



# The Construction of Christian Poetry in Old English (Literary Structures)

*Mr. John Gardner*

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Focusing on the works of Cynewulf, the Caedmonic school, and the great Beowulf-poet, John Gardner traces the development of Anglo-Saxon Christian poetic style.

This latest contribution to a distinguished new series is a scholar-novelist-poet's analysis of allegorical modes in a few major poems from England's great age of allegory, the seventh century to, roughly, the eleventh.

What John Gardner is out to understand and describe is not so much the "meaning" of particular poems—though his study inevitably deals, to some extent, with meaning and offers critical interpretations—but how the various kinds of Anglo-Saxon allegory work, what happens when several completely different kinds of allegory are brought together in one poem (as in *Beowulf*), and what it is that makes the different kinds of allegory not just intellectually but emotionally effective.

Gardner asks the right questions from both the scholar's and the novelist's points of view, which turn out to be important for an understanding of the whole Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition.

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