens to embody both. As we shall see in the next chapter, The Alternative Service Book 1980, no longer rooted in a living tradition of rhetoric and oratorical prose, is often unable to match the standards of liturgical prose established by the Book of Common Prayer.

IV. The Prose of The Alternative Service Book 1980

The compilers of the Book of Common Prayer probably never intended the book to become the fixed, unchanging institution that it did. The original Preface, introducing a book that considerably altered the service of the church, justifies the new book with the claim that it is correcting the inevitable errors and abuses that creep into any human construction over time, a claim that more or less admits that the book will in time need further alteration:

> There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted: As, among other things, it may plainly appear by the Common Prayers in the Church, commonly called Divine Service.

The 1662 Preface admits broader grounds for change:

> the particular Forms of Divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient.

Given that the 1662 book is itself the result of a century-long series of alterations to the liturgy, and that its Preface admits that alterations to liturgy are sometimes warranted, and that this same Preface explains the necessity of modernizing the language of the earlier prayer books, it is more surprising that the book was never changed before than that it was changed in 1980, after more than three hundred years of use.

There were, however, attempts to alter the Book of Common Prayer in those three hundred years. In 1689 changes aimed at making the Prayer Book more acceptable to Presbyterians were proposed but rejected even before reaching debate in Convocation. In 1872 the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act allowed shortened Morning and Evening Prayer services and shorter Sunday services. In 1927, after years of debate, the Church Assembly produced a revised book, but Parliament would not authorize it. Nevertheless, the 1928 Prayer Book was published, and used in some parishes over the next forty years.

Despite the failure of the 1928 revisions to gain legal approval, there was general agreement within the Church of England that Prayer-Book revision was needed. The 1965 Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure allowed the Church legally to engage in liturgical reform and produce alternative services without the approval of Parliament. The first result of the Measure was the set of services known as "Series 1" which, derived

from the 1928 revisions, was not stylistically a dramatic change from the 1662 version. Series 2, similarly, which came into use in 1967, was also linguistically conservative, maintaining the traditional thou, thee, thy, and thine.

But the Series 3 services, appearing through the 1970's, provoked considerable controversy, and it was their language that drew the most fire: God was addressed as "you," for example, the Creed began "We believe," and the Lord's Prayer contained the notorious line, "Do not bring us to the test." In angry response to such changes, the Prayer Book Society was founded in 1975 "to uphold the worship and doctrine of the Church of England as enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer" and to press for the continued use of that book "as a major element in the worshipping life of the Church of England" (qtd. in Welsby 241). A petition of six hundred notable names was presented to the General Synod in 1979, protesting the discontinuation of the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version. Nonetheless, in 1980 The Alternative Service Book 1980, consisting of revised Series 3 services, an alternate communion made up of the Series 1 and 2 versions combined, a new Psalter, and a new calendar and lectionary, was published. The book was authorized to be used for the next ten years and, as its name suggests, it was intended as an alternative to and not a replacement for the Book of Common Prayer.

The Alternative Service Book 1980, like the Book of Common Prayer, is a guide for conducting the services of the Church of England. It differs from the Prayer Book not only in its language but in the services it contains and in the structure and content of individual services. The main points to note about the construction of the new book are as follows. The book drops some Prayer-Book material, for instance the services of The Visitation of the Sick, The Catechism, and A Commination. It adds new material, as for example new services for Thanksgiving after Adoption and The Renewal of Baptismal Vows as well as many newly composed prayers. It includes material from sources other than the Prayer Book: it borrows prayers from the 1928 Prayer Book and the Book of Common Worship of the Church of South India (Commentary 52) and it takes its Scripture from modern translations--from the 1977 The Psalms: A New Translation for Worship and from the New English Bible, the Jerusalem Bible, Today's English Version, and the Revised Standard Version. It provides a great many options both within services and in the choice of services, for instance many choices of prayers, opportunities for sermons and hymns, regular or shorter forms of Morning and Evening Prayer, and two forms of Holy Communion. And it frequently alters Prayer-Book originals, as when it changes the order of events in a service, moves prayers from one service to another, rewrites prayers to make them clearer to modern ears or to change their emphasis, or lays out most of its

prayers as if they were verse.

The differences in the content of the two books are considerable and significant, but the particular concern of this chapter is with the language of the Alternative Service Book and its differences from the language of the Book of Common Prayer. The first point to note about the language of the Alternative Service Book is that, excepting Holy Communion Rite B, which uses traditional language, the new service book is intended to be and tries to be a liturgy in modern English. Its Preface talks about the need to modernize the liturgy because "any liturgy, no matter how timeless its qualities, also belongs to a particular period and culture," and the Commentary makes clear in its chapter on the language of worship that a primary linguistic aim of the Alternative Service Book is that it be in contemporary English. More importantly, the book itself testifies to this aim. It replaces old verb-forms (art; be ed as the present indicative plural; dost, hast, didst, and other second person singular verbs in -(e)st; hath and other third person singular verbs in -(e)th; and so on) with their modern forms. It replaces second person singular pronouns (thou, thee, thy, thine) and the second person plural nominative pronoun (ye) with their modern forms. It frequently does away with the same, used in the Prayer Book as a sort of all-purpose pronoun. It updates prepositions to the usual modern choice, as in its replacement of "Defend us . . . in all assaults of our

enemies" (second Collect, Morning Prayer) with "Defend us . . . from all assaults of our enemies," or in its change of "contempt of thy word" (Good Friday Collect) to "contempt for thy word," or in its replacement of unto with to. It replaces archaic diction with modern equivalents. For example it changes "by thy special grace preventing us" (Collect for Easter Sunday) to "by your special grace going before us"; "the quick and the dead" (Apostles' Creed) to "the living and the dead"; "corrupt affections" (Collect for Easter Eve) to "evil desires." Some Alternative Service Book prayers differ from their Prayer-Book originals only in such straightforward modernizations. For example, the new book's Communion Collect differs from its Prayer-Book form only in its modernized verb-forms ("are open" rather than "be open"; "hidden" rather than "hid"), modernized pronouns ("your" and "you" rather than "thy" and "thee"), and a modernized preposition ("to" rather than "unto").

Many other prayers, however, are altered in more substantial ways. The new book changes the grammatical structure of many Prayer-Book sentences from their long, complex, much-subordinated form to shorter, simpler, more typically modern sentences. As we have seen, a Prayer-Book prayer typically begins with an elaborated address, often made up of subordinate relative clauses describing God and his qualities ("Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of

all them that are penitent:") followed by the petition, which often gains both force and a pleasing inevitability from its delay after the long address ("Create and make in us new and contrite hearts . . ."), followed by a formulaic ending that is tied to what has gone before by its form as a prepositional phrase ("through Jesus Christ our Lord"--Collect for Ash Wednesday). This long sentence is united and flowing, yet structured and paced; it manages to achieve both fluidity and control at once. And it is an effective vehicle for the theology of the prayer: the information contained in the relative clauses about the God to whom the prayer is addressed provides the theological basis--often a whole argument--for the prayer's request, just as the concluding formula conveys the theological means by which the request of the prayer can be granted.

But the Alternative Service Book, seemingly influenced by a feeling that sentences constructed according to the Prayer-Book pattern of much subordination are not typical of modern English, often shortens and simplifies its Prayer-Book originals. It typically breaks one-sentence prayers into two sentences, making the address one complete sentence about God ("Almighty and everlasting God, / you hate nothing that you have made / and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent.") and putting the petition into a second sentence. Somewhat strangely, this new version of the address tells God about himself, prompting Robinson to call such a clause "a piece of

ridiculously gratuitous information" (52). Yet it includes the same information as the Prayer-Book address and the information God is given about himself is intended as the basis for the prayer's request. But the change in the grammar of the prayer has the considerable effect of obscuring the connection between the qualities of God and the request that is made of him. The old form, by making a grammatical connection, points out the more important connection between the nature of the God who is being petitioned and the petition. In the Alternative Service Book there is nothing in the grammar of the prayer to suggest that the two sentences are related, and the result is that the first sentence often seems irrelevant to the rest of the prayer, as in the Collect for Pentecost 6: "Almighty God, / without you we are not able to please you. / Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit / may in all things direct and rule our hearts; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." The hearer may work out the logical connection between the elaborated address and the petition, but that such a connection will be made is much less likely here than in the Prayer-Book original--"O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Collect for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity)--where the form of the prayer embodies the logical connection. Many newly composed prayers, such as the Collects for Epiphany 4 and

Pentecost 20, give a similar impression of disconnectedness.

Not all of the Alternative Service Book prayers are so disconnected, however. Some of the book's two-sentence prayers retain coherence by repeating an item from the first sentence in the second. For example the second Collect for Trinity Sunday speaks of "true faith" in its first sentence and refers again to "this faith" in its petition. Similarly the Collect for the Blessing of the Oils speaks first of "the Holy Spirit" and then of "the same Holy Spirit." But these are exceptions, and usually, when an Alternative Service Book prayer addresses God in one sentence and petitions him in the next, the logical connection between the petition and the information about the nature of God is attenuated.

This diminished sense of logical relationship is only part of the loss resulting from the splitting of one-sentence prayers into two or more sentences; another result is the loss of the unity and fluidity that make many Prayer-Book prayers so lovely. In the old Collect for the Twelfth Sunday After Trinity, which begins, "Almighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy . . .," the delay, caused by the lengthy relative clauses, before what is grammatically expected, the petition, coupled with the successive accents of the beginning of the

petition, gives the petition a pleasing sense of force and inevitability. In the new version of the same Collect, used at Easter 5--"Almighty and everlasting God, / you are always more ready to hear than we to pray / and give more than either we desire or deserve. / Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy. . ."--the effect is lost.

As well as splitting one-sentence prayers in its attempt to simplify and modernize Prayer-Book sentence structures, The Alternative Service Book 1980 also replaces participial phrases, showing relationship, with coordinate clauses. For example, in its Book of Common Prayer version the petition of the second Collect at Morning Prayer reads, "Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries." The participial phrase, "surely trusting in thy defence," gives the means by which we may be freed from the power of our adversaries. But in the modernized version of the prayer the purpose clause becomes, "that we may trust in your defence, / and not fear the power of any adversaries." The logical relationship between trust in God and freedom from fear is not in the new version explicit; the coordination of the two clauses may disguise from the hearer their relationship. Similarly, in the new version of the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent the relationship between physical abstinence and spiritual salvation--the relationship being, in the words of the Prayer Book, "that,

our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey [God's] godly motions in righteousness and true holiness"--is obscured by the loss of the participial phrase and by the coordination of the ideas of abstinence and salvation. The petition now reads, "give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; / and, as you know our weakness, / so may we know your power to save." The change from participial phrases to coordinated clauses may give the sentences a more modern, less Latinate feel, but as with the removal of the subordinate clauses of the addresses of many prayers, the new versions are no longer such clear embodiments of theology.

The prose of the Alternative Service Book, then, tends to be built of somewhat simpler, less subordinated, more typically modern sentences than is the Book of Common Prayer. The new book's prose is finished differently, as well: frequently the embellishments of its Prayer-Book originals--the resonant and expanded phrases and the repetition of word and sound that help to create the old book's distinctive rhythms--are removed in the 'translation' to modern English. The result is a toned down, less conspicuous prose.

At its simplest, this toning-down is represented by the loss of adverbs and adjectives that are not strictly necessary. "Mercifully grant" (Collect for the Sunday Next Before Easter) becomes simply "grant" in the Alternative Service Book. "Worthily lamenting" (Collect for Ash

Wednesday) becomes "lamenting"; "blessed hope of everlasting life" (Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent) becomes "hope of everlasting life"; "thy humble servants" (second Collect at Morning Prayer) becomes "your servants"; "thy great mercy" (third Collect at Evening Prayer) becomes "your mercy." These modifiers provide a kind of religious education: they tell us that we should lament worthily and be humble servants; that the hope of everlasting life is a blessed hope and that God's mercy is great. Their loss, then, affects both the meaning and, because of the two-beat rhythm that they establish, the sound of many prayers.

The modernized Alternative Service Book prayers leave out other favorite rhythmic Prayer-Book structures. The new book sometimes drops the typical Prayer-Book doubling of synonymous or related words. Its Collect for Advent 3 omits the "prepare and make ready" of the Prayer-Book original. Its second Good Friday Collect replaces "our supplications and prayers" with "our prayer." The book also tends to remove or simplify the rhythmic prepositional phrases of the Book of Common Prayer. The new version of the Absolution at Communion changes "who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him," with its prepositional phrases, to "who forgives all who truly repent." The phrase "turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" (Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent) becomes in the new book "turn our disobedient

hearts to the law of love." The book often drops the phrases in apposition that make up the rhythmic and impressive addresses of many Prayer-Book prayers. The third Collect at Morning Prayer begins "O Lord our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God" in its Prayer-Book version but simply "Almighty and everlasting Father" in its new version; the Book of Common Prayer Burial Collect begins "O Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life" but becomes simply "Almighty God, / whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life" in its new version for Easter 3. Undeniably, in taking out or simplifying such typical Prayer-Book phrases, the makers of the Alternative Service Book have given the prose more of a modern feeling.

Similarly, in its efforts to make the liturgy sound more like modern English, The Alternative Service Book 1980 sometimes leaves out the repetition of word and sound that characterizes its Prayer-Book originals; for modern prose tends to be much more sparing than sixteenth century prose in its use of such devices. The Alternative Service Book rewrites the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent such that "forty days and forty nights" becomes simply "forty nights"; it rewrites the Collect for the Sunday after Ascension such that its virtual repetition of word--"leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us"--becomes "Leave us not comfortless, / but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us." Moreover, Alternative

Service Book prayers often lack the assonance of their originals. "[W]e beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family" becomes "look with mercy on this your family" (first Good Friday Collect). Alliteration, too, is often diminished in the modernized prayers. "[T]he ministers and stewards of thy mysteries" becomes "the ministers and stewards of your truth" (Advent 3 Collect); "[T]hat we worthily lamenting our sins" becomes "that, lamenting our sins" (Ash Wednesday Collect). A great deal of alliteration is lost by the modernization of verb forms and personal pronouns: the repetition of the similar th sounds in thee, thou, thy, thine, in verbs in -(e)th, and in the common the and that, and also the repetition of the st sound of hast and other verbs in -(e)st, subtly unified and patterned Prayer-Book prayers. The modernization of the first Good Friday Collect illustrates such a loss of phonetic repetition: "who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost" becomes "who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit." The third Good Friday Collect also loses repetition of sound in its modernized form. Its 1662 version begins, "O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live"; its 1980 version begins, "Merciful God, / who made all men and hate nothing that you have made: / you desire not the death of a sinner / but rather that he should be converted and live." But although

the modern version of the prayer loses the repetition of s sounds (hast, hatest, wouldest, sinner), it retains the alliteration of m's and, secondarily, h sounds (who, hate, have), and even adds the alliteration of desire and death; it by no means is stripped of all pleasing devices of sound.

Much of the prose of the Alternative Service Book, then, is updated Prayer-Book prose, modernized, as we have seen, through the straightforward replacement of obsolete words and forms with modern equivalents; through the rewriting of sentences into more usual twentieth-century form; and through the toning-down of Prayer-Book prose by removing such distinctive features as expanded and resonant phrases and repetition of word and sound. Although much of the modernized prose is competent, much falls short of Prayer-Book standards. The new prose's ability to communicate to modern congregations benefits undoubtedly from its modernization and simplification, but, as we have seen, Alternative Service Book prose is in some respects a less effective vehicle for the book's theological content. Moreover, some of it is flat and lackluster. Why is this? First, part of bringing the book up to date involves taking out the embellishments and exuberances of the old prose. Repetition, appositives, and the frequent use of "we beseech thee," for example, all tend to intensify Prayer-Book prose; their loss lowers the pitch of the Alternative Service Book. But also, the modernization of

the prose results in a diminished rhythm. Many little words and syllables are removed in the rewriting of prayers, and the simple reduction in unstressed syllables alters what is in the Prayer Book the run of unaccented and slightly accented syllables that sets off what is stressed. For example, the Alternative Service Book's third Collect at Morning Prayer, tidied and shortened considerably from its old form, is composed of clauses of insufficient length to make the prayer rhythmically substantial. Its petition reads, "Keep us from falling into sin / or running into danger; / order us in all our doings; / and guide us to do always / what is right in your eyes." The Prayer-Book original, however, uses the extra syllables of its longer clauses as a necessary lead-up to the rhythmic prepositional phrases--the cadences--that end its clauses: "grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight." Without the run of lightly stressed syllables, the Alternative Service Book cannot achieve this sort of cadencing effect. Its prose, as a consequence, is at times a flattened version of Prayer-Book originals, less well-suited than Prayer-Book prose to the aural as well as to the pedagogical demands of public worship.

The Alternative Service Book's clumsy handling of prose rhythms sometimes creates another problem, one the opposite of rhythmic flatness. The book at times falls

into a rhythm that seems very much--in fact, too much--like verse. Indeed, this raises the question of whether the book is intended as prose or verse, for nearly all of its prayers, though for some reason not quite all, are laid out as if they were verse, although they are for the most part quite clearly prose. The likeliest explanation for this layout, however, is probably not an intention to versify the liturgy; instead it may be an intention of marking pauses and so making the prayers easier to read.

But let us return to the rhythm of this oddly laid-out book. Prose movement depends on varied patterns of stress; when it is too rhythmically regular, prose turns into verse. In some prayers of the Alternative Service Book, lines of about equal length combine with regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables to create a verse-like rhythm. This happens in the Confession used at Morning and Evening Prayer and Holy Communion Rite A. The Confession begins to slide from prose into near-verse in its third line, recovering completely only with the longer, more rhythmically varied eighth line:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
> we have sinned against you and against our
> fellow men,
> in thought and word and deed,
> through negligence, through weakness,
> through our own deliberate fault.
> We are truly sorry

and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who
died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness
of life;
to the glory of your name.

Prayer 34 from Prayers after the Birth of a still-born Child or the Death of a newly-born Child, one of the book's newly composed prayers, falls into even greater rhythmic regularity straight after its address: "Gracious Father, / in darkness and in light, / in trouble and in joy, / help us to trust your love, / to serve your purpose, / and to praise your name; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." The second through fourth lines set up the expectation that the fifth, too, will be in iambic trimeter and may even rhyme. On occasion the likeness to verse actually is reinforced by rhyme or near-rhyme. For instance, Prayer 38 at Baptism and Prayer 36 at Marriage contain the lines, "may we know you more clearly, / love you more dearly, / and follow you more nearly, / day by day." This sort of bouncing, jingling prose undermines its attempted seriousness.

The Alternative Service Book 1980 has problems beyond its rhythmical difficulties and one of them is that its aim of rendering the liturgy in contemporary English is incompletely realized. The book sounds more like modern English than does the Prayer Book, of course, but, though

it modernizes many archaisms, it retains and even adds others. Its Holy Communion Rite A Collect and its version of the Lord's Prayer illustrate this inconsistency in modernization. The new version of the Prayer-Book Communion Collect ("Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open. . . .") updates the preposition "unto" to "to," turns the outdated "be" to the modern "are," replaces the past participle "hid" with its more usual modern form "hidden," and changes the out-of-date pronouns "thy" and "thee" to "your" and "you," but it leaves untouched the archaic "magnify" in its line "and worthily magnify your holy name." With equal inconsistency, the Lord's Prayer replaces the archaic "trespasses" with "sins" yet retains the equally archaic "hallowed"; it removes the old second person singular verb-form in "Our Father who art in heaven" by changing the address to "Our Father in heaven," yet it keeps the decidedly un-modern subjunctives, "hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done." Such archaisms are common throughout this supposedly modernized book. Mark meaning "take notice of," a sense unused in modern English except in the expression, "Mark my words," is retained in the line, "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them" (Advent 2 Collect). Author meaning "source" is retained in the description of God as "the author of peace" (second Morning Prayer Collect). Even as meaning "to the same degree as," rather than its more usual modern meaning of "at the same time as," is left unchanged in the

line, "may purify ourselves even as he is pure" (Epiphany 6 Collect). The same, used almost like a pronoun referring back to profession (which incidentally is also archaic in its sense here of "religious faith"), is left unchanged in the line, "and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same" (Pentecost 5 Collect). Outdated word-order is also a frequent occurrence in the new book. The Apostles' Creed, for instance, retains the inversion of "the life everlasting." Negative statements are sometimes left in their archaic form, without the modern auxiliary do, as for example in "you desire not" (third Good Friday Collect) or "he went not up" (Lent 3 Collect). And beyond modernizing Prayer-Book prose incompletely, the Alternative Service Book even introduces archaisms into its prose. For instance it introduces obsolete diction, adding save meaning "except" to its Easter 5 Collect and using aright for "rightly" in the newly-composed Prayer 10 from the Funeral Service. It also introduces out-of-date expressions such as "these your children" and "these your servants" (Prayers 24, 27, Marriage Service) to newly composed prayers, and it introduces the inversion, "life eternal," into the Absolution it uses at Morning and Evening Prayer and Communion. What a mix of styles is here! This book can write a prayer that says, "We pray that these your servants may grow in love and self-giving to each other all the days of their life" (Prayer 11, Thanksgiving for Childbirth), a prayer that mixes the noun

self-giving, which smacks of psychobabble, with the traditional phrases these your servants and all the days of their life. This is the kind of weird and awkward mix of archaic and modern that prompts so much complaint about revisions of the Book of Common Prayer (e.g., Robinson 53; Cottle 18; Doody 119). Complaint is often justified, for at times Alternative Service Book prose is too obviously pasted together from prose of different eras and styles: its stylistic inconsistencies give it the air of pastiche.

Whereas the Book of Common Prayer maintains a consistently serious and dignified tone, always conveying the sense that it deals with weighty matters, The Alternative Service Book 1980, on the other hand, as well as at times defeating its own seriousness with its jingly rhythms and air of pastiche, sometimes strikes an entirely inappropriate tone. At times its prose has an air of social chitchat. "We welcome you into the Lord's Family. . . . We welcome you," say the congregation at two of the Baptism services. "[A]nd also with you," they reply courteously to "The Lord be with you" in Holy Communion Rite A. "We thank you," politely say many prayers, for example Prayer 53 at Holy Communion Rite A and Prayer 1 at Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child. The old book, with its expressions like "We give thee humble and hearty thanks" (A General Thanksgiving), or "We most heartily thank thee" (Post-Communion Prayer), never leaves any doubt that its gratitude is great; and two of the Alternative

Service Book's forms, "we give you thanks" (Proper Prefaces) and "Thanks be to God" (congregational response to "This is the word of the Lord"), have currency today only in religious usage and therefore clearly indicate a religious gratitude; but "We thank you" is scarcely distinguishable from the present-day conventional social form. Just as unfortunately, the prose of the new book at times has Sunday-schoolish explanations and commands. "Those of you who have come for baptism must affirm your allegiance to Christ," candidates for baptism are told. A lighted candle is given to newly baptized persons or their godparents along with the explanation, "This is to show that you have passed from darkness to light." Such language is probably part of what prompts David Martin's complaint that in the new services, "There is . . . a curious vein of childishness. Not only do the texts sound as if devised for children, but there are pervasive reminders of children being 'called together'" (2). And tone is out of control in various ways at other points in the book. For example at Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child the minister may with these words give "a copy of one of the gospels" to the parents: "This book contains the Good News of God's love. Read it, for it tells how you and your family can share in eternal life, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ." The offering of an incentive for reading the gospel, the casualness of "it tells how you can," and the importation of the tired expression, "you and

your family," combine to create a tone somehow more suitable to the gimmickry of the marketplace than to a church service; the lucky family might just as well be winning a week's groceries. And the book often seems unaware of the connotations that cling to the words and expressions it imports into its services. For instance it calls the priest who presides over Holy Communion Rite A "the President." It makes Christ sound like a labour negotiator: "we thank you/ for all the benefits you have won for us" (Baptism and Confirmation without Holy Communion). Such problems of connotation and tone provoke a good deal of lively complaint about revisions of the Book of Common Prayer (e.g., Robinson 50, 52; Cottle 18-19; Doody 121), and this is understandable. After all, in prayer, as Margaret Doody comments, "tone is doctrine" (110).

Despite its problems, The Alternative Service Book 1980 contains some good prayers. But most of its successful prose is written in what is more or less the style of the Book of Common Prayer, a style of careful balance and patterning, of rhythmic phrases, of figures of sound. Part of the new post-Communion Prayer from Holy Communion Rite A, a prayer Basil Cottle singles out for praise (19), reads,

> Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who

drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

The succession of short predicates of a common subject in the first sentence, the parallel clauses all built according to the same pattern in the second sentence, the alliteration (d's, l's, and g's), and the use of different parts of speech stemming from a common root ("living," "live," and "life"; "lights" and "light")--these are all hallmarks of Prayer-Book style. They build a prayer that is carefully structured and patterned, overlaid with repetition of sound, and, in sum, pleasing to both mind and ear. Other of the new book's best prose shows the same reliance on Prayer-Book methods of composition. The Epiphany 3 Collect, for example, delays and emphasizes, by the positioning of prepositional phrases, the rhetorical gist of two of its clauses. The prayer reads, "Almighty God, / whose Son revealed in signs and miracles / the wonder of your saving love: / renew your people with your heavenly grace, / and in all our weakness / sustain us by your mighty power; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the first three lines the slight delay between the verb and its object, "the wonder of your saving love," puts an effective emphasis on that object. Similarly in the final petition, the main clause is delayed by the prepositional phrase of the fifth line, thus putting a suitable emphasis on God's "mighty power." Moreover, the prayer derives considerable rhythmical beauty from the prepositional

phrases positioned at the end of its six last lines. The effective use of the rhythmic qualities of two-beat phrases is, as we have seen, standard in the Book of Common Prayer. A section of the Invitation to Confession at Holy Communion Rite A will serve as a last example of good Alternative Service Book prose: "Let us confess our sins, in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all men." The elaboration of the simple main clause, "Let us confess our sins," by the prepositional phrase and the participial phrase is typical of the Prayer-Book, these modifying phrases providing instruction about how this confession should be made. Like Prayer-Book prose the sentence has a predilection for pairs of nouns coupled by and. Also like Prayer-Book prose it is ornamented by alliteration, in this case alliteration of "faith" and "firmly," "keep" and "commandments," and "live" and "love." There is nothing of the jingle of too regular lines or of the comedy of pastiche and inappropriate tone about these passages of the book: they have the dignity and beauty that make them fit prose for public worship. And their means of achieving that dignity and beauty are the same means used by the Book of Common Prayer.

But on the whole The Alternative Service Book 1980 is only a partial success in its valiant attempt at modernizing Prayer-Book prose and providing a modern-English liturgy. It modernizes many obsolete forms and

usages--and the use of modern language can go a long way toward conveying the impression of a living, current religion. Yet, with sometimes jarring effect, it retains many archaisms. Partly as a result of this modernization the book is frequently rhythmically flat; at other points it falls into verse rhythm. It simplifies Prayer-Book sentence structure in an attempt to make the liturgy sound more like contemporary English, yet this updating leaves a sometimes clumsy, often less precise prose. And although the prose of the Alternative Service Book has its moments of success, those successes tend to be founded on an imitation of Prayer-Book style. The new book's prose, on the whole, is a hodgepodge of different styles and tones, consistent neither in quality nor in its suitability for public worship.

V. Conclusion

A constant undercurrent of this study has been the opportuneness of historical circumstances for the creation of the liturgical prose of the Book of Common Prayer. The book's purposes called for a prose that could edify, a prose that was clear and understandable. Its purposes also called for a prose that by its skilful use of the resources of English could move its hearers to assent to its burden of meaning. The book's function as a book of church services called for a prose that could fulfil its purposes aurally. Happily, the compilers had available to them the means to meet these demands, most notably in the styles available to them and in the tradition of oratorical prose.

The prose that was created in the Book of Common Prayer is constructed on a base of balanced and patterned sentences. Layered over that base are phrasal structures that reinforce the balance and pattern of the sentences and further the rhythms of the book. Manipulation of word, sound, and stress gives a final layer of polish to the prose and by its effect on rhythm helps to make the sense of the prose more graspable by the ear. The result is a prose that is on the one hand rich and dignified; and on the other plain and clear enough for instruction while at the same time capable of precisely expressing complex theology.

The virtues of Prayer-Book prose stand out in relief when we look at the prose of The Alternative Service Book

1980. Where the new book fails, it disregards its need to appeal to the ear. Where it succeeds, like the Book of Common Prayer it writes to be heard. The Alternative Service Book makes clear that the Book of Common Prayer succeeds because it is able to create a prose that is ideally suited to the demands of public worship. The achievement of the Book of Common Prayer is a prose that is sturdy enough to bear the weight of the liturgy, yet can rise to the great events of the life of the Church.

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The Prose Style of the Book of Common Prayer

by

Elizabeth Jean Gooding

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(SIGNED) E.J. Gooding

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

2049 North Park St. #3
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3K 4B2

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE PROSE STYLE OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER submitted by ELIZABETH JEAN GOODING in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

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I. Introduction

The Book of Common Prayer, until recently the only prayer book of the Church of England, was developed in the sixteenth century and reached its final form in the seventeenth. The making of the book marked a historical, liturgical, and doctrinal milestone; and so the book can be studied as history, as liturgy, as church doctrine, even as translation. But it can also be studied from a literary standpoint, that is, for its quality of expression, for its way of using language to achieve its purposes. And there is good reason for studying the language of the Prayer Book. As the first book of church services in English and one used, moreover, for roughly four hundred years, and as a source of other Protestant services in English, it helped shape the English of public worship and our ideas about the kind of English that is appropriate for public worship. In short, it provides a standard for liturgical English, just as the Authorized Version of the Bible provides a standard for biblical English.

That liturgical standard was challenged in the 1960's when the Church of England began introducing modern-English alternatives to the Prayer Book. The alternative services were produced by the Liturgical Commission of the church through the sixties and seventies, and a selection of them was revised and became part of The Alternative Service Book 1980. The new services sparked both public debate and private grumbling, with their choice of language generating

considerable comment, much of it negative and lamenting the departure from the English of the Book of Common Prayer. The controversy surrounding the Alternative Service Book prompts an examination of both the language of the Book of Common Prayer, which commands such attachment, and the much-censured language of the alternative services.

This thesis undertakes that examination. It will investigate the prose of both the Book of Common Prayer and The Alternative Service Book 1980 in order to address the question of what kinds of prose are appropriate for formal public worship. It will begin with an overview of the historical and stylistic background to the standard 1662 version of the Book of Common Prayer. This overview will help to place in perspective the primary concern of this study, the prose style of that standard 1662 Prayer Book. The thesis will anatomize the prose of the Book of Common Prayer in order to understand how the prose style of the book suits the book's purposes. Finally, and secondarily, the thesis will examine the prose of The Alternative Service Book 1980 and the departure of that prose from the liturgical English of the Prayer Book.

II. Historical and Stylistic Background

i.

The history of the production of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549 and of the successive editions resulting in the book's 1562 final form is long, complex, and not the subject of this thesis. But the book was written in a particular age and for particular purposes, and some of the facts of its history and origin help place its prose style in perspective. The pertinent facts are as follow.

The first Book of Common Prayer was the culmination of a series of translations of Scripture and liturgy and reforms of liturgy. The fifteen years before its appearance saw the production of a considerable amount of officially sanctioned religious material in English. The Great Bible, a combination and revision of earlier English translations of the Bible, appeared in 1539. A number of English primers--personal devotional guides for the laity, containing psalms and prayers--appeared in the 1530's and 1540's, and an official primer was authorized in 1545. The King's Book, aimed at helping the clergy in the education of its flock, was published in 1543. Paralleling the production of religious material in the vernacular was a steady increase in the use of English in church. The Injunctions of 1538 directed that the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments be recited in English. Convocation in 1543 ordered that a chapter from the Great

Bible be read each Sunday at Mattins and Evensong. The Injunctions of 1547 ordered that the Epistle and Gospel at High Mass be read in English. Two English services were produced: the 1544 Litany, and the 1548 Order of the Communion, which provided English supplements to the Latin Mass. The Book of Common Prayer incorporated some of the reformed, translated material that preceded it and combined it with newly composed material and material translated from a variety of sources. Much of the book is loose translation of the medieval Latin service known as the Use of Sarum. As we shall see, both Latin and English sources noticeably influenced the Prayer Book's prose.

In the course of the religious and political upheavals between its 1549 first version and its final version of 1662, the Book of Common Prayer underwent a series of revisions. The first Prayer Book drew a volley of complaint. Its services differed from the old considerably enough to offend traditionalists; yet it retained enough of the old practices to offend reformers. A more clearly reformed second version of the book appeared in 1552 and was used until the accession of Mary to the throne. This 1552 book restructured the Communion and replaced the somewhat ambiguous Words of Administration with reformed versions. Elizabeth reintroduced the book in 1559 with slight but tactful changes, such as the combination of the 1549 and 1552 Words of Administration and the omission from the Litany of the plea for deliverance "from the tyranny of

the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities." A 1604 version produced in response to Puritan complaints about the Prayer Book abolished lessons from the Apocrypha, enlarged the Catechism to include sections about Baptism and Communion, and added six occasional thanksgivings and a prayer for the royal family. Following the reintroduction of the book after the Interregnum, a new revision was begun. The resulting 1662 book modernized grammar and vocabulary, added new prayers, and substituted passages from the 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible for nearly all the passages from the 1540 Great Bible. Despite this series of alterations, the 1662 version of the book is recognizably the same book as the 1549 original. Moreover, although its final form is that of 1662, the Book of Common Prayer is essentially sixteenth-century prose, modernized only slightly in the seventeenth century.

The purposes of the Prayer Book are bound up with its history and equally important to an explanation of its prose. The first Book of Common Prayer continued a general movement toward reform of liturgy and translation of Scripture and liturgy but was also a response to the more particular and immediate need for uniformity, convenience, and simplicity. It provided a single order of worship to replace the numerous variations then in use, and it conveniently enclosed that order within a single book. Moreover, it reduced in number and simplified the daily services and reorganized and simplified daily readings.

But the new book intended more than a better organization; its purposes were of course religious. Its 1549 Preface, entitled "Concerning the Service of the Church" in the 1662 book, states that the original and true purpose of common prayers was "a great advancement of godliness." That was the purpose of Bible readings: the clergy by reading and meditating on Scripture would "be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be more able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the truth"; the people by hearing Scripture "might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion." Godliness, then, is the general aim, while knowledge and the "stirring up" of religious ardour are frequently mentioned specific purposes. The essay "Of Ceremonies" states similar aims when it argues for only

> those Ceremonies which do serve to a decent Order and godly Discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified.

Once more, the aims of edifying and of "stirring up" religious feeling, as well as of encouraging godliness, are stated. These purposes, along with the sources and sixteenth-century origins of the Book of Common Prayer, help explain the nature of the prose style of the book.

ii.

The book's sources and the styles available at the time to its compilers furnished two main traditions from which the compilers could choose their styles. There was the native tradition of Anglo-Saxon prose and verse, with its heavy beat, frequent alliteration, and pairs of synonyms or words of related meaning. This tradition had flourished in earlier religious writing and would certainly have been familiar to the compilers. Equally important was the inheritance from Latin, both medieval and classical. This Latin inheritance influenced vocabulary, sentence structure, and rhythm. The Prayer Book's sources included material from both of these traditions, and characteristics from each stylistic tradition are evident in the book. Each side has its champions. C.S. Lewis and Ian Robinson stress the importance of the "native" English influences (Lewis 219; Robinson 57), while Morris Croll makes a case for the imitation of certain features of the Latin sources.

The simple fact that the bulk of the book was written in the sixteenth century explains a good deal about its prose style. The Book of Common Prayer was written in an age steeped in rhetoric, an age in which rhetoric comprehended the theory and art of communication. Its compilers--or Cranmer, to whom we might as well give credit for the book's compilation--almost certainly received a standard Renaissance training in classical rhetoric and held the traditional view that the purpose of language was

to persuade to action. They were trained to use the devices and strategies of rhetoric and they made extensive use of them. Often the Prayer Book's linguistic particulars can best be described in the terms of rhetoric. Rhetoric provided ways of finding material (inventio), ways of organizing material (dispositio), and ways of expressing material (elocutio). Most important to the compilers of the Prayer Book, who to some extent already had material and a way of ordering it, were the ways of expressing material. The compilers, in keeping with the age (Vickers 41), typically chose those figures which produced a noticeably patterned prose. The Book of Common Prayer constantly reflects its debt to this rhetorical tradition of noticeably patterned and symmetrical writing that was thriving at the time of its compilation.

The Prayer Book's language also reflects the purposes of its compilers. Most obviously, these purposes dictated the choice of English for the book. The original Preface complains of the ineffectiveness of Latin:

> And moreover, whereas St Paul would have such language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might understand, and have profit by hearing the same; The Service in this Church of England these many years hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understand not; so that they have heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit, and mind, have not been

edified thereby.

The use of English, then, furthers both education and religious devotion, which as we have seen are the aims of the book. But not just any English would further these aims. The original Preface states that the new services are "in such a Language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding both of the Readers and Hearers." But such a claim--for plain understandable English--cannot be taken at face value. For one thing, such claims were conventional at the time (Jones, "Simplicity"). For another, some of the book's purposes could not easily be achieved by too plain a style. The book surely enough had to be in understandable English--the plain style for teaching--but too plain a style would not further the aim of "stirring up" the hearers to devotion, would not make them "inflamed with the love of [Christ's] true Religion," would not work on "heart, spirit, and mind." Moreover, the "decent order" mentioned twice in "Of Ceremonies," meaning an <u>appropriate</u> order, seems to have meant to the compilers something like a <u>dignified</u> order. This also might well work against plain language. So, then, not all the purposes of the book would best be served by the merely plain and understandable language it lays claim to. A higher style than the plain style would more effectively move and persuade the hearers; moreover, formal public worship called not for a plain style but for a dignified and impressive style. So what was needed was a style that

was at the same time understandable and impressive: clear and understandable in order to teach, and impressive and moving in order to achieve an appropriate dignity and in order to move the flock to devotion.

Bound up with the book's purposes is the way it was to be used. The fact that it was intended to be spoken and heard made certain demands on its prose. At the simplest level, the words had to be heard distinctly by the congregation. At numerous points the rubrics in Morning and Evening Prayer reflect this concern and specify that readings and prayers shall be said by the Minister "with a loud voice," or "with an audible voice," or "distinctly with an audible voice." But the fact that it was prose meant to be read aloud dictated more than volume. The way the book was to be used dictated the use of what we might call "oratorical style" (Croll 325), which we find in prose "which owes its form to the necessities and customs of public speech" (328). Prose written to be spoken and heard is an entirely different kind of prose from modern essay-prose. Croll notes the modern tendency "to consider prose chiefly as it is addressed to the intellect, rather than as language spoken and heard" (327-328). This modern essay prose "lay[s] more stress upon verbal propriety, grammatical precision, logical order, and the intellectual effects of prose than upon its rhythm and oral beauties" (328). The prose of the Book of Common Prayer, though, is of the kind in which rhythm and oral beauty are of great

importance. And so being meant for the ear rather than the eye the book chose a style that had a strong rhythm; a sentence structure falling on the ear in regular portions; resonant phrases; devices of sound creating aural linkages between words and phrases. Or, in short, it chose a style that was aurally satisfying.

The style in which Cranmer wrote the Book of Common Prayer, then, was shaped by the book's origin and history, and by its purpose and function. The book's native and Latin sources provided two stylistic traditions from which the book could borrow. Its sixteenth-century origins explain its debt to rhetoric. Its purposes and the way it was to be used account for its use of an oratorical style. The book's background, then, furnishes explanations for the linguistic phenomena of the book. These linguistic phenomena, which together constitute the book's style, are the subject of the next chapter.

III. The Prose Style of the Book of Common Prayer

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is distinctive, impressive, and memorable. It is made so by its style, its way of expressing its burden of meaning, its selection and arrangement of its linguistic particulars. This chapter will catalogue those linguistic particulars and explain how they work together to create certain stylistic effects. Or, to put it another way, it will anatomize the prose of the book. It will begin by discussing the most general characteristics of Prayer-Book prose--the kinds of passages, and the rhythm of the prose--and work down through progressively smaller components of that prose: sentence structure, common kinds of phrases, and choices of word and sound. In this way we can see how the smallest stylistic particulars contribute to general stylistic effects, stylistic effects that suit the prose of the book to the demands of public worship.

To speak of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer is not to refer to everything found between the two covers of the book. The book contains material taken from elsewhere to be used as part of these services: it contains the Psalms and a few scriptural sentences from the 1539 Great Bible and sentences and readings from the 1611 King James Bible. Moreover, it contains other verse material besides the Psalms: the hymns and canticles of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Veni, Creator Spiritus from The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops,

Priests, and Deacons. It contains explanatory and directional material: three prefatory essays; the calendars; and the rubrics, the short passages directing and explaining the services. Usually the Articles of Religion, better known as the Thirty-Nine Articles, are also contained in the book, as is A Table of Kindred and Affinity, taken from the church canons. But even though they comprise the bulk of the book, these parts--the passages from English versions of the Bible, the verse material, the 'administrative' portions, and church regulations--are not what is usually referred to as the prose of the Book of Common Prayer. The phrase generally indicates the prose of the services only, and only that prose which appears originally or uniquely, or in its lasting English form, in the Prayer Book.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer consists of a number of kinds of passages throughout the various services of the book. Prayers make up a good portion of the book, as its title would suggest, and are constructed according to the pattern of invocation, petition, and conclusion. A Collect, for instance, begins with an address to God the Father, ranging in length and complexity from the brevity and simplicity of "God" (Collect for Whitsunday) or "O Lord" (Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent) to the more expansive and resonant "Almighty and everlasting God" (Collect for the Second Sunday after Epiphany). Frequently the address is expanded by a relative clause beginning with

"who," giving characteristics of God, as in "O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth" (Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday). Then follows the prayer's request, the thing sought, often beginning with an imperative and frequently with "grant," or "mercifully grant," or "we beseech thee to." Each Collect closes with one of a number of formulaic endings, invoking Christ ("through Jesus Christ our Lord,") and frequently mentioning as well the rest of the Trinity ("through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the same spirit, ever one God, world without end" [Christmas Day]). But prayer is only one of the kinds of prose in the Prayer Book, and other passages can be classified as exhortation, explanatory and instructional passages, exchanges between priest and congregation or part of congregation, confession, blessing, declaration, or creed. These different kinds of passages have differing purposes and emphasize different elements of style in order to further their purposes. For instance, blessings tend to be resonant. Creeds recite well. Exchanges between the priest and congregation tend to be simple. Declarations also are simple, but forceful and eloquent. But although the prose of the book is adapted to the specific liturgical purposes of these different kinds of passages, the book has an overall uniformity of style and it makes sense to talk of its style rather than its styles.

The broadest and most pervasive aspect of the Prayer Book's style is rhythm, the general movement of the prose. It is a general effect, created and controlled by a variety of more specific elements of the prose. Perhaps because it is so general and pervasive an effect, it is one of the most noticeable aspects of the Prayer Book's prose. Moreover, rhythm is important. Ian Robinson's remarks about the Authorized Version of the Bible are apposite:

> the rhythm, so far from being a kind of rhetorical optional extra, is the shape of the meaning. It tells the reader how to connect and stress, and makes the point of its sense in that connecting and stressing. The rhythmic climaxes are the climaxes of sense. (27)

Rhythm, then, is not a mere ornament, but is essential to the meaning of prose and to the understanding of that meaning.

But because of its general nature, prose rhythm can be difficult to discuss and describe. Obviously prose has rhythm; moreover, we can often sense a difference in rhythm from one text or passage to another, or discern that a particular work or kind of writing has a characteristic rhythm. But in the absence of a descriptive system such as we have in metrics to describe verse rhythm, the analysis of prose rhythm presents a problem. Although we sense prose rhythm generally, it is more subtle and complex than metre, and we cannot easily pinpoint its components.

Nevertheless we can say some things about the creation of prose rhythm in the Book of Common Prayer. Essentially, it is established within Prayer-Book passages and sentences by recurrence of structure, by repetition of word and sound, and by variation. More specifically, sentence structure and phrasing control and pace the flow of speech. Certain kinds of smaller structures such as prepositional phrases and pairs of roughly synonymous words tend to create patterns of stress that make for noticeable rhythmical effects, especially when these structures appear in quantity and in combination with each other. Repetition of word or sound reinforces and furthers these patterns of stress by connecting and emphasizing. Briefly and simply, these are the main determinants of the Prayer Book's distinctive rhythm.

Rhythm is particularly important to prose meant for the ear. It is especially important to the prose of the Book of Common Prayer, which must both move ("stir up") and teach ("edify") by means of an appeal to and through the ear. In fact, the demands of public speech may be a source of prose rhythm:

> prose as such is without rhythmic law, and . . . it becomes rhythmic only as it is submitted to the control of some convention, a convention ultimately determined by the particular customs of oral delivery. That is to say, all rhythm in prose is finally due, however subtle its

> variations may become, to certain regulated customs which have originated in the relations between a public speaker and his audience. (Croll 357)

As we shall see, the importance of the demands of public speech to the Prayer Book's prose is reflected in most aspects of the book's style.

i.

These demands of public speech are evident in the Prayer Book's handling of sentence structure. Its sentences tend to be very long: Collects and other prayers are often the length of a small paragraph; sentences of a hundred words or more are common. This is an obvious point, but worth considering. Such sentences need to be structured and paced; they need to be separated into manageable parts. For the ease of the speaker they should fall into phrases short enough to be pronounced without running out of breath; for the ease of the hearer into phrases short enough to be grasped by the mind. And the sentences of the book do meet these requirements. They are carefully structured and controlled rather than breathlessly run-on. They achieve a dignified and steady movement despite their length. This control is achieved in a number of ways. Some sentences utilize the firm prayer-structure. Some use standard organizational structures such as first/second/third; now/then; you/we. But rhythmic control is mainly achieved by a general

adherence to the rules of periodic style and specifically by the use of equal members.

The term "equal members" derives from the rhetorical theory of the period. A period is an independent unit of speech with a beginning and end; basically it is a complete sentence. It may consist of two or more divisions known as members or cola. The length of a member is governed by the laws of breathing; it is not generally longer than about twenty syllables (Croll 325). The parts of a period are arranged and constructed to create repetition, symmetry, and balance, which not only pace and structure the sentence but give it beauties of sound as well. In the device of equal members (isocolon), members are of roughly equal length and weight, which gives a balanced and steady movement to the prose. Sister Miriam Joseph quotes Henry Peacham:

> Compar, of the Grecians called Isocolon and Parison, is a figure . . . which maketh the members of an oration to be almost of a just number of sillables, yet the equalitie of those members or parts, are not to be measured upon our fingers as if they were verses, but to bee tried by a secret sence of the eare. (297)

Equivalencies in length and weight of members often combine with parallelism of structure, or repetition of word or sound, to further point effects of balance.

For obvious reasons having to do with the necessity of

breathing while speaking, the prose of public speech "is much more regular than essay prose in its periodicity" (Croll 328). Not only did the demands of public speech work in favor of equal members, but the age in which the book was written did too:

> [I]n a great deal of the formal prose of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries we should find [a] controlled, regular, and stately movement. The prose of this period of direct classical and medieval influence is chiefly distinguished as displaying, along with a comparative freedom from syntactic precision, a constant sense of the weight and length of rhetorical members. It is rhetorically construed, in short, rather than grammatically. (Croll 322)

As we shall see, the demands of public speech and the teachings of rhetoric united to shape Prayer-Book prose into these regular rhetorical portions.

Equal members and the steady movement of prose in the Book of Common Prayer are abundant. But as with most individual aspects of the book's style, it is often impossible to find examples that illustrate a particular stylistic aspect in isolation from other components of style. Particular linguistic forms combine and interact with each other, making such isolation difficult. Still, some passages better illustrate a particular feature than

others, and the Collect for the Second Sunday After the Epiphany is a good example of equal members: "Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord." A Commination furnishes another good example of the device: "Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, and taketh man for his defence, and in his heart goeth from the Lord." The steady regular movement gives the sentence a slow impressiveness, a gravity suiting its matter. A more complex example of this kind of sentence movement is the first sentence of the Exhortation to Confession from Morning and Evening Prayer:

> Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy.

The sentence breaks into four main parts marked by semi-colons. Leaving out the address, they are of 27, 26, 19, and 24 syllables. The third and shortest, though, reads more slowly because of the pauses between the adjectives, with the result that it feels roughly equal in

length and weight to the others. The controlled, careful movement of the sentence helps make persuasive the carefully reasoned argument for confession. The Prefatory Address from Matrimony offers an example of the creation of a steadiness of movement by the repetition of units of equal weight and length, combined with the formal structuring device first/second/third:

> First, It was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name. Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body. Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

These regular, articulated sentences are characteristic of much of the book's prose, commanding by their slow, steady weightiness the attention of the congregation and giving to the prose the weight and dignity that formal public worship demands.

Members equal in length and weight, giving a regular and steady movement to the prose, help to structure the prose and shape rhythm. But this regular movement of prose is only the beginning of rhetorical structure: it is the

base on which many more rhetorical devices build. Balance of form as well as balance in length of sentence portions characterizes the prose of the Prayer Book:

> The "harmony," "number," or "rhythm" of a period depends chiefly upon the relations between the members of which it consists: relations of length, form, and sound. In oratorical style there is always a tendency to arrange them in groups of two or more of approximately (but not exactly) the same length, and to point the effect of balance thus produced by similarity in the syntactic form of these members, by correspondences in sound between words in corresponding positions in them, and finally by parallel or related rhythmic movements. (Croll 325-326)

Oratorical prose such as we find in the Book of Common Prayer creates this effect of balance by means of the rhetorical figures of repetition--of length, structure, word, and sound. We have considered, in equal members, the repetition of length and will now turn to the repetition of structure.

The repetition of similar syntactic structures is common in the Prayer Book. Where it occurs, successive clauses have similar structures: the same parts of speech are placed in equivalent positions in two or more clauses; sometimes particular words are repeated in equivalent

positions in their clauses. The repetition of stress patterns and the balanced parallelism thus created are satisfying both to the ear and mind of the hearer. Repetition of similar syntactic structure, called parison in rhetorical theory, frequently combines with equal members, or isocolon. The combination is well illustrated in the Exhortation from the Visitation of the Sick:

> For he himself went not up to joy but first he suffered pain; he entered not into his glory before he was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with him in everlasting life.

These perfectly balanced clauses give an air of reasoned, considerate thought, of the careful elaboration of an idea. The contrasting pairs, "death" and "everlasting life," further the effect of balance. Repeated similar structures are often lists of petitions, each introduced with an imperative, as in this example from A Prayer for the Royal Family: "Endue them with thy Holy Spirit; enrich them with thy heavenly grace; prosper them with all happiness; and bring them to thine everlasting kingdom." A similar example is from the Collect for the 7th Sunday after Trinity: "Graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same." The repeated

parallel petitions build up a rhythmical pattern which, combined with the imperatives, lends force to the matter.

The Prayer Book is very fond of the repetition of structures, especially of paired clauses joined by conjunctions. It comes close to overusing the device in a prayer composed from a combination of similarly structured fragments of Scripture:

> give him a right understanding of himself, and of thy threats and promises; that he may neither cast away his confidence in thee, nor place it any where but in thee. Give him strength against all his temptations, and heal all his distempers. Break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure; but make him to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver him from the fear of the enemy, and lift up the light of thy countenance upon him, and give him peace. (A Prayer for persons troubled in mind or in conscience, Visitation of the Sick)

The pairing of similar clauses is sustained to the point where a sing-song rhythm threatens to overwhelm the sense. But the prayer is saved by variation: by the choice of a petition varied by the elaboration of "that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice" (Ps. 51:8); and by a final variation, the use of "and give him peace" (Num. 6:26), a

third wonderfully brief petition added to the final pair of similar clauses. The book's fondness for similar structures is such that it will repeat, ungrammatically but with no lessening of the logic of the statement, a structure used earlier: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and hath preserved you in the great danger of child-birth: You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God" (Churching of Women, my italics). This ungrammatical repetition recalls Croll's claim that much of the prose of the time is "rhetorically construed . . . rather than grammatically" (332).

The repetition of similar syntactic structures, a device we have seen used heavily, is very effective when used sparingly, as in the brief and compact proper Collects, where a simple parallelism stands out. The device is the main ornament in the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter: "O Lord, from whom all good things do come: Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ." But these balanced clauses are more than ornament, of course: their parallelism connects by structure and position what is connected by causality--thought and deed. Similarly, the Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Lent achieves a balance that is harmonious but reinforces the sense of the prayer: "Grant,

we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved." Here the balance, provided not by parallel coordinate clauses but by similarities in the order and form of the components of the clauses--prepositional phrase followed by verb phrase--and by the echoes of "worthily" and "mercifully" and "be punished" and "be relieved," helps make clear the contrast between the treatment we merit and the treatment we may receive. Many of the Collects illustrate the effectiveness of such simple parallelisms, both as ornament and as a way of making clearer the meaning of the Collect.

The repetition of similar syntactic structures achieves some of its most notable effects when slight variations in length or structure of parts are introduced. The General Confession at Communion illustrates this: "We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable." The last two clauses are identical in form until the end, when the corresponding "grievous unto us" and "intolerable" vary in form, the second stronger and giving a sense of definite finish. Variation in length can give a grand sense of expansion. "I, for my part, shall be ready; and, according to mine Office, I bid you in the Name of God, I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this holy Communion"

(2nd Exhortation to Communion). The syntactic parallelism of "I bid you in the Name of God" and "I call you in Christ's behalf" creates an expectation that a similarly brief clause is to be introduced with "I exhort you." Instead, the clause is varied and expanded by "as ye love your own salvation," the expansion giving a welcome sense of liberation. The Prayer Book generally uses parallelism of structure flexibly and skilfully, with variety, and in the service of both sound and meaning.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer, then, is a prose characterized by a steady movement, a balance between parts, and regular patterning. It is made this kind of prose by its use of rhetorical schemes, which, as Brian Vickers points out, "offered various conventional arrangements of words into patterns, visual and aural" (35). As in Shakespeare's prose, "[t]he most frequently used of these schemata verborum are all based on parallelism, either of sense (antithesis) or of structure" (Vickers 36). We have just seen examples of parallelism of structure; the book also uses a kind of balancing that is a precise balance between words and ideas rather than a general structural balance: a word is countered by its opposite rather than by another instance of the same part of speech. The Prefatory Address at Matrimony abundantly illustrates this:

> Dear beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this

> congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church. (my italics).

The balancing pairs are the main ornaments of this part of the Address; they also, of course, express the matter. Their similarity in form draws attention to their contrast in meaning. This is also the case in "We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness" (Burial Collect). But the primary use of antithesis is to further the effects of equal members and the repetition of similar structures. When each half of an antithetical pair is in a separate sentence portion, each half of the pair seems, in its opposition to its mate, to define and distinguish the portion it is in. The Prayer of Saint Chrysostom, for instance, furnishes an example of opposites--"in this world" and "in the world to come"--supplying both a contrast in thought and a way of reinforcing the demarcation of phrases: "granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting." Similarly in the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent (based on Rom. 13:12): "Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light." Antithesis points the effects of both equal members and repetition of similar

syntactic structures in the following: "O Merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this Child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him. Grant that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him" (Prayer before Baptism). The antithetical pairs, "the old Adam" and "the new man," "may be so buried" and "may be raised up," "all carnal affections" and "all things belonging to the Spirit," and "may die in him" and "may live and grow in him," coupled with sentence portions of similar length and structure, create a tremendously balanced, polished, and rhythmic result.

Further refinements of the balanced structure so commonly used in the Prayer Book are occasionally achieved by the use of mirrored and interlocking structures, which sharpen the effects of balance. The mirrored structure, or the rhetorical figure antimetabole, repeats key words in the reverse order from their first use. The device shapes and ornaments a simple exchange from Morning and Evening Prayer: "Priest. Praise ye the Lord. Answer. The Lord's Name be praised." The device lends a kind of logical inevitability to the admonition at the opening of the Churching of Women: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance . . . You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God." In the Third Exhortation at Communion it emphasizes unity: "then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ,

and Christ with us." In the 2nd Prayer at Public Baptism it expands on Christ's words: "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: So give now unto us that ask; let us that seek find; open the gate unto us that knock." The device of interlocking structure repeats matter in a way that sharpens its sense by switching the positioning of negatives. A well-known example comes from the General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done." Another instance comes from the Collect at Burial: "in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally." Mirrored and interlocking structures are noticeable devices, sometimes drawing attention to the puzzling or paradoxical. As well, by the employment of symmetry and repetition they create structures pleasing to the ear.

The stylistic norm of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer may be a regular, patterned, balanced prose, but the book also uses a simple, direct, sometimes even blunt prose. This is not surprising, for as Croll points out, "Variations . . . from the regularity of a pattern . . . are, it must always be remembered, the chief resources of the orator in his quest of rhythmic and expressive beauty" (326). As well as introducing variation by simplicity, the

Prayer Book also varies its sentence structure and rhythm by delaying an expected part of a sentence. These variations produce directness and emphasis.

In the midst of complexly patterned sentences are noticeably simpler sentences which, all the more so because of their position, possess a good share of the force of simplicity. The General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer illustrates this:

> Almighty and most merciful Father, We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us.

The sentence, "And there is no health in us," is a simple, forceful, emphatic culmination of a series of statements employing a number of artful devices: repetition of similar structure and of initial words, pairs of synonyms, alliteration, assonance, and interlocking structure. The sentence stands out in relief: it not only varies from the "we have" structure, but is devoid of ornamentation. It is the unornamented climax of a heavily patterned arrangement of clauses. The Absolution at Communion works similarly:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to

> all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; Have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The "Have mercy upon you" clause is the plainest, sparest way of expressing the meaning, of effecting the absolution; it appears even simpler and shorter surrounded as it is by longer, more ornate and patterned clauses. It also gains force and emphasis from its position so far from its grammatical subject, "Almighty God." A final example of spare but tremendously effective expression comes from the well-known words at Burial (based on Job 14:1-2): "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." The passage begins calmly and simply; the force of these two sentences is allowed to come from their meaning; stylistic embellishment is not needed. In this occasional reliance on simplicity, the Book of Common Prayer shows its debt to earlier English writing (Brook 70).

The Prayer Book also employs a simple style that explains doctrine, gives orders, makes declarations, and asks questions. As in the second sentence of this Exhortation from the Visitation of the Sick, this is a plainness that leaves no doubts about doctrine:

> Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly, that it is God's visitation.

It tells the people at Public Baptism, "Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that he will likewise favourably receive this present Infant" (Exhortation). At the Churching of Women it gives an order: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and hath preserved you in the great danger of child-birth: You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God, and say, [Psalm 116]." The clarity of this style suits declarations: "I pronounce that they be man and wife together" (Matrimony). Its simplicity also suits many of the questions asked of members of the congregation. Questions in A Catechism, particularly, are generally perfectly straightforward and unornamented: "What is thy duty towards thy Neighbor?" or, "What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?" This variation of the usually heavily patterned Prayer-Book prose is efficient and easily understood.

Plainness, then, is one variation of sentence structure; another is delay in supplying what is grammatically expected. We wait for the missing part, most frequently a verb, and it seems to fall with more force

when it arrives. This aural expectation gives greater force to the petition in many prayers with an expanded address, for instance in the Communion Prayer of Consecration, where the account of the redemption is grammatically part of the address:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his Holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again: Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee.

The petition seems more heartfelt after the long explanatory address that precedes it; it is with a sort of relief that our ears register the verb they have expected. Moreover, the expansion of the address educates and reminds the hearer about the significance and gravity of the request. A delayed and consequently emphasized principal verb frequently occurs in structures beginning "Forasmuch", as in the words from Burial: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear <u>brother</u> here departed: we therefore

commit <u>his</u> body to the ground" or in the opening address for Public Baptism:

> Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost: I beseech you to call upon God the Father.

This use of subordination and grammatical delay as a means of educating and emphasizing is typical of the Book of Common Prayer.

Two very effective examples of delay of expected sentence components are from the Absolution at Morning and Evening Prayer and the Invitation to Confession at Communion. The delayed predicate of the Absolution echoes the two-beat phrases that distinguish the expansion of the subject:

> Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and hath given power and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.

The Invitation to Confession places the tremendously simple

"Draw near with faith" in the emphatic position:

> Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways: Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

As Margaret Doody points out, in this passage the expansion of the subject ("Ye that do . . .") "defines the spiritual state, or the state of the will, which is an essential condition of the action" (114). The sentence, then, is an effective, and beautiful, embodiment of the theology of the passage. The delay of the grammatically expected lends such passages a quiet force.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is characterized by sentences whose steadiness of movement and balance between parts create a dignity of expression. They are written not for the eye, which sees them falling far down the page, but for the ear, on which they fall in pleasantly but not monotonously regular portions, and for the mind, which is able to grasp them in these portions. These regular, balanced, patterned sentences are varied by simplicity and by changes in sentence structure that effect changes in rhythm and emphasis. The prevailing rhythms of

the book, grounded in the sentence structure, are furthered and polished, as we shall see, by the book's rhythmic phrasal structures and skilful control of sound.

ii.

The Book of Common Prayer repeatedly uses certain kinds of phrases which, both in themselves and especially in combination with each other, create noticeable rhythmic effects. Three similar kinds of such rhythmic phrases are prepositional phrases with nouns; pairs of synonyms or words of near or related meaning coupled by a conjunction; and phrases in which adjectives and adverbs are used in abundance and usually paired each with their own noun or verb. The rhythm of the book's prose, initially difficult to explain, becomes less mysterious once we are aware of the capacity of these kinds of phrases to determine rhythm. The idea of a kind of phrase having a rhythmic quality might seem odd at first. But consider this rhythmic sentence from the King James version of the 23rd Psalm: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." The rhythm is created partly by the splitting of the verse into two even parts and partly by rhythmic phrases: "goodness and mercy," a pair, and "all the days of my life" and "in the house of the Lord for ever," prepositional phrases. Or consider this Prayer Book Collect:

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our

> supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Collect to be said after the Offertory at Communion)

The roughly synonymous pairs, the prepositional phrases, and the noun-adjective pairs, all of which set up alternations of stressed and unstressed syllables, give the prayer a strong rhythm. Two main parts separated by a semi-colon, each falling in turn into two parts, structure the Collect; and these regular portions of the prayer are further set off by the occurrence of a rhythmic phrase at the end of each. These three kinds of rhythmic phrases generally work together and in concert with other devices, but each will first be scrutinized separately.

The standard rhythmic prepositional phrase is a noun phrase consisting of a noun and a prepositional phrase with 'of', as in "the sins of the flesh" or "the book of common prayer." This structure has an obvious rhythmic appeal, stemming from its combination of unstressed (because rhetorically unimportant) preposition with stressed (because more significant) nouns. Examples of this kind of phrase are abundant: the prayer at Burial, for instance, provides "the souls of the faithful," "the burden of the

flesh," "the miseries of this sinful world," "the number of thine elect," and "the true faith of thy holy Name." Other kinds of prepositional phrases, of course, create similar effects: "armed with thy defence" (Prayer In the time of War and Tumults), "defended by thy mighty power" (Collect for the 5th Sunday after Epiphany), "cleansed from all their sins" (Collect for the 21st Sunday after Trinity). The Prayer Book's fondness for the rhythmic prepositional phrase is striking: although it occasionally uses an apostrophe to indicate possession, as in "Christ's body" (Address at Matrimony) or "thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution" (Prayer of Consecration at Communion), the book generally chooses the expanded prepositional phrase, as in "the hearty desires of thy humble servants" (Collect for 3rd Sunday in Lent) or "the secrets of our hearts" (Burial). It prefers the expanded possessive form for its rhythmic qualities. The expanded form, too, is more easily grasped by the hearer, because it places the noun first and then modifies it.

The petition of the Collect for the Third Sunday Before Lent illustrates the rhythmic effects of the prepositional phrase: "we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name." Each movement of the petition ends with a rhythmic prepositional phrase: "the prayers of thy people," "punished for our offences,"

"delivered by thy goodness," and "the glory of thy Name." These phrases delineate the regular movement of the prose; they mark by recognizably similar patterns of stress the ends of the portions of the prayer. Prepositional phrases often in this way mark the ends of clauses and longer phrases. As well as emphasizing the movement of sentences, rhythmic prepositional phrases also further the effects of repeated similar structures. The Collect for the Fifth Sunday After Trinity illustrates this: "Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord." The prepositional phrases "ordered by thy governance" and "serve thee in all godly quietness" have a similar rhythmic pattern, and the repetition of this pattern at the end of each clause reinforces the effect of balance achieved by the similarly structured clauses. This way of pointing and polishing sentence structures can be very effective. The Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent shows how the repetition of the characteristic rhythm of the prepositional phrase can serve as an important ornament in a simple Collect: "We beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord." The similar rhythms of the three expanded prepositional phrases--"the hearty desires of thy humble servants," "the

right hand of thy Majesty," and "our defence against all our enemies"--create a pleasing repetition of stress patterns. The prepositional phrase, then, plays a considerable role in the determination of the Prayer Book's prose rhythm.

The second kind of rhythmic phrase, the pair of synonyms, near synonyms, or words of related meaning, is one of the more immediately noticeable characteristics of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer and part of its inheritance from earlier English prose. The book often uses such pairs of English words to translate single Latin words from the Use of Sarum, the medieval rite that is a source for much of the Prayer Book. For instance, the Prayer Book's Collect for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany translates the ad protegendum of its source as "to help and defend." Two theories account for the doubling in the book: one maintains that the doubling is glossatory (Booty 172); the other that the doubling has a rhythmic quality (Lewis 217-218). Another possibility is that these pairs slow the meaning of the prose, giving the mind of the hearer a better chance to absorb and consider the thought. Whatever the reason for the frequent use of such doublings, they have an incontrovertible rhythmic quality, especially when in combination. As with the prepositional phrase, the rhythm comes from the combination of the stressed (because important) noun, verb, or adjective with the unstressed (because rhetorically unimportant) conjunction.

These rhythmic pairs are found on every page of the Prayer Book. The Prayer for the Church Militant, for instance, contains the following sentence:

> Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all Bishops and Curates, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments: And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear, and receive thy holy Word; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

The effect of this heavy pairing of words is rhythmic and emotional intensity. Similarly, an abundance of pairs gives force and a strong rhythm to the Absolution at Morning and Evening Prayer:

> Almighty God . . . who . . . hath given power and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.

But pairs of synonymous or related words are not always used so heavily and to create such emphasis. Often they are a minor ornament, making the passage where they occur slightly more patterned, balanced, and rhythmic. This is

the case in the Collect for the Third Sunday After the Epiphany, where pairings ornament an otherwise plain Collect: "Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord." Pairs of synonymous, nearly synonymous, or related words, then, help to create the Prayer Book's noticeable and characteristic effects of rhythm and balance.

The book's third kind of commonly used rhythmic structure is the phrase with adjective-noun or adverb-verb couplings. Like the pairing of synonymous words, this use of modifiers slows down the prose for the better understanding of the hearer and lends a pleasing rhythmic quality. The modifier adds an additional stress to the noun or verb, creating a rhythmic two-beat structure, as, for example, in "merciful Father" (Prayer from the Litany), "heavenly Father" (Prayer for Rain), "his wonderful conversion" (Collect for the Conversion of Saint Paul), "everlasting Life" (Collect for Saint Philip and Saint James's Day), and "mercifully hear" (Collect for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany). The Collect for the Twentieth Sunday After Trinity shows the effects of the repetition of these rhythmic two-beat phrases, here "thy bountiful goodness" and "may cheerfully accomplish", as well as a pair, "body and soul":

> O Almighty and most merciful God, of thy

> bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The rhythms contributed by these two-beat phrases are a good part of what keeps the prayer from rhythmic flatness. But adjective-noun and adverb-verb pairs sometimes do more than lend rhythmic vigour, however. In the beginning of the first post-Communion Prayer--"we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving"--they create the intensity demanded by the liturgical occasion.

Frequently modifiers expand prepositional phrases and synonymous pairs. A common form of the prepositional phrase has one or two adjective-noun pairs. There are many examples: "the holy estate of Matrimony" (Questions at Matrimony), "the truth of thy holy Word" (Prayer for the Church Militant), "the true faith of thy holy Name" (Prayer at Burial), or "the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing" (2nd Prayer at Baptism). This structure is used effectively at Burial to sustain the emotional and rhythmic pitch of the address: "Yet, O lord God most holy, O lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death." But in general, the Prayer Book is sparing in its use of the

prepositional phrase with two adjective-noun pairs, a phrase which is, after all, the classic bombast structure.

Synonymous or related pairs, like prepositional phrases, are often expanded by one or two modifiers. There are many examples: "everlasting joy and felicity" (A Prayer for the King's Majesty), "godly and quietly governed" (Prayer for the Church Militant), "truly repent and unfeignedly believe" (Absolution from Morning and Evening Prayer), and "a pure heart and humble voice" (Confession from Morning and Evening Prayer). Such modified pairs lend a rhythmic force to the Confession at Communion, helping to create a feeling of sincerity: "We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings." The Prayer Book's prose, then, is characterized by the abundant use of adjectives and adverbs, and this abundance has a considerable effect on prose rhythm. Along with prepositional phrases and synonymous pairs, these abundant modifiers help to create the resonant and impressive prose of public worship.

The importance of these three structures stems from their two-beat rhythm. In combination, as they often are, they set up a string of two-beat phrases, significantly shaping the rhythm of the prose. The Invitation to Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer is a notable example of this sustained use of rhythmic phrases--of pairs, prepositional phrases, and abundant modifiers:

> Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us

> in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me. . . .

The fixed two-beat rhythms of these phrases invigorate the prose by creating rhythmic patterns. These rhythmic phrases are in themselves determinants of rhythm, and they also work to emphasize and refine the larger patterns set up by the Prayer Book's sentence structure.

Two more characteristic Prayer-Book structures deserve brief mention, and they are the list of three or more words, and phrases in apposition. One of the well-known

passages of the Prayer Book illustrates the list:

> Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent)

Generally this structure is found at a climax of sense and its rhythm often represents a variation from the prevailing pattern. The device makes appropriately intense the Communion Prayer of Consecration: "who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." It contributes to the sense of culmination in the last of the nine sentences beginning, "Cursed . . ." in A Commination: "Cursed are the unmerciful, fornicators, and adulterers, covetous persons, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards, and extortioners." And in the Apostles' Creed a list of rhythmic noun-phrases produces a tremendously rhythmic and recitable last line, "I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting."

Apposition is most commonly found in the openings of

prayers. The usual prayer address apposes a number of descriptions of God, descriptions in themselves rhythmic, being composed of pairs, prepositional phrases, and phrases with an abundance of modifiers. Examples are abundant: "O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life" (Prayer at Matrimony), "Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men" (Confession at Communion), and "Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that flee to thee for succour, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead" (2nd Prayer at Baptism). Standard prayer closings also employ several rhythmic phrases, although not in apposition. These addresses and closings give resonance to the prayers of the book.

By now it is clear that the Book of Common Prayer does not choose the sparest way of expressing its matter. Motivated by a desire to duplicate in English the sonorous effects of its Latin originals, the book elaborates its matter by means of these expanded and resonant phrases. These phrases ornament, they emphasize, and they raise the prose to an appropriate pitch. But this elaboration has another result, and that is to make the matter of the book at the same time both more easily understood by its hearers and more theologically precise.

iii.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is

characterized not only by its choice of sentence structure and common kinds of phrase, but by its skilful manipulation of the smallest components of speech--of word and sound and stress. The book's attention to sound reflects its aim of an aurally impressive and dignified service. We have seen how its sentence structure and frequent use of certain typical phrases build a sturdy rhythmic base; now we will see how the tiniest units of the book's prose provide, by means of repetition of word and sound and manipulation of accent, a kind of aural polish to that base.

Repetition of initial words, or anaphora, is the most common kind of repetition of words in the Prayer Book. It frequently occurs along with repetition of sentence structure and it often functions as a structural device in a passage. In the address to the godparents at Baptism, the repetition of 'ye have' gives unity and force: "Dearly beloved, ye have brought this Child here to be baptized; ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive him. . . . Ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his gospel. . . ." Anaphora functions in a similar fashion in the second Exhortation at Communion: "I bid you in the Name of God, I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this holy Communion." And in the General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer--"We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and

desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us"--the repetition makes the recital of sins build up most powerfully to its grave, unbearable conclusion.

Repetition of any word lends an extra force and noticeableness to that word, thus emphasizing its meaning. Sometimes this repetition is part of, and reinforces, balanced structures. For instance, in the Collect for the Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Trinity the repetition of 'plenteously' draws attention to a cause and effect relation: "that they plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works may of thee be plenteously rewarded." Repetition also points out antithesis, as in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday After Trinity: "so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal." Here, the repetition of "things" draws attention to the antithesis, making the important contrast more noticeable. Repetition of words draws attention to meaning; it links in sound words that are linked in meaning. And as Joseph points out (307), the figures of repetition are especially useful in prose meant to be read aloud.

Repetition of end words often gives a pleasant finishing emphasis to a passage. The Prayer Book chooses to repeat a pronoun when it could instead use it only once

and have it apply to several other words. The questions at Matrimony repeat the pronoun for the sake of the loveliness their repetition helps to create: "Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?". At Public Baptism the end repetition of "them" combines with the earlier repetition of "he": "Ye perceive how by his outward gesture and deed he declared his good will toward them; for he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them." The result is an emphasis and delineation of the parallel clauses, suiting the sequence of actions being described.

As well as repetition of word, the Book of Common Prayer employs repetition of sound. One frequently used and simple device based on repetition of sound is alliteration. As a kind of repetition, it is a way of making something noticeable and emphatic. For instance in A Commination, it draws attention to this blunt passage by the repetition of p's, s's, and f's: "such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend." Being more noticeable, alliterating parts are more likely to register on the ear, and so alliteration can further meaning by singling out for attention important words, for

instance words with contrasting meanings. The General Thanksgiving illustrates this in its contrasting and alliterating phrases, "not only with our lips, but in our lives." Alliteration can point the effects of balanced structures, as it does in a part of the first Exhortation at Communion by means of the alliteration of d's, coupled of course with the pairing of "worthily" and "unworthily": "so divine and comfortable a thing to them who receive it worthily, and so dangerous to them that will presume to receive it unworthily." By its creation of emphasis, it furthers rhythm and can reinforce the effects of rhythmic prepositional phrases and doublets. For instance it makes more noticeable the pairs, "the changes and chances of this mortal life" (first Post-Offertory Collect), "to have and to hold" (Matrimony), and "most humble and hearty thanks" (first Exhortation at Communion). And it reinforces the pairs of prepositional phrases in "dispose the way of thy servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation" (first Post-Offertory Collect) and in "in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments" (second Post-Offertory Collect). In its ornamental capacity, it can function as the sole ornament in an otherwise spare collect. Generally, the Prayer Book uses alliteration with restraint and control, and in the service of both sound and meaning. The book's use of it stems from both stylistic traditions which nourished the book. Brook points out that alliteration is a frequent component of earlier English

religious writing (64), while Croll notes that the Latin originals of the book "are singularly rich in rhyme, alliteration, balance, and the other figures of sound which form the chief adornments of medieval Latin prose" (310).

A second figure based on the repetition of sound, assonance, occasionally achieves some interesting effects. A notable example comes from the Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us." The sombre 'o' sounds reinforce the sombreness and seriousness of the content. Assonance can also reinforce the cheerfulness of a hopeful message, as it does in the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent: "that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal." The 'i' sounds give an uplifting sound to an uplifting content. Of course, the sombre or joyous note is struck by the meaning of the passage, by what is said rather than by how it is said, but in passages like these the sound effectively echoes the sense.

The most frequent use of assonance, however, is simply to please the ear with repetition of sound. For instance, the Collect for the First Sunday After the Epiphany piles up 'e' sounds: "O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee." So too does the Prayer for the Church Militant:

> We beseech thee most mercifully [to accept our alms and oblations, and] to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord.

Assonance gives a pleasing unity to such passages.

Rhyme and partial rhyme are a third and particularly strong form of repetition of sound, although not very common. A Prayer for the King's Majesty furnishes a simple example: "grant him in health and wealth long to live." Rhyme reinforces similarity of structure, as it does with the two clauses beginning "take" and "make": "Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God" (Invitation to Confession, Communion). A passage from a prayer from early in the Visitation of the Sick delineates its equal members by final near-rhyming sounds: "Look upon him with the eyes of thy mercy, give him comfort and sure confidence in thee, defend him from the danger of the enemy, and keep him in perpetual peace and safety." These end-sounds are not obtrusive; in fact it is the similarity of structure of the clauses that draws attention. But the use of near-rhyme polishes the passage.

The use of two words stemming from the same root, known as polyptoton, provides the aural pleasure of similar sounds and invites the hearers to attend to the meaning.

This figure would probably have been more noticeable to Renaissance Englishmen than to us--connections between words like "spirit" and "inspiration" would have been quite obvious--simply because of the fluid state of their language. The Second Collect for the King, from Communion, provides a number of instances of root words: "God," "godly," and "godliness," and "governance," "govern," and "Governor." This device is often built around such frequently used words of the Prayer Book as 'life' or 'mercy.' It often has the intensifying effect of repetition: "Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful father" (Confession at Communion). And in one of the book's most notable example of polyptoton, the root words "holy" and "holiness" combine with the word play of "wholly" and "holy": "submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life" (third Exhortation at Communion). The use of words from a common root is yet another simple device of the Prayer Book used sparingly and in the service of both meaning and aural pleasure.

Finally, the Book of Common Prayer manipulates accent to create two different, noticeable patterns of stress. The first of these is the use of successive accented syllables, which C.S. Lewis, calling "collisions of strong syllables," attributes to the inheritance from Anglo-Saxon (219). Successive accented syllables occur at various

points in the Book of Common Prayer, and since their rhythm is a variation from prose's usual (irregular) alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, they emphasize, draw attention toward, make stand out. Several examples of these clusters of stress come at the beginning of the petitions of prayers. For instance, A Prayer for the Clergy and People, taken from Morning and Evening Prayer, reads, "Send down upon our Bishops and Curates . . . the healthful Spirit of thy grace." Similarly, the Collect for the Twelfth Sunday After Trinity reads, "Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy." But this stress pattern occurs at places other than the start of petitions: some of the most notable instances can be found in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent ("with great might succour us"), the Visitation of the Sick ("just men made perfect"), and the Whitsunday Preface ("with a sudden great sound"). These phrases are made particularly striking by the accumulation of stress.

Cadence, on the other hand, depends on the separation of stressed syllables. Cadence occurs when two or more successive accents of decreasing strength and diminishing frequency occur immediately before a pause. More simply, cadence is an arrangement of stress resulting in a falling rhythm. Croll gives a useful and detailed account of it and of its frequent occurrence in the Prayer Book. The second Collect at Morning Prayer illustrates the pervasiveness of cadence in the book:

> O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord [cadence], in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life [cadence], whose service is perfect freedom [cadence]: Defend us thy humble servants [cadence] in all assaults of our enemies [cadence]; that we, surely trusting in thy defence [cadence], may not fear the power of any adversaries [cadence].

As the above example suggests, cadences frequently coincide with the rhythmic pairs, adjective-noun phrases, and prepositional phrases of the book (Croll 335-336). It should be stressed, however, that cadence is not rhythm, but is a particular aspect of rhythm that provides the final lovely finish on the prose of the book.

As the preceding account suggests, the Book of Common Prayer was composed at a fortunate moment. Its access to a living tradition of rhetoric and of oratorical prose furnished it with the means to achieve its purposes through a prose at once clear and understandable, yet moving and dignified. This tradition, which provided the compilers of the Book of Common Prayer with an acute understanding of the effective manipulation of sentence structure, phrasing, and sound, furnished the Prayer Book with the means to communicate its burden of meaning in a way that is both emphatic and pleasing to the ear. As C. S. Lewis remarks, "There are of course many good, and different, ways both of writing prose and of praying" (221), but the Book of Common

Prayer just happens to embody both. As we shall see in the next chapter, The Alternative Service Book 1980, no longer rooted in a living tradition of rhetoric and oratorical prose, is often unable to match the standards of liturgical prose established by the Book of Common Prayer.

IV. The Prose of The Alternative Service Book 1980

The compilers of the Book of Common Prayer probably never intended the book to become the fixed, unchanging institution that it did. The original Preface, introducing a book that considerably altered the service of the church, justifies the new book with the claim that it is correcting the inevitable errors and abuses that creep into any human construction over time, a claim that more or less admits that the book will in time need further alteration:

> There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted: As, among other things, it may plainly appear by the Common Prayers in the Church, commonly called Divine Service.

The 1662 Preface admits broader grounds for change:

> the particular Forms of Divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient.

Given that the 1662 book is itself the result of a century-long series of alterations to the liturgy, and that its Preface admits that alterations to liturgy are sometimes warranted, and that this same Preface explains the necessity of modernizing the language of the earlier prayer books, it is more surprising that the book was never changed before than that it was changed in 1980, after more than three hundred years of use.

There were, however, attempts to alter the Book of Common Prayer in those three hundred years. In 1689 changes aimed at making the Prayer Book more acceptable to Presbyterians were proposed but rejected even before reaching debate in Convocation. In 1872 the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act allowed shortened Morning and Evening Prayer services and shorter Sunday services. In 1927, after years of debate, the Church Assembly produced a revised book, but Parliament would not authorize it. Nevertheless, the 1928 Prayer Book was published, and used in some parishes over the next forty years.

Despite the failure of the 1928 revisions to gain legal approval, there was general agreement within the Church of England that Prayer-Book revision was needed. The 1965 Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure allowed the Church legally to engage in liturgical reform and produce alternative services without the approval of Parliament. The first result of the Measure was the set of services known as "Series 1" which, derived

from the 1928 revisions, was not stylistically a dramatic change from the 1662 version. Series 2, similarly, which came into use in 1967, was also linguistically conservative, maintaining the traditional thou, thee, thy, and thine.

But the Series 3 services, appearing through the 1970's, provoked considerable controversy, and it was their language that drew the most fire: God was addressed as "you," for example, the Creed began "We believe," and the Lord's Prayer contained the notorious line, "Do not bring us to the test." In angry response to such changes, the Prayer Book Society was founded in 1975 "to uphold the worship and doctrine of the Church of England as enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer" and to press for the continued use of that book "as a major element in the worshipping life of the Church of England" (qtd. in Welsby 241). A petition of six hundred notable names was presented to the General Synod in 1979, protesting the discontinuation of the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version. Nonetheless, in 1980 The Alternative Service Book 1980, consisting of revised Series 3 services, an alternate communion made up of the Series 1 and 2 versions combined, a new Psalter, and a new calendar and lectionary, was published. The book was authorized to be used for the next ten years and, as its name suggests, it was intended as an alternative to and not a replacement for the Book of Common Prayer.

The Alternative Service Book 1980, like the Book of Common Prayer, is a guide for conducting the services of the Church of England. It differs from the Prayer Book not only in its language but in the services it contains and in the structure and content of individual services. The main points to note about the construction of the new book are as follows. The book drops some Prayer-Book material, for instance the services of The Visitation of the Sick, The Catechism, and A Commination. It adds new material, as for example new services for Thanksgiving after Adoption and The Renewal of Baptismal Vows as well as many newly composed prayers. It includes material from sources other than the Prayer Book: it borrows prayers from the 1928 Prayer Book and the Book of Common Worship of the Church of South India (Commentary 52) and it takes its Scripture from modern translations--from the 1977 The Psalms: A New Translation for Worship and from the New English Bible, the Jerusalem Bible, Today's English Version, and the Revised Standard Version. It provides a great many options both within services and in the choice of services, for instance many choices of prayers, opportunities for sermons and hymns, regular or shorter forms of Morning and Evening Prayer, and two forms of Holy Communion. And it frequently alters Prayer-Book originals, as when it changes the order of events in a service, moves prayers from one service to another, rewrites prayers to make them clearer to modern ears or to change their emphasis, or lays out most of its

prayers as if they were verse.

The differences in the content of the two books are considerable and significant, but the particular concern of this chapter is with the language of the Alternative Service Book and its differences from the language of the Book of Common Prayer. The first point to note about the language of the Alternative Service Book is that, excepting Holy Communion Rite B, which uses traditional language, the new service book is intended to be and tries to be a liturgy in modern English. Its Preface talks about the need to modernize the liturgy because "any liturgy, no matter how timeless its qualities, also belongs to a particular period and culture," and the Commentary makes clear in its chapter on the language of worship that a primary linguistic aim of the Alternative Service Book is that it be in contemporary English. More importantly, the book itself testifies to this aim. It replaces old verb-forms (art; be ed as the present indicative plural; dost, hast, didst, and other second person singular verbs in -(e)st; hath and other third person singular verbs in -(e)th; and so on) with their modern forms. It replaces second person singular pronouns (thou, thee, thy, thine) and the second person plural nominative pronoun (ye) with their modern forms. It frequently does away with the same, used in the Prayer Book as a sort of all-purpose pronoun. It updates prepositions to the usual modern choice, as in its replacement of "Defend us . . . in all assaults of our

enemies" (second Collect, Morning Prayer) with "Defend us . . . from all assaults of our enemies," or in its change of "contempt of thy word" (Good Friday Collect) to "contempt for thy word," or in its replacement of unto with to. It replaces archaic diction with modern equivalents. For example it changes "by thy special grace preventing us" (Collect for Easter Sunday) to "by your special grace going before us"; "the quick and the dead" (Apostles' Creed) to "the living and the dead"; "corrupt affections" (Collect for Easter Eve) to "evil desires." Some Alternative Service Book prayers differ from their Prayer-Book originals only in such straightforward modernizations. For example, the new book's Communion Collect differs from its Prayer-Book form only in its modernized verb-forms ("are open" rather than "be open"; "hidden" rather than "hid"), modernized pronouns ("your" and "you" rather than "thy" and "thee"), and a modernized preposition ("to" rather than "unto").

Many other prayers, however, are altered in more substantial ways. The new book changes the grammatical structure of many Prayer-Book sentences from their long, complex, much-subordinated form to shorter, simpler, more typically modern sentences. As we have seen, a Prayer-Book prayer typically begins with an elaborated address, often made up of subordinate relative clauses describing God and his qualities ("Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of

all them that are penitent:") followed by the petition, which often gains both force and a pleasing inevitability from its delay after the long address ("Create and make in us new and contrite hearts . . ."), followed by a formulaic ending that is tied to what has gone before by its form as a prepositional phrase ("through Jesus Christ our Lord"--Collect for Ash Wednesday). This long sentence is united and flowing, yet structured and paced; it manages to achieve both fluidity and control at once. And it is an effective vehicle for the theology of the prayer: the information contained in the relative clauses about the God to whom the prayer is addressed provides the theological basis--often a whole argument--for the prayer's request, just as the concluding formula conveys the theological means by which the request of the prayer can be granted.

But the Alternative Service Book, seemingly influenced by a feeling that sentences constructed according to the Prayer-Book pattern of much subordination are not typical of modern English, often shortens and simplifies its Prayer-Book originals. It typically breaks one-sentence prayers into two sentences, making the address one complete sentence about God ("Almighty and everlasting God, / you hate nothing that you have made / and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent.") and putting the petition into a second sentence. Somewhat strangely, this new version of the address tells God about himself, prompting Robinson to call such a clause "a piece of

ridiculously gratuitous information" (52). Yet it includes the same information as the Prayer-Book address and the information God is given about himself is intended as the basis for the prayer's request. But the change in the grammar of the prayer has the considerable effect of obscuring the connection between the qualities of God and the request that is made of him. The old form, by making a grammatical connection, points out the more important connection between the nature of the God who is being petitioned and the petition. In the Alternative Service Book there is nothing in the grammar of the prayer to suggest that the two sentences are related, and the result is that the first sentence often seems irrelevant to the rest of the prayer, as in the Collect for Pentecost 6: "Almighty God, / without you we are not able to please you. / Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit / may in all things direct and rule our hearts; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." The hearer may work out the logical connection between the elaborated address and the petition, but that such a connection will be made is much less likely here than in the Prayer-Book original--"O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Collect for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity)--where the form of the prayer embodies the logical connection. Many newly composed prayers, such as the Collects for Epiphany 4 and

Pentecost 20, give a similar impression of disconnectedness.

Not all of the Alternative Service Book prayers are so disconnected, however. Some of the book's two-sentence prayers retain coherence by repeating an item from the first sentence in the second. For example the second Collect for Trinity Sunday speaks of "true faith" in its first sentence and refers again to "this faith" in its petition. Similarly the Collect for the Blessing of the Oils speaks first of "the Holy Spirit" and then of "the same Holy Spirit." But these are exceptions, and usually, when an Alternative Service Book prayer addresses God in one sentence and petitions him in the next, the logical connection between the petition and the information about the nature of God is attenuated.

This diminished sense of logical relationship is only part of the loss resulting from the splitting of one-sentence prayers into two or more sentences; another result is the loss of the unity and fluidity that make many Prayer-Book prayers so lovely. In the old Collect for the Twelfth Sunday After Trinity, which begins, "Almighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy . . .," the delay, caused by the lengthy relative clauses, before what is grammatically expected, the petition, coupled with the successive accents of the beginning of the

petition, gives the petition a pleasing sense of force and inevitability. In the new version of the same Collect, used at Easter 5--"Almighty and everlasting God, / you are always more ready to hear than we to pray / and give more than either we desire or deserve. / Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy. . ."--the effect is lost.

As well as splitting one-sentence prayers in its attempt to simplify and modernize Prayer-Book sentence structures, The Alternative Service Book 1980 also replaces participial phrases, showing relationship, with coordinate clauses. For example, in its Book of Common Prayer version the petition of the second Collect at Morning Prayer reads, "Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries." The participial phrase, "surely trusting in thy defence," gives the means by which we may be freed from the power of our adversaries. But in the modernized version of the prayer the purpose clause becomes, "that we may trust in your defence, / and not fear the power of any adversaries." The logical relationship between trust in God and freedom from fear is not in the new version explicit; the coordination of the two clauses may disguise from the hearer their relationship. Similarly, in the new version of the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent the relationship between physical abstinence and spiritual salvation--the relationship being, in the words of the Prayer Book, "that,

our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey [God's] godly motions in righteousness and true holiness"--is obscured by the loss of the participial phrase and by the coordination of the ideas of abstinence and salvation. The petition now reads, "give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; / and, as you know our weakness, / so may we know your power to save." The change from participial phrases to coordinated clauses may give the sentences a more modern, less Latinate feel, but as with the removal of the subordinate clauses of the addresses of many prayers, the new versions are no longer such clear embodiments of theology.

The prose of the Alternative Service Book, then, tends to be built of somewhat simpler, less subordinated, more typically modern sentences than is the Book of Common Prayer. The new book's prose is finished differently, as well: frequently the embellishments of its Prayer-Book originals--the resonant and expanded phrases and the repetition of word and sound that help to create the old book's distinctive rhythms--are removed in the 'translation' to modern English. The result is a toned down, less conspicuous prose.

At its simplest, this toning-down is represented by the loss of adverbs and adjectives that are not strictly necessary. "Mercifully grant" (Collect for the Sunday Next Before Easter) becomes simply "grant" in the Alternative Service Book. "Worthily lamenting" (Collect for Ash

Wednesday) becomes "lamenting"; "blessed hope of everlasting life" (Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent) becomes "hope of everlasting life"; "thy humble servants" (second Collect at Morning Prayer) becomes "your servants"; "thy great mercy" (third Collect at Evening Prayer) becomes "your mercy." These modifiers provide a kind of religious education: they tell us that we should lament worthily and be humble servants; that the hope of everlasting life is a blessed hope and that God's mercy is great. Their loss, then, affects both the meaning and, because of the two-beat rhythm that they establish, the sound of many prayers.

The modernized Alternative Service Book prayers leave out other favorite rhythmic Prayer-Book structures. The new book sometimes drops the typical Prayer-Book doubling of synonymous or related words. Its Collect for Advent 3 omits the "prepare and make ready" of the Prayer-Book original. Its second Good Friday Collect replaces "our supplications and prayers" with "our prayer." The book also tends to remove or simplify the rhythmic prepositional phrases of the Book of Common Prayer. The new version of the Absolution at Communion changes "who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him," with its prepositional phrases, to "who forgives all who truly repent." The phrase "turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" (Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent) becomes in the new book "turn our disobedient

hearts to the law of love." The book often drops the phrases in apposition that make up the rhythmic and impressive addresses of many Prayer-Book prayers. The third Collect at Morning Prayer begins "O Lord our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God" in its Prayer-Book version but simply "Almighty and everlasting Father" in its new version; the Book of Common Prayer Burial Collect begins "O Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life" but becomes simply "Almighty God, / whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life" in its new version for Easter 3. Undeniably, in taking out or simplifying such typical Prayer-Book phrases, the makers of the Alternative Service Book have given the prose more of a modern feeling.

Similarly, in its efforts to make the liturgy sound more like modern English, The Alternative Service Book 1980 sometimes leaves out the repetition of word and sound that characterizes its Prayer-Book originals; for modern prose tends to be much more sparing than sixteenth century prose in its use of such devices. The Alternative Service Book rewrites the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent such that "forty days and forty nights" becomes simply "forty nights"; it rewrites the Collect for the Sunday after Ascension such that its virtual repetition of word--"leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us"--becomes "Leave us not comfortless, / but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us." Moreover, Alternative

Service Book prayers often lack the assonance of their originals. "[W]e beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family" becomes "look with mercy on this your family" (first Good Friday Collect). Alliteration, too, is often diminished in the modernized prayers. "[T]he ministers and stewards of thy mysteries" becomes "the ministers and stewards of your truth" (Advent 3 Collect); "[T]hat we worthily lamenting our sins" becomes "that, lamenting our sins" (Ash Wednesday Collect). A great deal of alliteration is lost by the modernization of verb forms and personal pronouns: the repetition of the similar th sounds in thee, thou, thy, thine, in verbs in -(e)th, and in the common the and that, and also the repetition of the st sound of hast and other verbs in -(e)st, subtly unified and patterned Prayer-Book prayers. The modernization of the first Good Friday Collect illustrates such a loss of phonetic repetition: "who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost" becomes "who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit." The third Good Friday Collect also loses repetition of sound in its modernized form. Its 1662 version begins, "O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live"; its 1980 version begins, "Merciful God, / who made all men and hate nothing that you have made: / you desire not the death of a sinner / but rather that he should be converted and live." But although

the modern version of the prayer loses the repetition of s sounds (hast, hatest, wouldest, sinner), it retains the alliteration of m's and, secondarily, h sounds (who, hate, have), and even adds the alliteration of desire and death; it by no means is stripped of all pleasing devices of sound.

Much of the prose of the Alternative Service Book, then, is updated Prayer-Book prose, modernized, as we have seen, through the straightforward replacement of obsolete words and forms with modern equivalents; through the rewriting of sentences into more usual twentieth-century form; and through the toning-down of Prayer-Book prose by removing such distinctive features as expanded and resonant phrases and repetition of word and sound. Although much of the modernized prose is competent, much falls short of Prayer-Book standards. The new prose's ability to communicate to modern congregations benefits undoubtedly from its modernization and simplification, but, as we have seen, Alternative Service Book prose is in some respects a less effective vehicle for the book's theological content. Moreover, some of it is flat and lackluster. Why is this? First, part of bringing the book up to date involves taking out the embellishments and exuberances of the old prose. Repetition, appositives, and the frequent use of "we beseech thee," for example, all tend to intensify Prayer-Book prose; their loss lowers the pitch of the Alternative Service Book. But also, the modernization of

the prose results in a diminished rhythm. Many little words and syllables are removed in the rewriting of prayers, and the simple reduction in unstressed syllables alters what is in the Prayer Book the run of unaccented and slightly accented syllables that sets off what is stressed. For example, the Alternative Service Book's third Collect at Morning Prayer, tidied and shortened considerably from its old form, is composed of clauses of insufficient length to make the prayer rhythmically substantial. Its petition reads, "Keep us from falling into sin / or running into danger; / order us in all our doings; / and guide us to do always / what is right in your eyes." The Prayer-Book original, however, uses the extra syllables of its longer clauses as a necessary lead-up to the rhythmic prepositional phrases--the cadences--that end its clauses: "grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight." Without the run of lightly stressed syllables, the Alternative Service Book cannot achieve this sort of cadencing effect. Its prose, as a consequence, is at times a flattened version of Prayer-Book originals, less well-suited than Prayer-Book prose to the aural as well as to the pedagogical demands of public worship.

The Alternative Service Book's clumsy handling of prose rhythms sometimes creates another problem, one the opposite of rhythmic flatness. The book at times falls

into a rhythm that seems very much--in fact, too much--like verse. Indeed, this raises the question of whether the book is intended as prose or verse, for nearly all of its prayers, though for some reason not quite all, are laid out as if they were verse, although they are for the most part quite clearly prose. The likeliest explanation for this layout, however, is probably not an intention to versify the liturgy; instead it may be an intention of marking pauses and so making the prayers easier to read.

But let us return to the rhythm of this oddly laid-out book. Prose movement depends on varied patterns of stress; when it is too rhythmically regular, prose turns into verse. In some prayers of the Alternative Service Book, lines of about equal length combine with regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables to create a verse-like rhythm. This happens in the Confession used at Morning and Evening Prayer and Holy Communion Rite A. The Confession begins to slide from prose into near-verse in its third line, recovering completely only with the longer, more rhythmically varied eighth line:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
> we have sinned against you and against our
> fellow men,
> in thought and word and deed,
> through negligence, through weakness,
> through our own deliberate fault.
> We are truly sorry

and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who
died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness
of life;
to the glory of your name.

Prayer 34 from Prayers after the Birth of a still-born Child or the Death of a newly-born Child, one of the book's newly composed prayers, falls into even greater rhythmic regularity straight after its address: "Gracious Father, / in darkness and in light, / in trouble and in joy, / help us to trust your love, / to serve your purpose, / and to praise your name; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." The second through fourth lines set up the expectation that the fifth, too, will be in iambic trimeter and may even rhyme. On occasion the likeness to verse actually is reinforced by rhyme or near-rhyme. For instance, Prayer 38 at Baptism and Prayer 36 at Marriage contain the lines, "may we know you more clearly, / love you more dearly, / and follow you more nearly, / day by day." This sort of bouncing, jingling prose undermines its attempted seriousness.

The Alternative Service Book 1980 has problems beyond its rhythmical difficulties and one of them is that its aim of rendering the liturgy in contemporary English is incompletely realized. The book sounds more like modern English than does the Prayer Book, of course, but, though

it modernizes many archaisms, it retains and even adds others. Its Holy Communion Rite A Collect and its version of the Lord's Prayer illustrate this inconsistency in modernization. The new version of the Prayer-Book Communion Collect ("Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open. . . .") updates the preposition "unto" to "to," turns the outdated "be" to the modern "are," replaces the past participle "hid" with its more usual modern form "hidden," and changes the out-of-date pronouns "thy" and "thee" to "your" and "you," but it leaves untouched the archaic "magnify" in its line "and worthily magnify your holy name." With equal inconsistency, the Lord's Prayer replaces the archaic "trespasses" with "sins" yet retains the equally archaic "hallowed"; it removes the old second person singular verb-form in "Our Father who art in heaven" by changing the address to "Our Father in heaven," yet it keeps the decidedly un-modern subjunctives, "hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done." Such archaisms are common throughout this supposedly modernized book. Mark meaning "take notice of," a sense unused in modern English except in the expression, "Mark my words," is retained in the line, "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them" (Advent 2 Collect). Author meaning "source" is retained in the description of God as "the author of peace" (second Morning Prayer Collect). Even as meaning "to the same degree as," rather than its more usual modern meaning of "at the same time as," is left unchanged in the

line, "may purify ourselves even as he is pure" (Epiphany 6 Collect). The same, used almost like a pronoun referring back to profession (which incidentally is also archaic in its sense here of "religious faith"), is left unchanged in the line, "and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same" (Pentecost 5 Collect). Outdated word-order is also a frequent occurrence in the new book. The Apostles' Creed, for instance, retains the inversion of "the life everlasting." Negative statements are sometimes left in their archaic form, without the modern auxiliary do, as for example in "you desire not" (third Good Friday Collect) or "he went not up" (Lent 3 Collect). And beyond modernizing Prayer-Book prose incompletely, the Alternative Service Book even introduces archaisms into its prose. For instance it introduces obsolete diction, adding save meaning "except" to its Easter 5 Collect and using aright for "rightly" in the newly-composed Prayer 10 from the Funeral Service. It also introduces out-of-date expressions such as "these your children" and "these your servants" (Prayers 24, 27, Marriage Service) to newly composed prayers, and it introduces the inversion, "life eternal," into the Absolution it uses at Morning and Evening Prayer and Communion. What a mix of styles is here! This book can write a prayer that says, "We pray that these your servants may grow in love and self-giving to each other all the days of their life" (Prayer 11, Thanksgiving for Childbirth), a prayer that mixes the noun

self-giving, which smacks of psychobabble, with the traditional phrases these your servants and all the days of their life. This is the kind of weird and awkward mix of archaic and modern that prompts so much complaint about revisions of the Book of Common Prayer (e.g., Robinson 53; Cottle 18; Doody 119). Complaint is often justified, for at times Alternative Service Book prose is too obviously pasted together from prose of different eras and styles: its stylistic inconsistencies give it the air of pastiche.

Whereas the Book of Common Prayer maintains a consistently serious and dignified tone, always conveying the sense that it deals with weighty matters, The Alternative Service Book 1980, on the other hand, as well as at times defeating its own seriousness with its jingly rhythms and air of pastiche, sometimes strikes an entirely inappropriate tone. At times its prose has an air of social chitchat. "We welcome you into the Lord's Family. . . . We welcome you," say the congregation at two of the Baptism services. "[A]nd also with you," they reply courteously to "The Lord be with you" in Holy Communion Rite A. "We thank you," politely say many prayers, for example Prayer 53 at Holy Communion Rite A and Prayer 1 at Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child. The old book, with its expressions like "We give thee humble and hearty thanks" (A General Thanksgiving), or "We most heartily thank thee" (Post-Communion Prayer), never leaves any doubt that its gratitude is great; and two of the Alternative

Service Book's forms, "we give you thanks" (Proper Prefaces) and "Thanks be to God" (congregational response to "This is the word of the Lord"), have currency today only in religious usage and therefore clearly indicate a religious gratitude; but "We thank you" is scarcely distinguishable from the present-day conventional social form. Just as unfortunately, the prose of the new book at times has Sunday-schoolish explanations and commands. "Those of you who have come for baptism must affirm your allegiance to Christ," candidates for baptism are told. A lighted candle is given to newly baptized persons or their godparents along with the explanation, "This is to show that you have passed from darkness to light." Such language is probably part of what prompts David Martin's complaint that in the new services, "There is . . . a curious vein of childishness. Not only do the texts sound as if devised for children, but there are pervasive reminders of children being 'called together'" (2). And tone is out of control in various ways at other points in the book. For example at Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child the minister may with these words give "a copy of one of the gospels" to the parents: "This book contains the Good News of God's love. Read it, for it tells how you and your family can share in eternal life, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ." The offering of an incentive for reading the gospel, the casualness of "it tells how you can," and the importation of the tired expression, "you and

your family," combine to create a tone somehow more suitable to the gimmickry of the marketplace than to a church service; the lucky family might just as well be winning a week's groceries. And the book often seems unaware of the connotations that cling to the words and expressions it imports into its services. For instance it calls the priest who presides over Holy Communion Rite A "the President." It makes Christ sound like a labour negotiator: "we thank you/ for all the benefits you have won for us" (Baptism and Confirmation without Holy Communion). Such problems of connotation and tone provoke a good deal of lively complaint about revisions of the Book of Common Prayer (e.g., Robinson 50, 52; Cottle 18-19; Doody 121), and this is understandable. After all, in prayer, as Margaret Doody comments, "tone is doctrine" (110).

Despite its problems, The Alternative Service Book 1980 contains some good prayers. But most of its successful prose is written in what is more or less the style of the Book of Common Prayer, a style of careful balance and patterning, of rhythmic phrases, of figures of sound. Part of the new post-Communion Prayer from Holy Communion Rite A, a prayer Basil Cottle singles out for praise (19), reads,

> Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who

drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

The succession of short predicates of a common subject in the first sentence, the parallel clauses all built according to the same pattern in the second sentence, the alliteration (d's, l's, and g's), and the use of different parts of speech stemming from a common root ("living," "live," and "life"; "lights" and "light")--these are all hallmarks of Prayer-Book style. They build a prayer that is carefully structured and patterned, overlaid with repetition of sound, and, in sum, pleasing to both mind and ear. Other of the new book's best prose shows the same reliance on Prayer-Book methods of composition. The Epiphany 3 Collect, for example, delays and emphasizes, by the positioning of prepositional phrases, the rhetorical gist of two of its clauses. The prayer reads, "Almighty God, / whose Son revealed in signs and miracles / the wonder of your saving love: / renew your people with your heavenly grace, / and in all our weakness / sustain us by your mighty power; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the first three lines the slight delay between the verb and its object, "the wonder of your saving love," puts an effective emphasis on that object. Similarly in the final petition, the main clause is delayed by the prepositional phrase of the fifth line, thus putting a suitable emphasis on God's "mighty power." Moreover, the prayer derives considerable rhythmical beauty from the prepositional

phrases positioned at the end of its six last lines. The effective use of the rhythmic qualities of two-beat phrases is, as we have seen, standard in the Book of Common Prayer. A section of the Invitation to Confession at Holy Communion Rite A will serve as a last example of good Alternative Service Book prose: "Let us confess our sins, in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all men." The elaboration of the simple main clause, "Let us confess our sins," by the prepositional phrase and the participial phrase is typical of the Prayer-Book, these modifying phrases providing instruction about how this confession should be made. Like Prayer-Book prose the sentence has a predilection for pairs of nouns coupled by and. Also like Prayer-Book prose it is ornamented by alliteration, in this case alliteration of "faith" and "firmly," "keep" and "commandments," and "live" and "love." There is nothing of the jingle of too regular lines or of the comedy of pastiche and inappropriate tone about these passages of the book: they have the dignity and beauty that make them fit prose for public worship. And their means of achieving that dignity and beauty are the same means used by the Book of Common Prayer.

But on the whole The Alternative Service Book 1980 is only a partial success in its valiant attempt at modernizing Prayer-Book prose and providing a modern-English liturgy. It modernizes many obsolete forms and

usages--and the use of modern language can go a long way toward conveying the impression of a living, current religion. Yet, with sometimes jarring effect, it retains many archaisms. Partly as a result of this modernization the book is frequently rhythmically flat; at other points it falls into verse rhythm. It simplifies Prayer-Book sentence structure in an attempt to make the liturgy sound more like contemporary English, yet this updating leaves a sometimes clumsy, often less precise prose. And although the prose of the Alternative Service Book has its moments of success, those successes tend to be founded on an imitation of Prayer-Book style. The new book's prose, on the whole, is a hodgepodge of different styles and tones, consistent neither in quality nor in its suitability for public worship.

V. Conclusion

A constant undercurrent of this study has been the opportuneness of historical circumstances for the creation of the liturgical prose of the Book of Common Prayer. The book's purposes called for a prose that could edify, a prose that was clear and understandable. Its purposes also called for a prose that by its skilful use of the resources of English could move its hearers to assent to its burden of meaning. The book's function as a book of church services called for a prose that could fulfil its purposes aurally. Happily, the compilers had available to them the means to meet these demands, most notably in the styles available to them and in the tradition of oratorical prose.

The prose that was created in the Book of Common Prayer is constructed on a base of balanced and patterned sentences. Layered over that base are phrasal structures that reinforce the balance and pattern of the sentences and further the rhythms of the book. Manipulation of word, sound, and stress gives a final layer of polish to the prose and by its effect on rhythm helps to make the sense of the prose more graspable by the ear. The result is a prose that is on the one hand rich and dignified; and on the other plain and clear enough for instruction while at the same time capable of precisely expressing complex theology.

The virtues of Prayer-Book prose stand out in relief when we look at the prose of The Alternative Service Book

1980. Where the new book fails, it disregards its need to appeal to the ear. Where it succeeds, like the Book of Common Prayer it writes to be heard. The Alternative Service Book makes clear that the Book of Common Prayer succeeds because it is able to create a prose that is ideally suited to the demands of public worship. The achievement of the Book of Common Prayer is a prose that is sturdy enough to bear the weight of the liturgy, yet can rise to the great events of the life of the Church.

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The Prose Style of the Book of Common Prayer

by

Elizabeth Jean Gooding

A THESIS

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(SIGNED) E.J. Gooding

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

2049 North Park St. #3
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3K 4B2

DATED 19 April 1989

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE PROSE STYLE OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER submitted by ELIZABETH JEAN GOODING in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the prose style of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer in order to understand how the book's distinctive prose style is created and how that prose style suits the book to the demands of formal public worship. As a means of understanding Prayer-Book prose, the thesis studies as well the prose of a revision of the Book of Common Prayer, The Alternative Service Book 1980.

The thesis begins with an overview of the historical and stylistic background to the Book of Common Prayer, a background that helps to explain the prose of the book. It then studies the construction of the Prayer Book's prose. Finally, it examines Alternative Service Book prose and its departures from the prose of the Book of Common Prayer.

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II. Historical and Stylistic Background

i.

The history of the production of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549 and of the successive editions resulting in the book's 1662 final form is long, complex, and not the subject of this thesis. But the book was written in a particular age and for particular purposes, and some of the facts of its history and origin help place its prose style in perspective. The pertinent facts are as follow.

The first Book of Common Prayer was the culmination of a series of translations of Scripture and liturgy and reforms of liturgy. The fifteen years before its appearance saw the production of a considerable amount of officially sanctioned religious material in English. The Great Bible, a combination and revision of earlier English translations of the Bible, appeared in 1539. A number of English primers--personal devotional guides for the laity, containing psalms and prayers--appeared in the 1530's and 1540's, and an official primer was authorized in 1545. The King's Book, aimed at helping the clergy in the education of its flock, was published in 1543. Paralleling the production of religious material in the vernacular was a steady increase in the use of English in church. The Injunctions of 1538 directed that the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments be recited in English. Convocation in 1543 ordered that a chapter from the Great

Bible be read each Sunday at Mattins and Evensong. The Injunctions of 1547 ordered that the Epistle and Gospel at High Mass be read in English. Two English services were produced: the 1544 Litany, and the 1548 Order of the Communion, which provided English supplements to the Latin Mass. The Book of Common Prayer incorporated some of the reformed, translated material that preceded it and combined it with newly composed material and material translated from a variety of sources. Much of the book is loose translation of the medieval Latin service known as the Use of Sarum. As we shall see, both Latin and English sources noticeably influenced the Prayer Book's prose.

In the course of the religious and political upheavals between its 1549 first version and its final version of 1662, the Book of Common Prayer underwent a series of revisions. The first Prayer Book drew a volley of complaint. Its services differed from the old considerably enough to offend traditionalists; yet it retained enough of the old practices to offend reformers. A more clearly reformed second version of the book appeared in 1552 and was used until the accession of Mary to the throne. This 1552 book restructured the Communion and replaced the somewhat ambiguous Words of Administration with reformed versions. Elizabeth reintroduced the book in 1559 with slight but tactful changes, such as the combination of the 1549 and 1552 Words of Administration and the omission from the Litany of the plea for deliverance "from the tyranny of

the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities." A 1604 version produced in response to Puritan complaints about the Prayer Book abolished lessons from the Apocrypha, enlarged the Catechism to include sections about Baptism and Communion, and added six occasional thanksgivings and a prayer for the royal family. Following the reintroduction of the book after the Interregnum, a new revision was begun. The resulting 1662 book modernized grammar and vocabulary, added new prayers, and substituted passages from the 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible for nearly all the passages from the 1540 Great Bible. Despite this series of alterations, the 1662 version of the book is recognizably the same book as the 1549 original. Moreover, although its final form is that of 1662, the Book of Common Prayer is essentially sixteenth-century prose, modernized only slightly in the seventeenth century.

The purposes of the Prayer Book are bound up with its history and equally important to an explanation of its prose. The first Book of Common Prayer continued a general movement toward reform of liturgy and translation of Scripture and liturgy but was also a response to the more particular and immediate need for uniformity, convenience, and simplicity. It provided a single order of worship to replace the numerous variations then in use, and it conveniently enclosed that order within a single book. Moreover, it reduced in number and simplified the daily services and reorganized and simplified daily readings.

But the new book intended more than a better organization; its purposes were of course religious. Its 1549 Preface, entitled "Concerning the Service of the Church" in the 1662 book, states that the original and true purpose of common prayers was "a great advancement of godliness." That was the purpose of Bible readings: the clergy by reading and meditating on Scripture would "be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be more able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the truth"; the people by hearing Scripture "might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion." Godliness, then, is the general aim, while knowledge and the "stirring up" of religious ardour are frequently mentioned specific purposes. The essay "Of Ceremonies" states similar aims when it argues for only

> those Ceremonies which do serve to a decent Order and godly Discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified.

Once more, the aims of edifying and of "stirring up" religious feeling, as well as of encouraging godliness, are stated. These purposes, along with the sources and sixteenth-century origins of the Book of Common Prayer, help explain the nature of the prose style of the book.

ii.

The book's sources and the styles available at the time to its compilers furnished two main traditions from which the compilers could choose their styles. There was the native tradition of Anglo-Saxon prose and verse, with its heavy beat, frequent alliteration, and pairs of synonyms or words of related meaning. This tradition had flourished in earlier religious writing and would certainly have been familiar to the compilers. Equally important was the inheritance from Latin, both medieval and classical. This Latin inheritance influenced vocabulary, sentence structure, and rhythm. The Prayer Book's sources included material from both of these traditions, and characteristics from each stylistic tradition are evident in the book. Each side has its champions. C.S. Lewis and Ian Robinson stress the importance of the "native" English influences (Lewis 219; Robinson 57), while Morris Croll makes a case for the imitation of certain features of the Latin sources.

The simple fact that the bulk of the book was written in the sixteenth century explains a good deal about its prose style. The Book of Common Prayer was written in an age steeped in rhetoric, an age in which rhetoric comprehended the theory and art of communication. Its compilers--or Cranmer, to whom we might as well give credit for the book's compilation--almost certainly received a standard Renaissance training in classical rhetoric and held the traditional view that the purpose of language was

to persuade to action. They were trained to use the devices and strategies of rhetoric and they made extensive use of them. Often the Prayer Book's linguistic particulars can best be described in the terms of rhetoric. Rhetoric provided ways of finding material (inventio), ways of organizing material (dispositio), and ways of expressing material (elocutio). Most important to the compilers of the Prayer Book, who to some extent already had material and a way of ordering it, were the ways of expressing material. The compilers, in keeping with the age (Vickers 41), typically chose those figures which produced a noticeably patterned prose. The Book of Common Prayer constantly reflects its debt to this rhetorical tradition of noticeably patterned and symmetrical writing that was thriving at the time of its compilation.

The Prayer Book's language also reflects the purposes of its compilers. Most obviously, these purposes dictated the choice of English for the book. The original Preface complains of the ineffectiveness of Latin:

> And moreover, whereas St Paul would have such language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might understand, and have profit by hearing the same; The Service in this Church of England these many years hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understand not; so that they have heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit, and mind, have not been

edified thereby.

The use of English, then, furthers both education and religious devotion, which as we have seen are the aims of the book. But not just any English would further these aims. The original Preface states that the new services are "in such a Language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding both of the Readers and Hearers." But such a claim--for plain understandable English--cannot be taken at face value. For one thing, such claims were conventional at the time (Jones, "Simplicity"). For another, some of the book's purposes could not easily be achieved by too plain a style. The book surely enough had to be in understandable English--the plain style for teaching--but too plain a style would not further the aim of "stirring up" the hearers to devotion, would not make them "inflamed with the love of [Christ's] true Religion," would not work on "heart, spirit, and mind." Moreover, the "decent order" mentioned twice in "Of Ceremonies," meaning an <u>appropriate</u> order, seems to have meant to the compilers something like a <u>dignified</u> order. This also might well work against plain language. So, then, not all the purposes of the book would best be served by the merely plain and understandable language it lays claim to. A higher style than the plain style would more effectively move and persuade the hearers; moreover, formal public worship called not for a plain style but for a dignified and impressive style. So what was needed was a style that

was at the same time understandable and impressive: clear and understandable in order to teach, and impressive and moving in order to achieve an appropriate dignity and in order to move the flock to devotion.

Bound up with the book's purposes is the way it was to be used. The fact that it was intended to be spoken and heard made certain demands on its prose. At the simplest level, the words had to be heard distinctly by the congregation. At numerous points the rubrics in Morning and Evening Prayer reflect this concern and specify that readings and prayers shall be said by the Minister "with a loud voice," or "with an audible voice," or "distinctly with an audible voice." But the fact that it was prose meant to be read aloud dictated more than volume. The way the book was to be used dictated the use of what we might call "oratorical style" (Croll 325), which we find in prose "which owes its form to the necessities and customs of public speech" (328). Prose written to be spoken and heard is an entirely different kind of prose from modern essay-prose. Croll notes the modern tendency "to consider prose chiefly as it is addressed to the intellect, rather than as language spoken and heard" (327-328). This modern essay prose "lay[s] more stress upon verbal propriety, grammatical precision, logical order, and the intellectual effects of prose than upon its rhythm and oral beauties" (328). The prose of the Book of Common Prayer, though, is of the kind in which rhythm and oral beauty are of great

importance. And so being meant for the ear rather than the eye the book chose a style that had a strong rhythm; a sentence structure falling on the ear in regular portions; resonant phrases; devices of sound creating aural linkages between words and phrases. Or, in short, it chose a style that was aurally satisfying.

The style in which Cranmer wrote the Book of Common Prayer, then, was shaped by the book's origin and history, and by its purpose and function. The book's native and Latin sources provided two stylistic traditions from which the book could borrow. Its sixteenth-century origins explain its debt to rhetoric. Its purposes and the way it was to be used account for its use of an oratorical style. The book's background, then, furnishes explanations for the linguistic phenomena of the book. These linguistic phenomena, which together constitute the book's style, are the subject of the next chapter.

III. The Prose Style of the Book of Common Prayer

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is distinctive, impressive, and memorable. It is made so by its style, its way of expressing its burden of meaning, its selection and arrangement of its linguistic particulars. This chapter will catalogue those linguistic particulars and explain how they work together to create certain stylistic effects. Or, to put it another way, it will anatomize the prose of the book. It will begin by discussing the most general characteristics of Prayer-Book prose--the kinds of passages, and the rhythm of the prose--and work down through progressively smaller components of that prose: sentence structure, common kinds of phrases, and choices of word and sound. In this way we can see how the smallest stylistic particulars contribute to general stylistic effects, stylistic effects that suit the prose of the book to the demands of public worship.

To speak of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer is not to refer to everything found between the two covers of the book. The book contains material taken from elsewhere to be used as part of these services: it contains the Psalms and a few scriptural sentences from the 1539 Great Bible and sentences and readings from the 1611 King James Bible. Moreover, it contains other verse material besides the Psalms: the hymns and canticles of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Veni, Creator Spiritus from The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops,

Priests, and Deacons. It contains explanatory and directional material: three prefatory essays; the calendars; and the rubrics, the short passages directing and explaining the services. Usually the Articles of Religion, better known as the Thirty-Nine Articles, are also contained in the book, as is A Table of Kindred and Affinity, taken from the church canons. But even though they comprise the bulk of the book, these parts--the passages from English versions of the Bible, the verse material, the 'administrative' portions, and church regulations--are not what is usually referred to as the prose of the Book of Common Prayer. The phrase generally indicates the prose of the services only, and only that prose which appears originally or uniquely, or in its lasting English form, in the Prayer Book.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer consists of a number of kinds of passages throughout the various services of the book. Prayers make up a good portion of the book, as its title would suggest, and are constructed according to the pattern of invocation, petition, and conclusion. A Collect, for instance, begins with an address to God the Father, ranging in length and complexity from the brevity and simplicity of "God" (Collect for Whitsunday) or "O Lord" (Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent) to the more expansive and resonant "Almighty and everlasting God" (Collect for the Second Sunday after Epiphany). Frequently the address is expanded by a relative clause beginning with

"who," giving characteristics of God, as in "O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth" (Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday). Then follows the prayer's request, the thing sought, often beginning with an imperative and frequently with "grant," or "mercifully grant," or "we beseech thee to." Each Collect closes with one of a number of formulaic endings, invoking Christ ("through Jesus Christ our Lord,") and frequently mentioning as well the rest of the Trinity ("through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the same spirit, ever one God, world without end" [Christmas Day]). But prayer is only one of the kinds of prose in the Prayer Book, and other passages can be classified as exhortation, explanatory and instructional passages, exchanges between priest and congregation or part of congregation, confession, blessing, declaration, or creed. These different kinds of passages have differing purposes and emphasize different elements of style in order to further their purposes. For instance, blessings tend to be resonant. Creeds recite well. Exchanges between the priest and congregation tend to be simple. Declarations also are simple, but forceful and eloquent. But although the prose of the book is adapted to the specific liturgical purposes of these different kinds of passages, the book has an overall uniformity of style and it makes sense to talk of its style rather than its styles.

The broadest and most pervasive aspect of the Prayer Book's style is rhythm, the general movement of the prose. It is a general effect, created and controlled by a variety of more specific elements of the prose. Perhaps because it is so general and pervasive an effect, it is one of the most noticeable aspects of the Prayer Book's prose. Moreover, rhythm is important. Ian Robinson's remarks about the Authorized Version of the Bible are apposite:

> the rhythm, so far from being a kind of rhetorical optional extra, is the shape of the meaning. It tells the reader how to connect and stress, and makes the point of its sense in that connecting and stressing. The rhythmic climaxes are the climaxes of sense. (27)

Rhythm, then, is not a mere ornament, but is essential to the meaning of prose and to the understanding of that meaning.

But because of its general nature, prose rhythm can be difficult to discuss and describe. Obviously prose has rhythm; moreover, we can often sense a difference in rhythm from one text or passage to another, or discern that a particular work or kind of writing has a characteristic rhythm. But in the absence of a descriptive system such as we have in metrics to describe verse rhythm, the analysis of prose rhythm presents a problem. Although we sense prose rhythm generally, it is more subtle and complex than metre, and we cannot easily pinpoint its components.

Nevertheless we can say some things about the creation of prose rhythm in the Book of Common Prayer. Essentially, it is established within Prayer-Book passages and sentences by recurrence of structure, by repetition of word and sound, and by variation. More specifically, sentence structure and phrasing control and pace the flow of speech. Certain kinds of smaller structures such as prepositional phrases and pairs of roughly synonymous words tend to create patterns of stress that make for noticeable rhythmical effects, especially when these structures appear in quantity and in combination with each other. Repetition of word or sound reinforces and furthers these patterns of stress by connecting and emphasizing. Briefly and simply, these are the main determinants of the Prayer Book's distinctive rhythm.

Rhythm is particularly important to prose meant for the ear. It is especially important to the prose of the Book of Common Prayer, which must both move ("stir up") and teach ("edify") by means of an appeal to and through the ear. In fact, the demands of public speech may be a source of prose rhythm:

> prose as such is without rhythmic law, and . . . it becomes rhythmic only as it is submitted to the control of some convention, a convention ultimately determined by the particular customs of oral delivery. That is to say, all rhythm in prose is finally due, however subtle its

> variations may become, to certain regulated customs which have originated in the relations between a public speaker and his audience. (Croll 357)

As we shall see, the importance of the demands of public speech to the Prayer Book's prose is reflected in most aspects of the book's style.

i.

These demands of public speech are evident in the Prayer Book's handling of sentence structure. Its sentences tend to be very long: Collects and other prayers are often the length of a small paragraph; sentences of a hundred words or more are common. This is an obvious point, but worth considering. Such sentences need to be structured and paced; they need to be separated into manageable parts. For the ease of the speaker they should fall into phrases short enough to be pronounced without running out of breath; for the ease of the hearer into phrases short enough to be grasped by the mind. And the sentences of the book do meet these requirements. They are carefully structured and controlled rather than breathlessly run-on. They achieve a dignified and steady movement despite their length. This control is achieved in a number of ways. Some sentences utilize the firm prayer-structure. Some use standard organizational structures such as first/second/third; now/then; you/we. But rhythmic control is mainly achieved by a general

adherence to the rules of periodic style and specifically by the use of equal members.

The term "equal members" derives from the rhetorical theory of the period. A period is an independent unit of speech with a beginning and end; basically it is a complete sentence. It may consist of two or more divisions known as members or cola. The length of a member is governed by the laws of breathing; it is not generally longer than about twenty syllables (Croll 325). The parts of a period are arranged and constructed to create repetition, symmetry, and balance, which not only pace and structure the sentence but give it beauties of sound as well. In the device of equal members (isocolon), members are of roughly equal length and weight, which gives a balanced and steady movement to the prose. Sister Miriam Joseph quotes Henry Peacham:

> Compar, of the Grecians called Isocolon and Parison, is a figure . . . which maketh the members of an oration to be almost of a just number of sillables, yet the equalitie of those members or parts, are not to be measured upon our fingers as if they were verses, but to bee tried by a secret sence of the eare. (297)

Equivalencies in length and weight of members often combine with parallelism of structure, or repetition of word or sound, to further point effects of balance.

For obvious reasons having to do with the necessity of

breathing while speaking, the prose of public speech "is much more regular than essay prose in its periodicity" (Croll 328). Not only did the demands of public speech work in favor of equal members, but the age in which the book was written did too:

> [I]n a great deal of the formal prose of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries we should find [a] controlled, regular, and stately movement. The prose of this period of direct classical and medieval influence is chiefly distinguished as displaying, along with a comparative freedom from syntactic precision, a constant sense of the weight and length of rhetorical members. It is rhetorically construed, in short, rather than grammatically. (Croll 322)

As we shall see, the demands of public speech and the teachings of rhetoric united to shape Prayer-Book prose into these regular rhetorical portions.

Equal members and the steady movement of prose in the Book of Common Prayer are abundant. But as with most individual aspects of the book's style, it is often impossible to find examples that illustrate a particular stylistic aspect in isolation from other components of style. Particular linguistic forms combine and interact with each other, making such isolation difficult. Still, some passages better illustrate a particular feature than

others, and the Collect for the Second Sunday After the Epiphany is a good example of equal members: "Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord." A Commination furnishes another good example of the device: "Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, and taketh man for his defence, and in his heart goeth from the Lord." The steady regular movement gives the sentence a slow impressiveness, a gravity suiting its matter. A more complex example of this kind of sentence movement is the first sentence of the Exhortation to Confession from Morning and Evening Prayer:

> Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy.

The sentence breaks into four main parts marked by semi-colons. Leaving out the address, they are of 27, 26, 19, and 24 syllables. The third and shortest, though, reads more slowly because of the pauses between the adjectives, with the result that it feels roughly equal in

length and weight to the others. The controlled, careful movement of the sentence helps make persuasive the carefully reasoned argument for confession. The Prefatory Address from Matrimony offers an example of the creation of a steadiness of movement by the repetition of units of equal weight and length, combined with the formal structuring device first/second/third:

> First, It was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name. Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body. Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

These regular, articulated sentences are characteristic of much of the book's prose, commanding by their slow, steady weightiness the attention of the congregation and giving to the prose the weight and dignity that formal public worship demands.

Members equal in length and weight, giving a regular and steady movement to the prose, help to structure the prose and shape rhythm. But this regular movement of prose is only the beginning of rhetorical structure: it is the

base on which many more rhetorical devices build. Balance of form as well as balance in length of sentence portions characterizes the prose of the Prayer Book:

> The "harmony," "number," or "rhythm" of a period depends chiefly upon the relations between the members of which it consists: relations of length, form, and sound. In oratorical style there is always a tendency to arrange them in groups of two or more of approximately (but not exactly) the same length, and to point the effect of balance thus produced by similarity in the syntactic form of these members, by correspondences in sound between words in corresponding positions in them, and finally by parallel or related rhythmic movements. (Croll 325-326)

Oratorical prose such as we find in the Book of Common Prayer creates this effect of balance by means of the rhetorical figures of repetition--of length, structure, word, and sound. We have considered, in equal members, the repetition of length and will now turn to the repetition of structure.

The repetition of similar syntactic structures is common in the Prayer Book. Where it occurs, successive clauses have similar structures: the same parts of speech are placed in equivalent positions in two or more clauses; sometimes particular words are repeated in equivalent

positions in their clauses. The repetition of stress patterns and the balanced parallelism thus created are satisfying both to the ear and mind of the hearer. Repetition of similar syntactic structure, called parison in rhetorical theory, frequently combines with equal members, or isocolon. The combination is well illustrated in the Exhortation from the Visitation of the Sick:

> For he himself went not up to joy but first he suffered pain; he entered not into his glory before he was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with him in everlasting life.

These perfectly balanced clauses give an air of reasoned, considerate thought, of the careful elaboration of an idea. The contrasting pairs, "death" and "everlasting life," further the effect of balance. Repeated similar structures are often lists of petitions, each introduced with an imperative, as in this example from A Prayer for the Royal Family: "Endue them with thy Holy Spirit; enrich them with thy heavenly grace; prosper them with all happiness; and bring them to thine everlasting kingdom." A similar example is from the Collect for the 7th Sunday after Trinity: "Graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same." The repeated

parallel petitions build up a rhythmical pattern which, combined with the imperatives, lends force to the matter.

The Prayer Book is very fond of the repetition of structures, especially of paired clauses joined by conjunctions. It comes close to overusing the device in a prayer composed from a combination of similarly structured fragments of Scripture:

> give him a right understanding of himself, and of thy threats and promises; that he may neither cast away his confidence in thee, nor place it any where but in thee. Give him strength against all his temptations, and heal all his distempers. Break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure; but make him to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver him from the fear of the enemy, and lift up the light of thy countenance upon him, and give him peace. (A Prayer for persons troubled in mind or in conscience, Visitation of the Sick)

The pairing of similar clauses is sustained to the point where a sing-song rhythm threatens to overwhelm the sense. But the prayer is saved by variation: by the choice of a petition varied by the elaboration of "that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice" (Ps. 51:8); and by a final variation, the use of "and give him peace" (Num. 6:26), a

third wonderfully brief petition added to the final pair of similar clauses. The book's fondness for similar structures is such that it will repeat, ungrammatically but with no lessening of the logic of the statement, a structure used earlier: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and hath preserved you in the great danger of child-birth: You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God" (Churching of Women, my italics). This ungrammatical repetition recalls Croll's claim that much of the prose of the time is "rhetorically construed . . . rather than grammatically" (332).

The repetition of similar syntactic structures, a device we have seen used heavily, is very effective when used sparingly, as in the brief and compact proper Collects, where a simple parallelism stands out. The device is the main ornament in the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter: "O Lord, from whom all good things do come: Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ." But these balanced clauses are more than ornament, of course: their parallelism connects by structure and position what is connected by causality--thought and deed. Similarly, the Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Lent achieves a balance that is harmonious but reinforces the sense of the prayer: "Grant,

we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved." Here the balance, provided not by parallel coordinate clauses but by similarities in the order and form of the components of the clauses--prepositional phrase followed by verb phrase--and by the echoes of "worthily" and "mercifully" and "be punished" and "be relieved," helps make clear the contrast between the treatment we merit and the treatment we may receive. Many of the Collects illustrate the effectiveness of such simple parallelisms, both as ornament and as a way of making clearer the meaning of the Collect.

The repetition of similar syntactic structures achieves some of its most notable effects when slight variations in length or structure of parts are introduced. The General Confession at Communion illustrates this: "We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable." The last two clauses are identical in form until the end, when the corresponding "grievous unto us" and "intolerable" vary in form, the second stronger and giving a sense of definite finish. Variation in length can give a grand sense of expansion. "I, for my part, shall be ready; and, according to mine Office, I bid you in the Name of God, I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this holy Communion"

(2nd Exhortation to Communion). The syntactic parallelism of "I bid you in the Name of God" and "I call you in Christ's behalf" creates an expectation that a similarly brief clause is to be introduced with "I exhort you." Instead, the clause is varied and expanded by "as ye love your own salvation," the expansion giving a welcome sense of liberation. The Prayer Book generally uses parallelism of structure flexibly and skilfully, with variety, and in the service of both sound and meaning.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer, then, is a prose characterized by a steady movement, a balance between parts, and regular patterning. It is made this kind of prose by its use of rhetorical schemes, which, as Brian Vickers points out, "offered various conventional arrangements of words into patterns, visual and aural" (35). As in Shakespeare's prose, "[t]he most frequently used of these schemata verborum are all based on parallelism, either of sense (antithesis) or of structure" (Vickers 36). We have just seen examples of parallelism of structure; the book also uses a kind of balancing that is a precise balance between words and ideas rather than a general structural balance: a word is countered by its opposite rather than by another instance of the same part of speech. The Prefatory Address at Matrimony abundantly illustrates this:

> Dear beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this

> congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church. (my italics).

The balancing pairs are the main ornaments of this part of the Address; they also, of course, express the matter. Their similarity in form draws attention to their contrast in meaning. This is also the case in "We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness" (Burial Collect). But the primary use of antithesis is to further the effects of equal members and the repetition of similar structures. When each half of an antithetical pair is in a separate sentence portion, each half of the pair seems, in its opposition to its mate, to define and distinguish the portion it is in. The Prayer of Saint Chrysostom, for instance, furnishes an example of opposites--"in this world" and "in the world to come"--supplying both a contrast in thought and a way of reinforcing the demarcation of phrases: "granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting." Similarly in the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent (based on Rom. 13:12): "Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light." Antithesis points the effects of both equal members and repetition of similar

syntactic structures in the following: "O Merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this Child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him. Grant that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him" (Prayer before Baptism). The antithetical pairs, "the old Adam" and "the new man," "may be so buried" and "may be raised up," "all carnal affections" and "all things belonging to the Spirit," and "may die in him" and "may live and grow in him," coupled with sentence portions of similar length and structure, create a tremendously balanced, polished, and rhythmic result.

Further refinements of the balanced structure so commonly used in the Prayer Book are occasionally achieved by the use of mirrored and interlocking structures, which sharpen the effects of balance. The mirrored structure, or the rhetorical figure antimetabole, repeats key words in the reverse order from their first use. The device shapes and ornaments a simple exchange from Morning and Evening Prayer: "Priest. Praise ye the Lord. Answer. The Lord's Name be praised." The device lends a kind of logical inevitability to the admonition at the opening of the Churching of Women: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance . . . You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God." In the Third Exhortation at Communion it emphasizes unity: "then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ,

and Christ with us." In the 2nd Prayer at Public Baptism it expands on Christ's words: "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: So give now unto us that ask; let us that seek find; open the gate unto us that knock." The device of interlocking structure repeats matter in a way that sharpens its sense by switching the positioning of negatives. A well-known example comes from the General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done." Another instance comes from the Collect at Burial: "in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally." Mirrored and interlocking structures are noticeable devices, sometimes drawing attention to the puzzling or paradoxical. As well, by the employment of symmetry and repetition they create structures pleasing to the ear.

The stylistic norm of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer may be a regular, patterned, balanced prose, but the book also uses a simple, direct, sometimes even blunt prose. This is not surprising, for as Croll points out, "Variations . . . from the regularity of a pattern . . . are, it must always be remembered, the chief resources of the orator in his quest of rhythmic and expressive beauty" (326). As well as introducing variation by simplicity, the

Prayer Book also varies its sentence structure and rhythm by delaying an expected part of a sentence. These variations produce directness and emphasis.

In the midst of complexly patterned sentences are noticeably simpler sentences which, all the more so because of their position, possess a good share of the force of simplicity. The General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer illustrates this:

> Almighty and most merciful Father, We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us.

The sentence, "And there is no health in us," is a simple, forceful, emphatic culmination of a series of statements employing a number of artful devices: repetition of similar structure and of initial words, pairs of synonyms, alliteration, assonance, and interlocking structure. The sentence stands out in relief: it not only varies from the "we have" structure, but is devoid of ornamentation. It is the unornamented climax of a heavily patterned arrangement of clauses. The Absolution at Communion works similarly:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to

> all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; Have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The "Have mercy upon you" clause is the plainest, sparest way of expressing the meaning, of effecting the absolution; it appears even simpler and shorter surrounded as it is by longer, more ornate and patterned clauses. It also gains force and emphasis from its position so far from its grammatical subject, "Almighty God." A final example of spare but tremendously effective expression comes from the well-known words at Burial (based on Job 14:1-2): "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." The passage begins calmly and simply; the force of these two sentences is allowed to come from their meaning; stylistic embellishment is not needed. In this occasional reliance on simplicity, the Book of Common Prayer shows its debt to earlier English writing (Brook 70).

The Prayer Book also employs a simple style that explains doctrine, gives orders, makes declarations, and asks questions. As in the second sentence of this Exhortation from the Visitation of the Sick, this is a plainness that leaves no doubts about doctrine:

> Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly, that it is God's visitation.

It tells the people at Public Baptism, "Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that he will likewise favourably receive this present Infant" (Exhortation). At the Churching of Women it gives an order: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and hath preserved you in the great danger of child-birth: You shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God, and say, [Psalm 116]." The clarity of this style suits declarations: "I pronounce that they be man and wife together" (Matrimony). Its simplicity also suits many of the questions asked of members of the congregation. Questions in A Catechism, particularly, are generally perfectly straightforward and unornamented: "What is thy duty towards thy Neighbor?" or, "What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?" This variation of the usually heavily patterned Prayer-Book prose is efficient and easily understood.

Plainness, then, is one variation of sentence structure; another is delay in supplying what is grammatically expected. We wait for the missing part, most frequently a verb, and it seems to fall with more force

when it arrives. This aural expectation gives greater force to the petition in many prayers with an expanded address, for instance in the Communion Prayer of Consecration, where the account of the redemption is grammatically part of the address:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his Holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again: Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee.

The petition seems more heartfelt after the long explanatory address that precedes it; it is with a sort of relief that our ears register the verb they have expected. Moreover, the expansion of the address educates and reminds the hearer about the significance and gravity of the request. A delayed and consequently emphasized principal verb frequently occurs in structures beginning "Forasmuch", as in the words from Burial: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear <u>brother</u> here departed: we therefore

commit his body to the ground" or in the opening address for Public Baptism:

> Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost: I beseech you to call upon God the Father.

This use of subordination and grammatical delay as a means of educating and emphasizing is typical of the Book of Common Prayer.

Two very effective examples of delay of expected sentence components are from the Absolution at Morning and Evening Prayer and the Invitation to Confession at Communion. The delayed predicate of the Absolution echoes the two-beat phrases that distinguish the expansion of the subject:

> Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and hath given power and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.

The Invitation to Confession places the tremendously simple

"Draw near with faith" in the emphatic position:

> Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways: Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

As Margaret Doody points out, in this passage the expansion of the subject ("Ye that do . . .") "defines the spiritual state, or the state of the will, which is an essential condition of the action" (114). The sentence, then, is an effective, and beautiful, embodiment of the theology of the passage. The delay of the grammatically expected lends such passages a quiet force.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is characterized by sentences whose steadiness of movement and balance between parts create a dignity of expression. They are written not for the eye, which sees them falling far down the page, but for the ear, on which they fall in pleasantly but not monotonously regular portions, and for the mind, which is able to grasp them in these portions. These regular, balanced, patterned sentences are varied by simplicity and by changes in sentence structure that effect changes in rhythm and emphasis. The prevailing rhythms of

the book, grounded in the sentence structure, are furthered and polished, as we shall see, by the book's rhythmic phrasal structures and skilful control of sound.

ii.

The Book of Common Prayer repeatedly uses certain kinds of phrases which, both in themselves and especially in combination with each other, create noticeable rhythmic effects. Three similar kinds of such rhythmic phrases are prepositional phrases with nouns; pairs of synonyms or words of near or related meaning coupled by a conjunction; and phrases in which adjectives and adverbs are used in abundance and usually paired each with their own noun or verb. The rhythm of the book's prose, initially difficult to explain, becomes less mysterious once we are aware of the capacity of these kinds of phrases to determine rhythm. The idea of a kind of phrase having a rhythmic quality might seem odd at first. But consider this rhythmic sentence from the King James version of the 23rd Psalm: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." The rhythm is created partly by the splitting of the verse into two even parts and partly by rhythmic phrases: "goodness and mercy," a pair, and "all the days of my life" and "in the house of the Lord for ever," prepositional phrases. Or consider this Prayer Book Collect:

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our

> supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Collect to be said after the Offertory at Communion)

The roughly synonymous pairs, the prepositional phrases, and the noun-adjective pairs, all of which set up alternations of stressed and unstressed syllables, give the prayer a strong rhythm. Two main parts separated by a semi-colon, each falling in turn into two parts, structure the Collect; and these regular portions of the prayer are further set off by the occurrence of a rhythmic phrase at the end of each. These three kinds of rhythmic phrases generally work together and in concert with other devices, but each will first be scrutinized separately.

The standard rhythmic prepositional phrase is a noun phrase consisting of a noun and a prepositional phrase with 'of', as in "the sins of the flesh" or "the book of common prayer." This structure has an obvious rhythmic appeal, stemming from its combination of unstressed (because rhetorically unimportant) preposition with stressed (because more significant) nouns. Examples of this kind of phrase are abundant: the prayer at Burial, for instance, provides "the souls of the faithful," "the burden of the

flesh," "the miseries of this sinful world," "the number of thine elect," and "the true faith of thy holy Name." Other kinds of prepositional phrases, of course, create similar effects: "armed with thy defence" (Prayer In the time of War and Tumults), "defended by thy mighty power" (Collect for the 5th Sunday after Epiphany), "cleansed from all their sins" (Collect for the 21st Sunday after Trinity). The Prayer Book's fondness for the rhythmic prepositional phrase is striking: although it occasionally uses an apostrophe to indicate possession, as in "Christ's body" (Address at Matrimony) or "thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution" (Prayer of Consecration at Communion), the book generally chooses the expanded prepositional phrase, as in "the hearty desires of thy humble servants" (Collect for 3rd Sunday in Lent) or "the secrets of our hearts" (Burial). It prefers the expanded possessive form for its rhythmic qualities. The expanded form, too, is more easily grasped by the hearer, because it places the noun first and then modifies it.

The petition of the Collect for the Third Sunday Before Lent illustrates the rhythmic effects of the prepositional phrase: "we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name." Each movement of the petition ends with a rhythmic prepositional phrase: "the prayers of thy people," "punished for our offences,"

"delivered by thy goodness," and "the glory of thy Name." These phrases delineate the regular movement of the prose; they mark by recognizably similar patterns of stress the ends of the portions of the prayer. Prepositional phrases often in this way mark the ends of clauses and longer phrases. As well as emphasizing the movement of sentences, rhythmic prepositional phrases also further the effects of repeated similar structures. The Collect for the Fifth Sunday After Trinity illustrates this: "Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord." The prepositional phrases "ordered by thy governance" and "serve thee in all godly quietness" have a similar rhythmic pattern, and the repetition of this pattern at the end of each clause reinforces the effect of balance achieved by the similarly structured clauses. This way of pointing and polishing sentence structures can be very effective. The Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent shows how the repetition of the characteristic rhythm of the prepositional phrase can serve as an important ornament in a simple Collect: "We beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord." The similar rhythms of the three expanded prepositional phrases--"the hearty desires of thy humble servants," "the

right hand of thy Majesty," and "our defence against all our enemies"--create a pleasing repetition of stress patterns. The prepositional phrase, then, plays a considerable role in the determination of the Prayer Book's prose rhythm.

The second kind of rhythmic phrase, the pair of synonyms, near synonyms, or words of related meaning, is one of the more immediately noticeable characteristics of the prose of the Book of Common Prayer and part of its inheritance from earlier English prose. The book often uses such pairs of English words to translate single Latin words from the Use of Sarum, the medieval rite that is a source for much of the Prayer Book. For instance, the Prayer Book's Collect for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany translates the ad protegendum of its source as "to help and defend." Two theories account for the doubling in the book: one maintains that the doubling is glossatory (Booty 172); the other that the doubling has a rhythmic quality (Lewis 217-218). Another possibility is that these pairs slow the meaning of the prose, giving the mind of the hearer a better chance to absorb and consider the thought. Whatever the reason for the frequent use of such doublings, they have an incontrovertible rhythmic quality, especially when in combination. As with the prepositional phrase, the rhythm comes from the combination of the stressed (because important) noun, verb, or adjective with the unstressed (because rhetorically unimportant) conjunction.

These rhythmic pairs are found on every page of the Prayer Book. The Prayer for the Church Militant, for instance, contains the following sentence:

> Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all Bishops and Curates, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments: And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear, and receive thy holy Word; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

The effect of this heavy pairing of words is rhythmic and emotional intensity. Similarly, an abundance of pairs gives force and a strong rhythm to the Absolution at Morning and Evening Prayer:

> Almighty God . . . who . . . hath given power and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.

But pairs of synonymous or related words are not always used so heavily and to create such emphasis. Often they are a minor ornament, making the passage where they occur slightly more patterned, balanced, and rhythmic. This is

the case in the Collect for the Third Sunday After the Epiphany, where pairings ornament an otherwise plain Collect: "Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord." Pairs of synonymous, nearly synonymous, or related words, then, help to create the Prayer Book's noticeable and characteristic effects of rhythm and balance.

The book's third kind of commonly used rhythmic structure is the phrase with adjective-noun or adverb-verb couplings. Like the pairing of synonymous words, this use of modifiers slows down the prose for the better understanding of the hearer and lends a pleasing rhythmic quality. The modifier adds an additional stress to the noun or verb, creating a rhythmic two-beat structure, as, for example, in "merciful Father" (Prayer from the Litany), "heavenly Father" (Prayer for Rain), "his wonderful conversion" (Collect for the Conversion of Saint Paul), "everlasting Life" (Collect for Saint Philip and Saint James's Day), and "mercifully hear" (Collect for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany). The Collect for the Twentieth Sunday After Trinity shows the effects of the repetition of these rhythmic two-beat phrases, here "thy bountiful goodness" and "may cheerfully accomplish", as well as a pair, "body and soul":

> O Almighty and most merciful God, of thy

> bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The rhythms contributed by these two-beat phrases are a good part of what keeps the prayer from rhythmic flatness. But adjective-noun and adverb-verb pairs sometimes do more than lend rhythmic vigour, however. In the beginning of the first post-Communion Prayer--"we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving"--they create the intensity demanded by the liturgical occasion.

Frequently modifiers expand prepositional phrases and synonymous pairs. A common form of the prepositional phrase has one or two adjective-noun pairs. There are many examples: "the holy estate of Matrimony" (Questions at Matrimony), "the truth of thy holy Word" (Prayer for the Church Militant), "the true faith of thy holy Name" (Prayer at Burial), or "the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing" (2nd Prayer at Baptism). This structure is used effectively at Burial to sustain the emotional and rhythmic pitch of the address: "Yet, O lord God most holy, O lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death." But in general, the Prayer Book is sparing in its use of the

prepositional phrase with two adjective-noun pairs, a phrase which is, after all, the classic bombast structure.

Synonymous or related pairs, like prepositional phrases, are often expanded by one or two modifiers. There are many examples: "everlasting joy and felicity" (A Prayer for the King's Majesty), "godly and quietly governed" (Prayer for the Church Militant), "truly repent and unfeignedly believe" (Absolution from Morning and Evening Prayer), and "a pure heart and humble voice" (Confession from Morning and Evening Prayer). Such modified pairs lend a rhythmic force to the Confession at Communion, helping to create a feeling of sincerity: "We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings." The Prayer Book's prose, then, is characterized by the abundant use of adjectives and adverbs, and this abundance has a considerable effect on prose rhythm. Along with prepositional phrases and synonymous pairs, these abundant modifiers help to create the resonant and impressive prose of public worship.

The importance of these three structures stems from their two-beat rhythm. In combination, as they often are, they set up a string of two-beat phrases, significantly shaping the rhythm of the prose. The Invitation to Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer is a notable example of this sustained use of rhythmic phrases--of pairs, prepositional phrases, and abundant modifiers:

> Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us

> in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me. . . .

The fixed two-beat rhythms of these phrases invigorate the prose by creating rhythmic patterns. These rhythmic phrases are in themselves determinants of rhythm, and they also work to emphasize and refine the larger patterns set up by the Prayer Book's sentence structure.

Two more characteristic Prayer-Book structures deserve brief mention, and they are the list of three or more words, and phrases in apposition. One of the well-known

passages of the Prayer Book illustrates the list:

> Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent)

Generally this structure is found at a climax of sense and its rhythm often represents a variation from the prevailing pattern. The device makes appropriately intense the Communion Prayer of Consecration: "who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." It contributes to the sense of culmination in the last of the nine sentences beginning, "Cursed . . ." in A Commination: "Cursed are the unmerciful, fornicators, and adulterers, covetous persons, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards, and extortioners." And in the Apostles' Creed a list of rhythmic noun-phrases produces a tremendously rhythmic and recitable last line, "I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting."

Apposition is most commonly found in the openings of

prayers. The usual prayer address apposes a number of descriptions of God, descriptions in themselves rhythmic, being composed of pairs, prepositional phrases, and phrases with an abundance of modifiers. Examples are abundant: "O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life" (Prayer at Matrimony), "Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men" (Confession at Communion), and "Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that flee to thee for succour, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead" (2nd Prayer at Baptism). Standard prayer closings also employ several rhythmic phrases, although not in apposition. These addresses and closings give resonance to the prayers of the book.

By now it is clear that the Book of Common Prayer does not choose the sparest way of expressing its matter. Motivated by a desire to duplicate in English the sonorous effects of its Latin originals, the book elaborates its matter by means of these expanded and resonant phrases. These phrases ornament, they emphasize, and they raise the prose to an appropriate pitch. But this elaboration has another result, and that is to make the matter of the book at the same time both more easily understood by its hearers and more theologically precise.

iii.

The prose of the Book of Common Prayer is

characterized not only by its choice of sentence structure and common kinds of phrase, but by its skilful manipulation of the smallest components of speech--of word and sound and stress. The book's attention to sound reflects its aim of an aurally impressive and dignified service. We have seen how its sentence structure and frequent use of certain typical phrases build a sturdy rhythmic base; now we will see how the tiniest units of the book's prose provide, by means of repetition of word and sound and manipulation of accent, a kind of aural polish to that base.

Repetition of initial words, or anaphora, is the most common kind of repetition of words in the Prayer Book. It frequently occurs along with repetition of sentence structure and it often functions as a structural device in a passage. In the address to the godparents at Baptism, the repetition of 'ye have' gives unity and force: "Dearly beloved, ye have brought this Child here to be baptized; ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive him. . . . Ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his gospel. . . ." Anaphora functions in a similar fashion in the second Exhortation at Communion: "I bid you in the Name of God, I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this holy Communion." And in the General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer--"We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and

desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us"--the repetition makes the recital of sins build up most powerfully to its grave, unbearable conclusion.

Repetition of any word lends an extra force and noticeableness to that word, thus emphasizing its meaning. Sometimes this repetition is part of, and reinforces, balanced structures. For instance, in the Collect for the Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Trinity the repetition of 'plenteously' draws attention to a cause and effect relation: "that they plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works may of thee be plenteously rewarded." Repetition also points out antithesis, as in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday After Trinity: "so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal." Here, the repetition of "things" draws attention to the antithesis, making the important contrast more noticeable. Repetition of words draws attention to meaning; it links in sound words that are linked in meaning. And as Joseph points out (307), the figures of repetition are especially useful in prose meant to be read aloud.

Repetition of end words often gives a pleasant finishing emphasis to a passage. The Prayer Book chooses to repeat a pronoun when it could instead use it only once

and have it apply to several other words. The questions at Matrimony repeat the pronoun for the sake of the loveliness their repetition helps to create: "Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?". At Public Baptism the end repetition of "them" combines with the earlier repetition of "he": "Ye perceive how by his outward gesture and deed he declared his good will toward them; for he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them." The result is an emphasis and delineation of the parallel clauses, suiting the sequence of actions being described.

As well as repetition of word, the Book of Common Prayer employs repetition of sound. One frequently used and simple device based on repetition of sound is alliteration. As a kind of repetition, it is a way of making something noticeable and emphatic. For instance in A Commination, it draws attention to this blunt passage by the repetition of p's, s's, and f's: "such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend." Being more noticeable, alliterating parts are more likely to register on the ear, and so alliteration can further meaning by singling out for attention important words, for

instance words with contrasting meanings. The General Thanksgiving illustrates this in its contrasting and alliterating phrases, "not only with our lips, but in our lives." Alliteration can point the effects of balanced structures, as it does in a part of the first Exhortation at Communion by means of the alliteration of d's, coupled of course with the pairing of "worthily" and "unworthily": "so divine and comfortable a thing to them who receive it worthily, and so dangerous to them that will presume to receive it unworthily." By its creation of emphasis, it furthers rhythm and can reinforce the effects of rhythmic prepositional phrases and doublets. For instance it makes more noticeable the pairs, "the changes and chances of this mortal life" (first Post-Offertory Collect), "to have and to hold" (Matrimony), and "most humble and hearty thanks" (first Exhortation at Communion). And it reinforces the pairs of prepositional phrases in "dispose the way of thy servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation" (first Post-Offertory Collect) and in "in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments" (second Post-Offertory Collect). In its ornamental capacity, it can function as the sole ornament in an otherwise spare collect. Generally, the Prayer Book uses alliteration with restraint and control, and in the service of both sound and meaning. The book's use of it stems from both stylistic traditions which nourished the book. Brook points out that alliteration is a frequent component of earlier English

religious writing (64), while Croll notes that the Latin originals of the book "are singularly rich in rhyme, alliteration, balance, and the other figures of sound which form the chief adornments of medieval Latin prose" (310).

A second figure based on the repetition of sound, assonance, occasionally achieves some interesting effects. A notable example comes from the Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us." The sombre 'o' sounds reinforce the sombreness and seriousness of the content. Assonance can also reinforce the cheerfulness of a hopeful message, as it does in the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent: "that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal." The 'i' sounds give an uplifting sound to an uplifting content. Of course, the sombre or joyous note is struck by the meaning of the passage, by what is said rather than by how it is said, but in passages like these the sound effectively echoes the sense.

The most frequent use of assonance, however, is simply to please the ear with repetition of sound. For instance, the Collect for the First Sunday After the Epiphany piles up 'e' sounds: "O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee." So too does the Prayer for the Church Militant:

> We beseech thee most mercifully [to accept our alms and oblations, and] to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord.

Assonance gives a pleasing unity to such passages.

Rhyme and partial rhyme are a third and particularly strong form of repetition of sound, although not very common. A Prayer for the King's Majesty furnishes a simple example: "grant him in health and wealth long to live." Rhyme reinforces similarity of structure, as it does with the two clauses beginning "take" and "make": "Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God" (Invitation to Confession, Communion). A passage from a prayer from early in the Visitation of the Sick delineates its equal members by final near-rhyming sounds: "Look upon him with the eyes of thy mercy, give him comfort and sure confidence in thee, defend him from the danger of the enemy, and keep him in perpetual peace and safety." These end-sounds are not obtrusive; in fact it is the similarity of structure of the clauses that draws attention. But the use of near-rhyme polishes the passage.

The use of two words stemming from the same root, known as polyptoton, provides the aural pleasure of similar sounds and invites the hearers to attend to the meaning.

This figure would probably have been more noticeable to Renaissance Englishmen than to us--connections between words like "spirit" and "inspiration" would have been quite obvious--simply because of the fluid state of their language. The Second Collect for the King, from Communion, provides a number of instances of root words: "God," "godly," and "godliness," and "governance," "govern," and "Governor." This device is often built around such frequently used words of the Prayer Book as 'life' or 'mercy.' It often has the intensifying effect of repetition: "Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful father" (Confession at Communion). And in one of the book's most notable example of polyptoton, the root words "holy" and "holiness" combine with the word play of "wholly" and "holy": "submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life" (third Exhortation at Communion). The use of words from a common root is yet another simple device of the Prayer Book used sparingly and in the service of both meaning and aural pleasure.

Finally, the Book of Common Prayer manipulates accent to create two different, noticeable patterns of stress. The first of these is the use of successive accented syllables, which C.S. Lewis, calling "collisions of strong syllables," attributes to the inheritance from Anglo-Saxon (219). Successive accented syllables occur at various

points in the Book of Common Prayer, and since their rhythm is a variation from prose's usual (irregular) alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, they emphasize, draw attention toward, make stand out. Several examples of these clusters of stress come at the beginning of the petitions of prayers. For instance, A Prayer for the Clergy and People, taken from Morning and Evening Prayer, reads, "Send down upon our Bishops and Curates . . . the healthful Spirit of thy grace." Similarly, the Collect for the Twelfth Sunday After Trinity reads, "Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy." But this stress pattern occurs at places other than the start of petitions: some of the most notable instances can be found in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent ("with great might succour us"), the Visitation of the Sick ("just men made perfect"), and the Whitsunday Preface ("with a sudden great sound"). These phrases are made particularly striking by the accumulation of stress.

Cadence, on the other hand, depends on the separation of stressed syllables. Cadence occurs when two or more successive accents of decreasing strength and diminishing frequency occur immediately before a pause. More simply, cadence is an arrangement of stress resulting in a falling rhythm. Croll gives a useful and detailed account of it and of its frequent occurrence in the Prayer Book. The second Collect at Morning Prayer illustrates the pervasiveness of cadence in the book:

> O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord [cadence], in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life [cadence], whose service is perfect freedom [cadence]: Defend us thy humble servants [cadence] in all assaults of our enemies [cadence]; that we, surely trusting in thy defence [cadence], may not fear the power of any adversaries [cadence].

As the above example suggests, cadences frequently coincide with the rhythmic pairs, adjective-noun phrases, and prepositional phrases of the book (Croll 335-336). It should be stressed, however, that cadence is not rhythm, but is a particular aspect of rhythm that provides the final lovely finish on the prose of the book.

As the preceding account suggests, the Book of Common Prayer was composed at a fortunate moment. Its access to a living tradition of rhetoric and of oratorical prose furnished it with the means to achieve its purposes through a prose at once clear and understandable, yet moving and dignified. This tradition, which provided the compilers of the Book of Common Prayer with an acute understanding of the effective manipulation of sentence structure, phrasing, and sound, furnished the Prayer Book with the means to communicate its burden of meaning in a way that is both emphatic and pleasing to the ear. As C. S. Lewis remarks, "There are of course many good, and different, ways both of writing prose and of praying" (221), but the Book of Common

Prayer just happens to embody both. As we shall see in the next chapter, The Alternative Service Book 1980, no longer rooted in a living tradition of rhetoric and oratorical prose, is often unable to match the standards of liturgical prose established by the Book of Common Prayer.

IV. The Prose of The Alternative Service Book 1980

The compilers of the Book of Common Prayer probably never intended the book to become the fixed, unchanging institution that it did. The original Preface, introducing a book that considerably altered the service of the church, justifies the new book with the claim that it is correcting the inevitable errors and abuses that creep into any human construction over time, a claim that more or less admits that the book will in time need further alteration:

> There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted: As, among other things, it may plainly appear by the Common Prayers in the Church, commonly called Divine Service.

The 1662 Preface admits broader grounds for change:

> the particular Forms of Divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient.

Given that the 1662 book is itself the result of a century-long series of alterations to the liturgy, and that its Preface admits that alterations to liturgy are sometimes warranted, and that this same Preface explains the necessity of modernizing the language of the earlier prayer books, it is more surprising that the book was never changed before than that it was changed in 1980, after more than three hundred years of use.

There were, however, attempts to alter the Book of Common Prayer in those three hundred years. In 1689 changes aimed at making the Prayer Book more acceptable to Presbyterians were proposed but rejected even before reaching debate in Convocation. In 1872 the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act allowed shortened Morning and Evening Prayer services and shorter Sunday services. In 1927, after years of debate, the Church Assembly produced a revised book, but Parliament would not authorize it. Nevertheless, the 1928 Prayer Book was published, and used in some parishes over the next forty years.

Despite the failure of the 1928 revisions to gain legal approval, there was general agreement within the Church of England that Prayer-Book revision was needed. The 1965 Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure allowed the Church legally to engage in liturgical reform and produce alternative services without the approval of Parliament. The first result of the Measure was the set of services known as "Series 1" which, derived

from the 1928 revisions, was not stylistically a dramatic change from the 1662 version. Series 2, similarly, which came into use in 1967, was also linguistically conservative, maintaining the traditional thou, thee, thy, and thine.

But the Series 3 services, appearing through the 1970's, provoked considerable controversy, and it was their language that drew the most fire: God was addressed as "you," for example, the Creed began "We believe," and the Lord's Prayer contained the notorious line, "Do not bring us to the test." In angry response to such changes, the Prayer Book Society was founded in 1975 "to uphold the worship and doctrine of the Church of England as enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer" and to press for the continued use of that book "as a major element in the worshipping life of the Church of England" (qtd. in Welsby 241). A petition of six hundred notable names was presented to the General Synod in 1979, protesting the discontinuation of the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version. Nonetheless, in 1980 The Alternative Service Book 1980, consisting of revised Series 3 services, an alternate communion made up of the Series 1 and 2 versions combined, a new Psalter, and a new calendar and lectionary, was published. The book was authorized to be used for the next ten years and, as its name suggests, it was intended as an alternative to and not a replacement for the Book of Common Prayer.

The Alternative Service Book 1980, like the Book of Common Prayer, is a guide for conducting the services of the Church of England. It differs from the Prayer Book not only in its language but in the services it contains and in the structure and content of individual services. The main points to note about the construction of the new book are as follows. The book drops some Prayer-Book material, for instance the services of The Visitation of the Sick, The Catechism, and A Commination. It adds new material, as for example new services for Thanksgiving after Adoption and The Renewal of Baptismal Vows as well as many newly composed prayers. It includes material from sources other than the Prayer Book: it borrows prayers from the 1928 Prayer Book and the Book of Common Worship of the Church of South India (Commentary 52) and it takes its Scripture from modern translations--from the 1977 The Psalms: A New Translation for Worship and from the New English Bible, the Jerusalem Bible, Today's English Version, and the Revised Standard Version. It provides a great many options both within services and in the choice of services, for instance many choices of prayers, opportunities for sermons and hymns, regular or shorter forms of Morning and Evening Prayer, and two forms of Holy Communion. And it frequently alters Prayer-Book originals, as when it changes the order of events in a service, moves prayers from one service to another, rewrites prayers to make them clearer to modern ears or to change their emphasis, or lays out most of its

prayers as if they were verse.

The differences in the content of the two books are considerable and significant, but the particular concern of this chapter is with the language of the Alternative Service Book and its differences from the language of the Book of Common Prayer. The first point to note about the language of the Alternative Service Book is that, excepting Holy Communion Rite B, which uses traditional language, the new service book is intended to be and tries to be a liturgy in modern English. Its Preface talks about the need to modernize the liturgy because "any liturgy, no matter how timeless its qualities, also belongs to a particular period and culture," and the Commentary makes clear in its chapter on the language of worship that a primary linguistic aim of the Alternative Service Book is that it be in contemporary English. More importantly, the book itself testifies to this aim. It replaces old verb-forms (art; be ed as the present indicative plural; dost, hast, didst, and other second person singular verbs in -(e)st; hath and other third person singular verbs in -(e)th; and so on) with their modern forms. It replaces second person singular pronouns (thou, thee, thy, thine) and the second person plural nominative pronoun (ye) with their modern forms. It frequently does away with the same, used in the Prayer Book as a sort of all-purpose pronoun. It updates prepositions to the usual modern choice, as in its replacement of "Defend us . . . in all assaults of our

enemies" (second Collect, Morning Prayer) with "Defend us . . . from all assaults of our enemies," or in its change of "contempt of thy word" (Good Friday Collect) to "contempt for thy word," or in its replacement of unto with to. It replaces archaic diction with modern equivalents. For example it changes "by thy special grace preventing us" (Collect for Easter Sunday) to "by your special grace going before us"; "the quick and the dead" (Apostles' Creed) to "the living and the dead"; "corrupt affections" (Collect for Easter Eve) to "evil desires." Some Alternative Service Book prayers differ from their Prayer-Book originals only in such straightforward modernizations. For example, the new book's Communion Collect differs from its Prayer-Book form only in its modernized verb-forms ("are open" rather than "be open"; "hidden" rather than "hid"), modernized pronouns ("your" and "you" rather than "thy" and "thee"), and a modernized preposition ("to" rather than "unto").

Many other prayers, however, are altered in more substantial ways. The new book changes the grammatical structure of many Prayer-Book sentences from their long, complex, much-subordinated form to shorter, simpler, more typically modern sentences. As we have seen, a Prayer-Book prayer typically begins with an elaborated address, often made up of subordinate relative clauses describing God and his qualities ("Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of

all them that are penitent:") followed by the petition, which often gains both force and a pleasing inevitability from its delay after the long address ("Create and make in us new and contrite hearts . . ."), followed by a formulaic ending that is tied to what has gone before by its form as a prepositional phrase ("through Jesus Christ our Lord"--Collect for Ash Wednesday). This long sentence is united and flowing, yet structured and paced; it manages to achieve both fluidity and control at once. And it is an effective vehicle for the theology of the prayer: the information contained in the relative clauses about the God to whom the prayer is addressed provides the theological basis--often a whole argument--for the prayer's request, just as the concluding formula conveys the theological means by which the request of the prayer can be granted.

But the Alternative Service Book, seemingly influenced by a feeling that sentences constructed according to the Prayer-Book pattern of much subordination are not typical of modern English, often shortens and simplifies its Prayer-Book originals. It typically breaks one-sentence prayers into two sentences, making the address one complete sentence about God ("Almighty and everlasting God, / you hate nothing that you have made / and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent.") and putting the petition into a second sentence. Somewhat strangely, this new version of the address tells God about himself, prompting Robinson to call such a clause "a piece of

ridiculously gratuitous information" (52). Yet it includes the same information as the Prayer-Book address and the information God is given about himself is intended as the basis for the prayer's request. But the change in the grammar of the prayer has the considerable effect of obscuring the connection between the qualities of God and the request that is made of him. The old form, by making a grammatical connection, points out the more important connection between the nature of the God who is being petitioned and the petition. In the Alternative Service Book there is nothing in the grammar of the prayer to suggest that the two sentences are related, and the result is that the first sentence often seems irrelevant to the rest of the prayer, as in the Collect for Pentecost 6: "Almighty God, / without you we are not able to please you. / Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit / may in all things direct and rule our hearts; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." The hearer may work out the logical connection between the elaborated address and the petition, but that such a connection will be made is much less likely here than in the Prayer-Book original--"O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Collect for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity)--where the form of the prayer embodies the logical connection. Many newly composed prayers, such as the Collects for Epiphany 4 and

Pentecost 20, give a similar impression of disconnectedness.

Not all of the Alternative Service Book prayers are so disconnected, however. Some of the book's two-sentence prayers retain coherence by repeating an item from the first sentence in the second. For example the second Collect for Trinity Sunday speaks of "true faith" in its first sentence and refers again to "this faith" in its petition. Similarly the Collect for the Blessing of the Oils speaks first of "the Holy Spirit" and then of "the same Holy Spirit." But these are exceptions, and usually, when an Alternative Service Book prayer addresses God in one sentence and petitions him in the next, the logical connection between the petition and the information about the nature of God is attenuated.

This diminished sense of logical relationship is only part of the loss resulting from the splitting of one-sentence prayers into two or more sentences; another result is the loss of the unity and fluidity that make many Prayer-Book prayers so lovely. In the old Collect for the Twelfth Sunday After Trinity, which begins, "Almighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy . . .," the delay, caused by the lengthy relative clauses, before what is grammatically expected, the petition, coupled with the successive accents of the beginning of the

petition, gives the petition a pleasing sense of force and inevitability. In the new version of the same Collect, used at Easter 5--"Almighty and everlasting God, / you are always more ready to hear than we to pray / and give more than either we desire or deserve. / Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy. . ."--the effect is lost.

As well as splitting one-sentence prayers in its attempt to simplify and modernize Prayer-Book sentence structures, The Alternative Service Book 1980 also replaces participial phrases, showing relationship, with coordinate clauses. For example, in its Book of Common Prayer version the petition of the second Collect at Morning Prayer reads, "Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries." The participial phrase, "surely trusting in thy defence," gives the means by which we may be freed from the power of our adversaries. But in the modernized version of the prayer the purpose clause becomes, "that we may trust in your defence, / and not fear the power of any adversaries." The logical relationship between trust in God and freedom from fear is not in the new version explicit; the coordination of the two clauses may disguise from the hearer their relationship. Similarly, in the new version of the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent the relationship between physical abstinence and spiritual salvation--the relationship being, in the words of the Prayer Book, "that,

our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey [God's] godly motions in righteousness and true holiness"--is obscured by the loss of the participial phrase and by the coordination of the ideas of abstinence and salvation. The petition now reads, "give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; / and, as you know our weakness, / so may we know your power to save." The change from participial phrases to coordinated clauses may give the sentences a more modern, less Latinate feel, but as with the removal of the subordinate clauses of the addresses of many prayers, the new versions are no longer such clear embodiments of theology.

The prose of the Alternative Service Book, then, tends to be built of somewhat simpler, less subordinated, more typically modern sentences than is the Book of Common Prayer. The new book's prose is finished differently, as well: frequently the embellishments of its Prayer-Book originals--the resonant and expanded phrases and the repetition of word and sound that help to create the old book's distinctive rhythms--are removed in the 'translation' to modern English. The result is a toned down, less conspicuous prose.

At its simplest, this toning-down is represented by the loss of adverbs and adjectives that are not strictly necessary. "Mercifully grant" (Collect for the Sunday Next Before Easter) becomes simply "grant" in the Alternative Service Book. "Worthily lamenting" (Collect for Ash

Wednesday) becomes "lamenting"; "blessed hope of everlasting life" (Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent) becomes "hope of everlasting life"; "thy humble servants" (second Collect at Morning Prayer) becomes "your servants"; "thy great mercy" (third Collect at Evening Prayer) becomes "your mercy." These modifiers provide a kind of religious education: they tell us that we should lament worthily and be humble servants; that the hope of everlasting life is a blessed hope and that God's mercy is great. Their loss, then, affects both the meaning and, because of the two-beat rhythm that they establish, the sound of many prayers.

The modernized Alternative Service Book prayers leave out other favorite rhythmic Prayer-Book structures. The new book sometimes drops the typical Prayer-Book doubling of synonymous or related words. Its Collect for Advent 3 omits the "prepare and make ready" of the Prayer-Book original. Its second Good Friday Collect replaces "our supplications and prayers" with "our prayer." The book also tends to remove or simplify the rhythmic prepositional phrases of the Book of Common Prayer. The new version of the Absolution at Communion changes "who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him," with its prepositional phrases, to "who forgives all who truly repent." The phrase "turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" (Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent) becomes in the new book "turn our disobedient

hearts to the law of love." The book often drops the phrases in apposition that make up the rhythmic and impressive addresses of many Prayer-Book prayers. The third Collect at Morning Prayer begins "O Lord our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God" in its Prayer-Book version but simply "Almighty and everlasting Father" in its new version; the Book of Common Prayer Burial Collect begins "O Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life" but becomes simply "Almighty God, / whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life" in its new version for Easter 3. Undeniably, in taking out or simplifying such typical Prayer-Book phrases, the makers of the Alternative Service Book have given the prose more of a modern feeling.

Similarly, in its efforts to make the liturgy sound more like modern English, The Alternative Service Book 1980 sometimes leaves out the repetition of word and sound that characterizes its Prayer-Book originals; for modern prose tends to be much more sparing than sixteenth century prose in its use of such devices. The Alternative Service Book rewrites the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent such that "forty days and forty nights" becomes simply "forty nights"; it rewrites the Collect for the Sunday after Ascension such that its virtual repetition of word--"leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us"--becomes "Leave us not comfortless, / but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us." Moreover, Alternative

Service Book prayers often lack the assonance of their originals. "[W]e beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family" becomes "look with mercy on this your family" (first Good Friday Collect). Alliteration, too, is often diminished in the modernized prayers. "[T]he ministers and stewards of thy mysteries" becomes "the ministers and stewards of your truth" (Advent 3 Collect); "[T]hat we worthily lamenting our sins" becomes "that, lamenting our sins" (Ash Wednesday Collect). A great deal of alliteration is lost by the modernization of verb forms and personal pronouns: the repetition of the similar th sounds in thee, thou, thy, thine, in verbs in -(e)th, and in the common the and that, and also the repetition of the st sound of hast and other verbs in -(e)st, subtly unified and patterned Prayer-Book prayers. The modernization of the first Good Friday Collect illustrates such a loss of phonetic repetition: "who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost" becomes "who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit." The third Good Friday Collect also loses repetition of sound in its modernized form. Its 1662 version begins, "O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live"; its 1980 version begins, "Merciful God, / who made all men and hate nothing that you have made: / you desire not the death of a sinner / but rather that he should be converted and live." But although

the modern version of the prayer loses the repetition of s sounds (hast, hatest, wouldest, sinner), it retains the alliteration of m's and, secondarily, h sounds (who, hate, have), and even adds the alliteration of desire and death; it by no means is stripped of all pleasing devices of sound.

Much of the prose of the Alternative Service Book, then, is updated Prayer-Book prose, modernized, as we have seen, through the straightforward replacement of obsolete words and forms with modern equivalents; through the rewriting of sentences into more usual twentieth-century form; and through the toning-down of Prayer-Book prose by removing such distinctive features as expanded and resonant phrases and repetition of word and sound. Although much of the modernized prose is competent, much falls short of Prayer-Book standards. The new prose's ability to communicate to modern congregations benefits undoubtedly from its modernization and simplification, but, as we have seen, Alternative Service Book prose is in some respects a less effective vehicle for the book's theological content. Moreover, some of it is flat and lackluster. Why is this? First, part of bringing the book up to date involves taking out the embellishments and exuberances of the old prose. Repetition, appositives, and the frequent use of "we beseech thee," for example, all tend to intensify Prayer-Book prose; their loss lowers the pitch of the Alternative Service Book. But also, the modernization of

the prose results in a diminished rhythm. Many little words and syllables are removed in the rewriting of prayers, and the simple reduction in unstressed syllables alters what is in the Prayer Book the run of unaccented and slightly accented syllables that sets off what is stressed. For example, the Alternative Service Book's third Collect at Morning Prayer, tidied and shortened considerably from its old form, is composed of clauses of insufficient length to make the prayer rhythmically substantial. Its petition reads, "Keep us from falling into sin / or running into danger; / order us in all our doings; / and guide us to do always / what is right in your eyes." The Prayer-Book original, however, uses the extra syllables of its longer clauses as a necessary lead-up to the rhythmic prepositional phrases--the cadences--that end its clauses: "grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight." Without the run of lightly stressed syllables, the Alternative Service Book cannot achieve this sort of cadencing effect. Its prose, as a consequence, is at times a flattened version of Prayer-Book originals, less well-suited than Prayer-Book prose to the aural as well as to the pedagogical demands of public worship.

The Alternative Service Book's clumsy handling of prose rhythms sometimes creates another problem, one the opposite of rhythmic flatness. The book at times falls

into a rhythm that seems very much--in fact, too much--like verse. Indeed, this raises the question of whether the book is intended as prose or verse, for nearly all of its prayers, though for some reason not quite all, are laid out as if they were verse, although they are for the most part quite clearly prose. The likeliest explanation for this layout, however, is probably not an intention to versify the liturgy; instead it may be an intention of marking pauses and so making the prayers easier to read.

But let us return to the rhythm of this oddly laid-out book. Prose movement depends on varied patterns of stress; when it is too rhythmically regular, prose turns into verse. In some prayers of the Alternative Service Book, lines of about equal length combine with regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables to create a verse-like rhythm. This happens in the Confession used at Morning and Evening Prayer and Holy Communion Rite A. The Confession begins to slide from prose into near-verse in its third line, recovering completely only with the longer, more rhythmically varied eighth line:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
> we have sinned against you and against our
> fellow men,
> in thought and word and deed,
> through negligence, through weakness,
> through our own deliberate fault.
> We are truly sorry

and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who
died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness
of life;
to the glory of your name.

Prayer 34 from Prayers after the Birth of a still-born Child or the Death of a newly-born Child, one of the book's newly composed prayers, falls into even greater rhythmic regularity straight after its address: "Gracious Father, / in darkness and in light, / in trouble and in joy, / help us to trust your love, / to serve your purpose, / and to praise your name; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." The second through fourth lines set up the expectation that the fifth, too, will be in iambic trimeter and may even rhyme. On occasion the likeness to verse actually is reinforced by rhyme or near-rhyme. For instance, Prayer 38 at Baptism and Prayer 36 at Marriage contain the lines, "may we know you more clearly, / love you more dearly, / and follow you more nearly, / day by day." This sort of bouncing, jingling prose undermines its attempted seriousness.

The Alternative Service Book 1980 has problems beyond its rhythmical difficulties and one of them is that its aim of rendering the liturgy in contemporary English is incompletely realized. The book sounds more like modern English than does the Prayer Book, of course, but, though

it modernizes many archaisms, it retains and even adds others. Its Holy Communion Rite A Collect and its version of the Lord's Prayer illustrate this inconsistency in modernization. The new version of the Prayer-Book Communion Collect ("Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open. . . .") updates the preposition "unto" to "to," turns the outdated "be" to the modern "are," replaces the past participle "hid" with its more usual modern form "hidden," and changes the out-of-date pronouns "thy" and "thee" to "your" and "you," but it leaves untouched the archaic "magnify" in its line "and worthily magnify your holy name." With equal inconsistency, the Lord's Prayer replaces the archaic "trespasses" with "sins" yet retains the equally archaic "hallowed"; it removes the old second person singular verb-form in "Our Father who art in heaven" by changing the address to "Our Father in heaven," yet it keeps the decidedly un-modern subjunctives, "hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done." Such archaisms are common throughout this supposedly modernized book. Mark meaning "take notice of," a sense unused in modern English except in the expression, "Mark my words," is retained in the line, "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them" (Advent 2 Collect). Author meaning "source" is retained in the description of God as "the author of peace" (second Morning Prayer Collect). Even as meaning "to the same degree as," rather than its more usual modern meaning of "at the same time as," is left unchanged in the

line, "may purify ourselves even as he is pure" (Epiphany 6 Collect). The same, used almost like a pronoun referring back to profession (which incidentally is also archaic in its sense here of "religious faith"), is left unchanged in the line, "and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same" (Pentecost 5 Collect). Outdated word-order is also a frequent occurrence in the new book. The Apostles' Creed, for instance, retains the inversion of "the life everlasting." Negative statements are sometimes left in their archaic form, without the modern auxiliary do, as for example in "you desire not" (third Good Friday Collect) or "he went not up" (Lent 3 Collect). And beyond modernizing Prayer-Book prose incompletely, the Alternative Service Book even introduces archaisms into its prose. For instance it introduces obsolete diction, adding save meaning "except" to its Easter 5 Collect and using aright for "rightly" in the newly-composed Prayer 10 from the Funeral Service. It also introduces out-of-date expressions such as "these your children" and "these your servants" (Prayers 24, 27, Marriage Service) to newly composed prayers, and it introduces the inversion, "life eternal," into the Absolution it uses at Morning and Evening Prayer and Communion. What a mix of styles is here! This book can write a prayer that says, "We pray that these your servants may grow in love and self-giving to each other all the days of their life" (Prayer 11, Thanksgiving for Childbirth), a prayer that mixes the noun

self-giving, which smacks of psychobabble, with the traditional phrases these your servants and all the days of their life. This is the kind of weird and awkward mix of archaic and modern that prompts so much complaint about revisions of the Book of Common Prayer (e.g., Robinson 53; Cottle 18; Doody 119). Complaint is often justified, for at times Alternative Service Book prose is too obviously pasted together from prose of different eras and styles: its stylistic inconsistencies give it the air of pastiche.

Whereas the Book of Common Prayer maintains a consistently serious and dignified tone, always conveying the sense that it deals with weighty matters, The Alternative Service Book 1980, on the other hand, as well as at times defeating its own seriousness with its jingly rhythms and air of pastiche, sometimes strikes an entirely inappropriate tone. At times its prose has an air of social chitchat. "We welcome you into the Lord's Family. . . . We welcome you," say the congregation at two of the Baptism services. "[A]nd also with you," they reply courteously to "The Lord be with you" in Holy Communion Rite A. "We thank you," politely say many prayers, for example Prayer 53 at Holy Communion Rite A and Prayer 1 at Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child. The old book, with its expressions like "We give thee humble and hearty thanks" (A General Thanksgiving), or "We most heartily thank thee" (Post-Communion Prayer), never leaves any doubt that its gratitude is great; and two of the Alternative

Service Book's forms, "we give you thanks" (Proper Prefaces) and "Thanks be to God" (congregational response to "This is the word of the Lord"), have currency today only in religious usage and therefore clearly indicate a religious gratitude; but "We thank you" is scarcely distinguishable from the present-day conventional social form. Just as unfortunately, the prose of the new book at times has Sunday-schoolish explanations and commands. "Those of you who have come for baptism must affirm your allegiance to Christ," candidates for baptism are told. A lighted candle is given to newly baptized persons or their godparents along with the explanation, "This is to show that you have passed from darkness to light." Such language is probably part of what prompts David Martin's complaint that in the new services, "There is . . . a curious vein of childishness. Not only do the texts sound as if devised for children, but there are pervasive reminders of children being 'called together'" (2). And tone is out of control in various ways at other points in the book. For example at Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child the minister may with these words give "a copy of one of the gospels" to the parents: "This book contains the Good News of God's love. Read it, for it tells how you and your family can share in eternal life, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ." The offering of an incentive for reading the gospel, the casualness of "it tells how you can," and the importation of the tired expression, "you and

your family," combine to create a tone somehow more suitable to the gimmickry of the marketplace than to a church service; the lucky family might just as well be winning a week's groceries. And the book often seems unaware of the connotations that cling to the words and expressions it imports into its services. For instance it calls the priest who presides over Holy Communion Rite A "the President." It makes Christ sound like a labour negotiator: "we thank you/ for all the benefits you have won for us" (Baptism and Confirmation without Holy Communion). Such problems of connotation and tone provoke a good deal of lively complaint about revisions of the Book of Common Prayer (e.g., Robinson 50, 52; Cottle 18-19; Doody 121), and this is understandable. After all, in prayer, as Margaret Doody comments, "tone is doctrine" (110).

Despite its problems, The Alternative Service Book 1980 contains some good prayers. But most of its successful prose is written in what is more or less the style of the Book of Common Prayer, a style of careful balance and patterning, of rhythmic phrases, of figures of sound. Part of the new post-Communion Prayer from Holy Communion Rite A, a prayer Basil Cottle singles out for praise (19), reads,

> Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who

drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

The succession of short predicates of a common subject in the first sentence, the parallel clauses all built according to the same pattern in the second sentence, the alliteration (d's, l's, and g's), and the use of different parts of speech stemming from a common root ("living," "live," and "life"; "lights" and "light")--these are all hallmarks of Prayer-Book style. They build a prayer that is carefully structured and patterned, overlaid with repetition of sound, and, in sum, pleasing to both mind and ear. Other of the new book's best prose shows the same reliance on Prayer-Book methods of composition. The Epiphany 3 Collect, for example, delays and emphasizes, by the positioning of prepositional phrases, the rhetorical gist of two of its clauses. The prayer reads, "Almighty God, / whose Son revealed in signs and miracles / the wonder of your saving love: / renew your people with your heavenly grace, / and in all our weakness / sustain us by your mighty power; / through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the first three lines the slight delay between the verb and its object, "the wonder of your saving love," puts an effective emphasis on that object. Similarly in the final petition, the main clause is delayed by the prepositional phrase of the fifth line, thus putting a suitable emphasis on God's "mighty power." Moreover, the prayer derives considerable rhythmical beauty from the prepositional

phrases positioned at the end of its six last lines. The effective use of the rhythmic qualities of two-beat phrases is, as we have seen, standard in the Book of Common Prayer. A section of the Invitation to Confession at Holy Communion Rite A will serve as a last example of good Alternative Service Book prose: "Let us confess our sins, in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all men." The elaboration of the simple main clause, "Let us confess our sins," by the prepositional phrase and the participial phrase is typical of the Prayer-Book, these modifying phrases providing instruction about how this confession should be made. Like Prayer-Book prose the sentence has a predilection for pairs of nouns coupled by and. Also like Prayer-Book prose it is ornamented by alliteration, in this case alliteration of "faith" and "firmly," "keep" and "commandments," and "live" and "love." There is nothing of the jingle of too regular lines or of the comedy of pastiche and inappropriate tone about these passages of the book: they have the dignity and beauty that make them fit prose for public worship. And their means of achieving that dignity and beauty are the same means used by the Book of Common Prayer.

But on the whole The Alternative Service Book 1980 is only a partial success in its valiant attempt at modernizing Prayer-Book prose and providing a modern-English liturgy. It modernizes many obsolete forms and

usages--and the use of modern language can go a long way toward conveying the impression of a living, current religion. Yet, with sometimes jarring effect, it retains many archaisms. Partly as a result of this modernization the book is frequently rhythmically flat; at other points it falls into verse rhythm. It simplifies Prayer-Book sentence structure in an attempt to make the liturgy sound more like contemporary English, yet this updating leaves a sometimes clumsy, often less precise prose. And although the prose of the Alternative Service Book has its moments of success, those successes tend to be founded on an imitation of Prayer-Book style. The new book's prose, on the whole, is a hodgepodge of different styles and tones, consistent neither in quality nor in its suitability for public worship.

V. Conclusion

A constant undercurrent of this study has been the opportuneness of historical circumstances for the creation of the liturgical prose of the Book of Common Prayer. The book's purposes called for a prose that could edify, a prose that was clear and understandable. Its purposes also called for a prose that by its skilful use of the resources of English could move its hearers to assent to its burden of meaning. The book's function as a book of church services called for a prose that could fulfil its purposes aurally. Happily, the compilers had available to them the means to meet these demands, most notably in the styles available to them and in the tradition of oratorical prose.

The prose that was created in the Book of Common Prayer is constructed on a base of balanced and patterned sentences. Layered over that base are phrasal structures that reinforce the balance and pattern of the sentences and further the rhythms of the book. Manipulation of word, sound, and stress gives a final layer of polish to the prose and by its effect on rhythm helps to make the sense of the prose more graspable by the ear. The result is a prose that is on the one hand rich and dignified; and on the other plain and clear enough for instruction while at the same time capable of precisely expressing complex theology.

The virtues of Prayer-Book prose stand out in relief when we look at the prose of The Alternative Service Book

1980. Where the new book fails, it disregards its need to appeal to the ear. Where it succeeds, like the Book of Common Prayer it writes to be heard. The Alternative Service Book makes clear that the Book of Common Prayer succeeds because it is able to create a prose that is ideally suited to the demands of public worship. The achievement of the Book of Common Prayer is a prose that is sturdy enough to bear the weight of the liturgy, yet can rise to the great events of the life of the Church.

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