

THE "SÁ + INN" PATTERN: A STUDY IN LITERARY IDIOM
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Could anything possibly be more boring than the study of the Demonstrative Pronoun? "Yes," I hear someone answering, "the study of the Definite Article." It is with some trepidation, then, that I present an analysis of a pattern centered on the combination of these particles. I hope to show, however, that most of the alleged boredom would be in collecting and collating examples "by hand," which would reduce the most Sitzfleischig researcher to stupefaction. When the scholar is relieved of such tedium--in this case, by the computer--he can detect fascinating patterns which adumbrate literary functions of such humble crumbs of language.

In a meticulous analysis of the demonstrative pronoun sá in Old Icelandic poetry, Ulrike Sprenger discovered a lexical pattern which might be termed "hyperdemonstrative": In combination with the definite article, sá was evidently intended to throw an unusually strong emphasis on its modificand.¹ After surveying Eddic, runic, and skaldic uses of sá, Sprenger describes this extra emphasis in various ways: "besonderes Gewicht verleiht," "ein schweres Gewicht [legt]," "am meisten Nachdruck [legt]," "aktualisiert," "dramatisiert." She demonstrates this tendency with virtual minimum pairs:

- | |
|--|
| 1) stócc þat ip micla / men Brisinga (vs.) ino micla / men Brisinga (Þrk. 13) (Þrk. 19) |
| 2) oc sá inn húnsci / herbaldr lifir (vs.) konungr inn húnsci (Sg. 18) (Sg. 8) |
| 3) oc var þat sá inn lævisi Loki (vs.) inn lævisi Loki (Ls. 54) (Hym. 37) |
| 4) orni þeim inom frána (Vkv. 17) (vs.) orni inn frána (Grp. 11) |

Through the template fashioned by these four examples, we can see the following three, lacking the minimal contrast, as having the same resonance:

- 5) Kœmia Grótti / or gríá fialli, / ne sá inn harði / hallr ór iqröo
(Grt. 10, referring to Grótti itself)

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- 6) Ec drap Plaza, / inn þrúðmóga igtun, / upp ec varp augom / Allvalda
sonar / á þann inn heiða himin (Hrbl. 19)
- 7) en ör hans heila / vöru þau in harðmógo / scý ǫll um scǫpuð (Grm. 41)

After elaborate analysis, Sprenger finds this dramatic emphasis too strong for the term "deixis"; her summarizing term is "prägnant." This quality, moreover, often has mythological overtones:

Bei den erwähnten Beispielen mit sá + inn handelt es sich um Gestalten oder Gegenstände des Mythos oder solche, denen ein mythischer Anstrich gegeben werden soll. Hier mag man die von Neckel...gegebene Übersetzung bei sá + inn als "jener bekannte" annehmen. (2)

The present study will extend this analysis into Old Norse prose. It will first tabulate, chart, and say something about the deictic function of some 55 instances of the pattern in twelve fornaldarsögur. Following this, six examples from Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar (Eigla) and four related passages from Njáls saga (Njála) will be produced for comparison, in hopes of demonstrating more highly-developed literary uses of the pattern in the Íslendingasögur.

All instances of the pattern in prose, except those from Njála, were found in rough concordances of twelve fornaldarsögur (FS), a total corpus of ca. 123,000 words, and of Eigla (ca. 55,600 words). The concordances were produced on computers by Project CREST (Computer Research on Early Scandinavian Texts) between 1976 and 1979.³ The FS used were, in decreasing order of length: Örvar-Odds s. (33,000 words), Völsunga s. (26,000), Hervarar s. ok Heiðreks (11,300), Bósa s. (9,600), Yngvars s. víðförla (9,200), Áns s. bogsveigis (8,900), Hálfðanar s. Brönufostra (7,400), Hálf s. ok Hálfrekka (4,800), Sörla þáttir (3,750), Hrómundar s. Gripssonar (3,550), Gríms s. loðinkinna (2,900), and Illuga s. Gríðarfóstra (2,850).⁴ Primarily out of curiosity, I followed this search with a quick scanning of about 5,400 lines of

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rímur,⁵ 1,300 of dansar,⁶ and the 2,496 lines of the Faroese Sjúðarkvæði,⁷ to a total of ca. 9,200 lines of verse, and found a handful of examples.

As a prelude to analysis and argument, here is an illustrative list of examples, arranged so as to show progressive variation within a similar structural framework.⁸

| | | | Referents (selected) |
|-----|--|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1) | sá inn mikli | Herv 44, 47 | Fog, Anchor |
| 2) | sá inn hveli | Herv 39 | Goldsmith's Hammer |
| 3) | sá inn fagrgjarni | Herv 44 | Heiðreks- gáður |
| 4) | þær, inar hvítfölduðu | Herv 46 | |
| 5) | þær / inar hvítfölduðu konur | Herv 48 | Waves |
| 6) | Sú (sjá) in sama ylgr | Völs 119 (3 times) | Fatal she-wolf |
| 7) | Sú in virðuliga kona | Yngv 437 | Silkisif |
| 8) | sá in illiligi tröllkonuhamr | Grim 193 | |
| 9) | Þá ina sömu nótt | Hálf 104 | |
| 10) | S(j)á inn ungi maðr | Ánsb 399 (2), 400 (2) | Þórir Ánsson |
| 11) | þetta it nauðljóta höfuð | Órvd 386 | Ógmundur Eyþjófsbani |
| 12) | sjá inn mikli apaldr | Völs 114 | Barnstokkr (tree) |
| 13) | þau in hvössu augu | Völs 140 | Sigurðr's eyes |
| 14) | þenna inn mikla dreka | Völs 145 | Fáfnir |
| 15) | þessi in sterkla hönd | Völs 152 | Sigurðr's hand |
| 16) | þetta it snarpa sverð | Völs 152 | Sigurðr's sword |
| 17) | þessa ins mikla fjár | Völs 154 | Fáfnir's treasure |
| 18) | þetta it illa verk | Völs 191 | Slaying of Sigurðr |
| 19) | þenna inn hýnska konung | Völs 193 | Sigurðr |
| 20) | þetta...inn mikli maðr | Eigla 63 | Skallagrímur |
| 21) | sá...inn mikli maðr | Eigla 111 | Egill |
| 22) | táð hit vana vív | Sjúðarkvæði (6 times) ⁹ | various women |
| 23) | mitt/þitt it ógurliga sax | Illg 420-1 | a troll-sword |
| 24) | yðarn inn bezta mág | Völs 205 | Sigurðr |
| 25) | þú...inn mikli maðr | Eigla 203 | Egill |
| 26) | Þú inn vondi slangi | Skíðaríma 189 ¹⁰ | |
| 27) | tú hinn illa kvinna | SK H3 42.4 | |
| 28) | gull þat it mikla | Völs 204 | Fáfnir's treasure |
| 29) | hrís þat it mæra...gröf þá ina helgu...stein þann inn mæra | Herv 56 (Hlökkviða) | (see p. 5 below) |
| 30) | skalla þeim inum mikla | Eigla 65 | Skallagrímur |
| 31) | Egil þenna inn mikla | Eigla 157 | Egill |
| 32) | Egill sjá inn mikli | Eigla 233 | Egill |
| 33) | ristill þessi inn þrúði Geirarðsrímur | 63 ¹¹ | |
| 34) | lofðungs þess ins dýra | " " 67 | |
| 35) | bróðir okkar inn böðfrækni | Völs 218 | Erpr |
| 36) | bróðir þinn / inn böðskái | Herv 54 | Hlökk |
| 37) | skyrtu sinnar innar góðu | Órvd 358 | Óddr's magic shirt |
| 38) | Krists vdrs ins krossfesta | Yngv 453 | Christ |
| 39) | farþegi þeirra inn dauði | Skáld-Helga rímur 18 ¹² | |

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As our study is concerned with literary function, it must start with the fundamental linguistic task of pronouns and articles: To refer to something. For this point we return to Sprenger's examples. Here, two properties of reference must be distinguished: First, the mythological; second, a slightly less elevated quality of extraordinariness. The second will be shown to be persistent throughout the usage of the sá inn idiom. Sprenger balances these two properties by showing how sá, especially when intensified by inn ("zur Verstärkung neben inn gesetzt"), highlights

Personen und Gegenstände, die aus dem Gewöhnlichen hervorragten--meist standen sie ja in Beziehung zum Mythos--und auf die nun der Sprechende durch die Setzung von sá + inn besonders hinwies, sie damit hervorhob...¹³

Not all of my examples from the FS share this elevated function of mythic resonance, but it can be shown that all of them "aus dem Gewöhnlichen hervorragen." A quick survey of the referents of sá + inn will serve as an illustrative prelude; it should be noted that, as a general rule, all of the following are focused on by sá + inn at portentous moments. In Völs, these include Sigurðr (three times), Fáfnir (twice), and Óðinn; Sigurðr's eyes, hand, sword, death, and the gold he wins (five times); and the she-wolf which devours Sigmund's brothers (three times). In Herv, the referents include five of the subjects of the Heiðreksgátur (waves, fire, fog, hammer, anchor) and the obscure but clearly important hrís, gröf, and steinn claimed by Hlóðr in Hlöðskviða. In Örvd, they include Óðr's magic, life-saving shirt, made in six countries (including, probably, the otherworld); and the face of Þgmundr Eyþjófsbani, one of the most gruesomely vivid things in the saga. In other, shorter sagas the idiom is used to highlight fearsome swords, loathesome beings, ominous strangers, portentous moments, and the like.

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The mythic resonance found by Sprenger in the Elder Edda can be detected most strongly in Völs and Hery, though there is a distinct contrast between the two in this regard. Of the 11 instances in Hery, the seven in the Heiðreksgáttur are as unique as the gáttur themselves, in that they refer to archetypes, not specific things. Yet this archetypality shares some of the gnomic, almost etiological quality of the Eddic references. The sá inn idiom is used four times in the formula "Hverr er sá inn mikli (twice), ...hvelli, ...eini," referring respectively to Fog (p. 44), Anchor (47), Goldsmith's Hammer (39), and Fire in the Hearth (43); the last is also called "sá inn fagrjarni" later in its strophe. The remaining two uses are a repetition: In two separate riddles, waves are referred to as "þær, inar hvítfölduðu" (46) and "þær / inar hvítfölduðu konur" (48).¹⁴

Something of this gnomic quality is shared by the three much more specific (but obscure) references in Hlöðskviða. Hlöðr begins his claim with a formal, half-legalistic list suggestive of the basic underpinnings of his society: cows, calves, querns, tools, weapons, slaves. He then claims his share of

Hrís þat it mæra,
 er Myrkviðir heita,
 gröf þá ina helgu, (var. enu göðu)
 er stendr á götu þjóðar; (varr. Goðþjóðu, gotþjóða)
 stein þann inn mæra,
 er stendr á stöðum Danpar...(p. 56)

Tolkien concisely summarizes both the obscurity of these references and their cultural resonance:

...in such things as the "grave" and the "stone" on the banks of the Dneiper one is probably being taken back a thousand years even beyond Heiðreks Saga to the burial-place of Gothic kings in south-eastern Europe and the high stone in their chief place, on which the king stepped to have homage done to him in the sight of all the people. (15)

The sá inn idiom in Völs displays this same tendency to form clusters. The fatal she-wolf is referred to as "sú/sjá inn sama ylgr" three times on p. 119. To Fáfnir's famous question "Hverr eggjaði þik...?," the victorious

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Sigurðr answers: "Til þess hvatti mik inn harði hugr, ok stoðaði til, at gert yrði, þessi in sterka hönd ok þetta it snarpa sverð, er nú kenndir þú" (152). Fáfnir's gold is referred to four times within three pages: "þat it mikla gull" (153, 155), "þessa ins mikla fjár" (154), and "gullinu því inu mikla" (155; cp. gull þat it mikla, 205).

Fáfnir is called "þenna inn mikla dreka" (by Sigurðr, 145) and, in a passage which highlights Sigurðr's achievement: "Spyrst nú þetta frægðarverk um öll lönd, er hann hafði drepit þann inn ógurliga dreka" (166). Sigurðr is twice referred to in phrases echoing Sigurðarkviða in skamma: by Högni ("Eru engir konungar oss jafnir, ef sjá inn hýnski konungr lifir," 189) and by Brynhild in her instructions for their common pyre ("brenna mér þar á aðra hönd þenna inn hýnska konung," 193). Sigurðr's eyes are highlighted at his birth ("Konungrinn varð glaðr við, er hann sá þau in hvössu augu, er hann bar í höfði" [140; cp. "Augu Sigurðar váru svá snör, at fær einn þorði gegn at sjá," 190, and Fáfnir's apostrophe "Inn fráneygi sveinn," 152]). There is a most unusual, but not unique, reference to an action. Högni calls the slaying of Sigurðr "þat it illa verk, er vér fám aldri bót" (191). Other examples in Völs will be taken up later.

Practically no other FS show such a high percentage of these idioms. In Völs, about 25 of 95 forms of the/definite article are used in this sá inn construction, or 26%. In Herv, 11 of 61, or 18%, are so used. The average figure for the twelve FS I have searched is 10%; the range is 0%-26%.

The percentage is much lower in Örvǫ, for instance, where only five of 84 definite articles are so used. A typical referent is the "skyrtu sinnar innar góðu" (p. 358), Oddr's magic shirt, made for him by the Irish noblewoman (and, one feels, huldu-woman) Ölvör, which protects him from cold, drowning, fire, hunger, weapons (unless he is fleeing) and, it turns out,

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fatigue. This gold and silk shirt saves him from the horrendous finngálmr, a monster bird, and retains its powers even after Oddr bathes in the River Jordan. It certainly deserves its little accolade of deixis. But so, for other reasons, does the face of Ögmundur Eyþjófsbani, Oddr's arch-enemy. Oddr has torn this demon's entire face off (358), and when they meet again, with Ögmundur's face and identity both masked, Ögmundur removes the mask and asks Oddr: "Þekkir þú nokkut þetta it nauðljóta höfuð?" (386). The face is described as "þeingrót ok ekki hár á vaxit," and it must have been a memorable sight.

The diminutive Illuga saga Gríðarfóstra (Illg) is unusual in that it contains only 12 examples of the free Def. Art., and three of these (25%) participate in the sá inn pattern. When Illugi makes an impressive display of fearlessness in the home of the troll-woman Gríðr, she remarks: "Eigi ertu sem aðrir menn, ... þú hræðist ekki... hafa allir hræðzt mitt it ógurliga sax. Sextán vaska menn hefi ek drepit með þessu saxi..." (420). She then tells him her story, about her former identity as Signý and her transformation into a troll-woman by the flagðkona Grímhild, a fate which would last until "þú [Signý/Gríðr] hittir þann mann, er eigi hræðist þitt it ógurliga sax" (420). She closes her story: "...ok er ek sú in sama Signý" (422).

-- Typical of the surprising patterns that surface in concordances, another eight instances of inn (67%) are bound into another pattern, highly formulaic both syntactically and semantically: "in mesta tröllkona" (417, 421, 423), "in mesta kvöldriða" (415), it mesta flagð (421), inar mestu flagðkonur (421), inn mesti kappi (414), inn mesti bardagamaðr (413).¹⁶

Such apparently random but consistent patterns appear in other sagas, and may ultimately prove to be distinctive features of authorship. For instance, the sá inn idiom shows only temporal usage in Bósa s. and Hálfs s.

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ok Hálfsrelda. The sole example in Bósa heralds the entry of Busla into King Hring's chamber to chant the "Buslubæn" (291): "Þetta kveld it sama kom Busla í þat herbergi." This famous curse ("hefir hún viðfræg orðit síðan," 291) saves Bósi from the most ferocious enmity. The two examples in Hálf introduce portents of danger or death (104-5). When Hreiðarr attacks Hjørleifr by stealth, "Þá ina sömu nótt gó hundr hans Flóki, er aldri gó, nema hann vissi konungi ótta vánir." Hjørleifr survives to slay Hreiðarr, at which point the saga inserts an afterthought: "Þann inn sama aftan, er Hjørleifr konungr kom, heyrði Hreiðarr konungr kveðit:" (a portentous verse follows).

In at least three FS, the idiom signals a theme involving a portentous stranger. A classic example occurs early in Völs in the story of the origin of Sigmund's sword. The tree Barnstokkr has just been mentioned ("sjá inn mikli apaldr," 114) as the backdrop to a feast.

Nú er þess við getit, at þá er menn sátu við eldana um kveldit, at maðr einn gekk inn í höllina. Sá maðr er mönnum ókunnr at sýn. Sjá maðr hefir þess háttar búning, at hann hefir hekiu fleikkotta yfir sér. Sá maðr var berfættir ok hafði knýtt línbrókum at beini. Sá maðr hafði sverð í hendi ok gengr at barnstokkinum ok hött síðan á höfði. Hann var hárr mjök ok eiddiligr ok einsýrn. (He thrusts the sword into the tree.) Öllum mönnum fellust kveðjur við þenna mann.

This fivefold, highly patterned use of sá spotlights this eerie apparition. After the stranger makes his announcement about determining the sword's owner, the narrative continues: "Eftir þetta gengr sjá inn gamli maðr út ór höllini, ok veit engi, hverr hann er eða hvert hann gengr." The sá inn deixis accords him a last focus.

A combination of the motifs above--a striking stranger + identification--appears in Yngvars s. víðförla. As Yngvarr's fleet approaches a stunning marble city somewhere in Russia, they see a great crowd of men and women.

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Þó bar ein af öllum [konum] bæði fyrir búnaðar sakir ok fegrðar. Sú in virðuliga kona teiknaði þeim Yngvari, at þeir sækti fund hennar. Þá gekk Yngvarr af skipi ok á fund þeirar innar tíguligu konu. (437)

This woman is Queen Silkisif, who falls in love with Yngvarr, Christianizes her land for him, mourns his death, builds his sepulchre, gets him canonized despite ecclesiastical disapproval, and later marries his son Sveinn and crowns him king over her realm. This last act fulfils, one generation late, Yngvarr's driving dream to possess konungs nafn, which motivates the entire saga. The sá inn phrase casts an appropriate first spotlight on the instrument of the saga's resolution.

This "Spotlighted Stranger" theme represents the only use of the sá inn idiom in Áns s. bogsveigis. At the end of the saga (399-400), Án spies a stranger ("mann...ungligan ok mikinn") camping on one of his islands. The stranger pretends to take no notice when Án shoots a morsel of food, a dish, and a knife out of his hand.

Þá mælti sá inn ungi maðr: "Þessi maðr gerði mér mein, en sér lítit gagn, er hann spillti knífi mínum."

He picks up his bow; Án steps behind a tree. "Sjá inn ungi maðr" shoots three arrows, any one of which would have killed Án.

Þá mælti sjá inn ungi maðr: "Hitt er þeim ráð, er skaut at mér, at sýna sik nú, ok hittumst vit, ef hann á við mik sakir."

This ominous stranger is Án's son Þórir háleggr. The delayed identification, underlined by the sá inn idiom, intensifies the drama of son and father meeting. The idiom is used a last time when Jörunn, Án's wife, asks him "hværr sjá maðr væri inn ungi" whom he brings home and places in the high-seat next to him.

I want to emphasize here that I consider this last usage (Ánsb 399-400) clumsy and overdone, vitiating the focusing power of the sá inn idiom. The fourfold repetition in close compass seems unmotivated, considering that the

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author had other rhetorical resources at his disposal. It certainly cannot compare to the repetitive focus on Óðinn in Völs, where our curiosity is rhythmically piqued by the device of beginning four consecutive sentences with S(j)á maðr, while the sá inn device is saved for a last focus on the departing stranger. The artistic note sounded in the Ánsb passage is of excessive use of fortissimo.

The sá inn idiom also appears in association with the "Spotlighted Stranger" theme in Njála and Eigla, and in both sagas it is artfully and skillfully employed. The pattern in Njála is the more obviously artful, though its use of sá inn is thinner and less consistent. It appears in the fourfold focus on Skarpheðinn in Ch. 119, where Njáll and his sons are canvassing for support at the Alþing. It is an unusually symmetrical series of scenes, repeated four times in four pages. And the scene-type is obviously used to shape the plot toward the major crux of the second half of the saga -- Skarpheðinn's insult to Flósi which provokes him to reject a settlement.

Njáll and his sons solicit the support of four chieftains in succession, and each has an eerie third-person apostrophe for Skarpheðinn:

"Hverr er sá maðr...er fjórir menn ganga fyrri, mikill maðr ok fölleitr ok ógafusamligr, harðligr ok tröllsligr?" (Skapti Þóroðsson, p. 298)

"Hverr er sá maðr, er fjórir ganga fyrri, fölleitr ok skarpleitr ok glottir við tönn ok hefir óxi reidda um óxi?" (Snorri goði, p. 299)

"--en þó vil ek spyrja, hverr sá er inn fölleiti, er fjórir menn ganga fyrr ok er svá illiligr sem genginn sé út or sjávarhömrum."
(Hafr inn auði, p. 301)

"Maðr er sá einn í liði þínu, er ek hefi horft á um hríð, ok lízk mér ólíkr flestum mönnum,...Fjórir menn ganga fyrri en hann,...jarpr á hárs-lit ok föllitaðr, mikilli vöxtum ok ernligr ok svá skjótligr til karl-mennsku, at heldr vilda ek hans fylgi hafa en tíu annarra. Ok þó er maðrinn ógafusamligr." (Guðmundr inn rúki, pp. 301-2)

Skarpheðinn replies to each with a nonchalant insult, which is itself portentous--not only because it risks losing support, but because it shows

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his indifference (perhaps prescient) to a bloodless settlement. Both the patterned comments of the chieftains and Skarpheðinn's replies are clearly triangulated toward his insult which causes Flósi to kick over the pile of reparation-goods and vow vengeance. It is the "Fögr er hliðin" of the second half of the saga.

It is in Eigla that the sá inn pattern achieves its most creative and artful use. Though the evidence is diffuse, it shows patterns of exclusiveness which suggest that its employment is deliberate. The basic pattern is illustrated in Table 1: Every time the pattern "Sá + inn + mikill (+ maðr)" is found in Eigla, it is used in a (post-)confrontation scene; and in four of these five scenes, the speaker of the "sá inn mikli" phrase instructs his men to chase and kill the mikill maðr (it is always Skallagrím or Egill). The one clear exception is a scene of single combat, where there is no thematic room for instructions or pursuit; yet this scene contains (1) a reflex of the killing-motif in the form of an oblique prediction of death and (2) a phrase (allfúss at berjask) which recurs only in another one of these scenes. All five scenes are knit more tightly together by similar, exclusive lexical echoes. Because of the consistent appearance of mikill, I call it the "sá inn mikli" pattern.

The five scenes which include the pattern show three "classic" forms and two variant ones. I will elucidate the classic three first and argue that they form a template through which we can see the other two as members of the same scene-type. The first three are Scenes A, B, and C in Table 1.

In Scene A, Skallagrím has reluctantly gone to Harald's court to sue for compensation for his slain brother Þórólfr. Harald apostrophizes him in the third person ("Er þetta hann Skalla-Grímur,...inn mikli maðr?") and issues him a brusque, threatening invitation into his service. Skallagrím gives a

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beautifully sarcastic reply and walks out. Immediately the king says to his men:

"Þat sé ek á skalla þeim inum mikla, at hann er fullr upp úlfúðar ok hann verðr at skaða þeim mönnum nöðkurum, er oss mun þykkja afnám í, ef hann nær. Megu þér þat ætía, þeir menn, er hann mun kalla, at í sökum sé við hann, at sá skalli mun engan yðvarn spara, ef hann kemsk í fœri; farið nú þá eptir honum ok drepið hann." (p. 65)

Parts of this speech will be echoed the next time that Kveldúlf's line crosses swords with the Norwegian crown, and other parts still later. The first occasion is Scene B, where Egill is the uninvited guest of Atleyjar-Bárðr. Piqued by Bárðr's niggardliness, he more or less crashes a party for king Eiríkr, makes a drunken scene, kills Bárðr, and flees. Eiríkr, upon learning of Bárðr's death, asks

hvar sá væri inn mikli maðr, er þar hafði drukkit mest um kveldit. "...skulum vér rannsaka alla eyna ok drepa þá manninn." (p. 111)

The third classic scene, C, takes place in Vermaland, where Egill has just departed Arnviðr jarl's estate to bring the king an unfavorable report on Arnviðr's management of royal revenues (including the killing of the king's agents). Arnviðr charges his men:

"Egill sjá inn mikli, er hér var um hvið, ætla ek at oss muni allþarfr, er hann kemr til konungs; megu vér af því marka, hverning hann mun bera fyrir konung várt mál, at hann jös síku í augu oss uppi, aftöku konungsmanna. Nú skulu þit fara eptir þeim ok drepa þá alla" (p. 233)

The first of these scenes, by my count, contains five elements of the pattern, not counting a repetition of one element. The second contains three, the third four. Of the two remaining scenes, one is quite sketchy; for it I would claim only two and a half. The other contains five or six, though they are scattered throughout a much more diffuse complex of scenes or subscenes. The sketchier of these (Scene E, Table 1) telescopes all its elements into a hólmgang-challenge flung at Egill by Ljótr inn bleiki: "Gakk þú hingat, inn mikli maðr, ok bersk við mik, ef þú ert allfúss til" (p. 203). Ljótr also

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obliquely expresses his confidence that he will kill Egill, so I have placed the killing-motif within parentheses in Table 1.

In Scene D, the key phrase is not spoken by the same protagonist who orders his men to chase and kill the hero. When Eiríkr declares himself neutral in the suit between Egill and Ónundur, Queen Gunnhildr angrily intercedes: "Þetta er undarligt, konungr, hvernig þú lætr Egil þenna inn mikla vefja máli öll fyrir þér" (p. 157). At the close of her speech, she gives one of her henchmen a prearranged signal to disrupt the assembly. Egill thereupon challenges Ónundur to single combat, but the reply comes from Eiríkr: "Ef þú, Egill, ert allfúss at berjask, þá skulum vér þat nú veita þér"(158). Egill declines on the grounds that the odds seem a bit long; and as the assembly disperses Eiríkr issues instructions to his men:

"...vér skulum nú láta fara tjöld af skipum várum; vil ek nú fara á fund Arinbjarnar ok Egils; vil ek ok því lýsa fyrir yör, at ek vil Egil af lífi taka, ef vér komunsk í föeri..." (160)

(The chase-motif is almost too diffuse to isolate lexically, but is clearly present.)

Finally, one of the elements occurs only in the margins of the scene. When Egill visits Ónundur to sue for satisfaction previous to the assembly, Ónundur issues an angry rejection: Ónundur segir þá snellt mjök: "Máttu svá ætla, Egill, at ek hefi valta látit slíka, sem þú ert" (153). This element is also considered tentative in Table 1.

It should be pointed out here that examination of the full "lexical context" of the key phrases in Eigla emphasizes their restrictedness within this scene-type. Some features of the pattern never occur anywhere else, both lexical features (allfúss) and morphological ones (the form mikli). Of the 16 forms of mikill which occur a total of 376 times in the saga, only the six described above, plus one other, participate in the syntactic pat-

tern "Demonstrative Pronoun + Article + mikill."¹⁷ Similar restrictions apply to the other key phrases in the scene-type. Komask í fóðri never occurs again, though koma í fóðri occurs once in a scene of preparation for ambush (p. 60). Mega atla never occurs again. Mega marka occurs once more in the excursus on Egill's skull: "Má af slíku marka, at hauss sá mundi ekki auðskaddir," p. 299.

In sum, there is nothing in the syntax, or in the lexical context of these key phrases, to explain the collocations in this scene-type. If we appeal to a higher level of discourse, to the literary device of mannlýsing (character description) to which "mikill maðr" belongs, we find even more restrictedness.

The phrase "sá inn mikli" refers to physical size. In making a complete survey of mannlýsing vocabulary in Eigla,¹⁸ I found that the conceptual category of physical size is one of the two largest in this convention, and that mikill is by far the most common word in the category. I also found that mannlýsing can be separated into two distinctive modes, which I call "Narrative Mannlýsing" (the familiar, conventional type of character description) and "Discourse Mannlýsing" (couched in direct or indirect discourse, and providing a comment on one person by another). References to physical size are found only nine times in Discourse Mannlýsing; "sá inn mikli" accounts for six of these, and two more belong to another repetitive pattern in a slightly different theme.¹⁹ Additional restrictions of this sort make these spider-webs of evidence seem less flimsy.

When I first began this study, I was troubled by the apparent innocuousness of the sá inn mikli phrase. It seemed a rather fragile semantic craft to bear all the significance which the larger pattern seems to accord it. By now, however, I believe that the accretion of examples has bestowed a

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distinct resonance on this phrase-type. It has an undeniable measure of artistic power, throwing a highly focused spotlight on a particular motif. In fact, we find a cognate of mikill in the "Portentous Stranger" theme used for a quite similar dramatic emphasis in Beowulf, when the Danish coast-guard expresses his first impression of the hero:

Næfre ic maran geseah
 eorla ofer eorþan ðonne is eower sum,
 secg on searwum; nis þæt seldguma... (Bwf 247b-249).²⁰

So our "sá inn mikli" scene may represent a more generalized type, sharing certain lexical features but not necessarily sharing a multiplicity of motifs. (Indeed, anyone familiar with American cowboy films can probably testify to the dramatic power of apparently innocuous phrases like "Who's that new cowpoke in town, the one with the white hat?")

Some Tentative Conclusions

Whatever the ultimate origin of the sá inn pattern, a few things can now be said about it. First, it has a vestigial mythic resonance which suggests literary antiquity, especially in the light of Sprenger's findings. The frequent use of this resonance in Völs is one stylistic index (among others) of the elevated, rather pompous tone of that saga. As a rhetorical device, the resonance can be seen perhaps even more clearly in travesty form--the overdone attempt at portentousness in Ansb 399-400.

Among the texts we have surveyed, Egla makes the richest use of the pattern's possibilities. Consciously or unconsciously, its author selects one thematic use of the pattern which has great dramatic potential (the "Spotlighted Stranger") and employs it in a most appropriate scene-type. His recurrent use of it establishes consistency, while his skillful varying of words and syntactic patterns (see Footnote 8 and Table 1) achieves subtlety at the same time. He gives us a sense of a scene-dynamic with roots in mythic

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archetype, while doing subtle stylistic honor to Skallagrím and Egill by speaking their names in the echo-chamber of myth. It is one more testimony to his genius. -- Referring primarily to Bwf 247ff., Klaeber says that the Beowulf-poet "sets forth, with eloquence, the striking impression that he [Beowulf] makes on others."²¹ So does the author of Egla with his heroes, using the same sort of dramatic "potential energy" to infuse a type of scene that burns in the memory.

Of all the borrowings which the sagas made from older mythic and heroic material on so many structural levels, the sá inn pattern represents a lexical and syntactic echo which can be seen as endowing a particular scene-type with a recurrent structure, according it something of the "dynamic" of an older scene-type. Our evidence strongly suggests that this sort of structuring would be called "formulaic" if it occurred in narrative verse. And this, in turn, implies that some conventions of saga composition might respond to a judicious application of the techniques of oral-formulaic analysis. Such analysis could provide a more solid lexical underpinning for the identification of scenes, episodes, subplots, and the rest of the higher-level units presently used in structural studies of the saga.

Such analysis can best be carried out with the help of complete concordances to the relevant texts. I emphasize "complete" because such analysis requires complete information on high-frequency function words like sá and inn, which are too often left out of published concordances. And I should also like to emphasize that the computer's role in this sort of research is primarily in accelerating the production of research tools like concordances, which can then be worked with in the traditional scholarly ways. To call this sort of work "computer-aided" is a bit like calling 19th- and early 20th-century scholarship "typewriter-aided" or "linotype-aided."

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However they are designated, the concordances which the computer has put within our reach give us the opportunity to elucidate saga structure "from the ground up," from the lexical level upward. This approach strikes me as more empirical, more inductive, more epistemologically sound than the opposite "downward" approach, since it requires a firm anchoring in observable lexical patterns and so militates against Procrusteanism.

This paper has presented only one example of lexical patterning in sagas that is highly significant on a literary level. Other patterns exist, with equally firm lexical roots, which not only build scenes but knit whole subplots together, portray character, provide ethical frameworks, or perform combinations of these functions. They are often so subtle that they can only be discerned by bringing together their widely scattered and unobtrusive lexical clues; but, when sought out, they show us that the narrative art of the saga may be even more subtle than we think.

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NOTES

1. Ulrike Sprenger, "sá als Pronomen der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung in der altisländischen Dichtung," BGDSL, 87 (1965), 74-92.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
3. The sagas were prepared for computer-concording by the following scholars in the CREST project: S. F. D. Hughes, Purdue Univ. (Ánsb, Völs); Peter Jorgensen, Univ. of Georgia (HdBf, Örvd); Patricia Conroy, Univ. of Washington (Herv, Völs, Ánsb); John Lindow, Univ. of California-Berkeley, and Claiborne Thompson, Univ. of Michigan (Bósa); Stephen Mitchell, Univ. of Minnesota, and Carol Clover, Univ. of California-Berkeley (Hálf); John Weinstock, Univ. of Texas (Yngv); David Rollman, Harry McWilliams, William Guthrie, and Howard Movshovitz, Univ. of Colorado (Grím, HrnG, Sörl). This work was supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Committee on Research and Creative Work of the Univ. of Colo. The author assisted in the preparation of Yngv, HdBf, and Illg, and made all concordances at the Univ. of Colorado except that to Eigla, which was made in 1966 at Harvard Univ.
4. Citations from Örvar-Odds s. are from Guðni Jónsson, ed., Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda (Reykjavík, 1943-44, 3 vols.). Citations from all other fornaldarsögur refer to the 4-vol. Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda, ed. Guðni

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Jónsson, in the Íslendingasagnaútgáfan (Akureyri, 1954, rpt. 1976). Njála and Eigla are referred to in their Íslensk Fornrit editions: Brænu-Njáls saga, ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson (Reykjavík, 1954), and Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar, ed. Sigurður Nordal (Reykjavík, 1933).

Abbreviations to FS titles have been adopted to save space, as follows: Örvd = Örvar-Odds s., Völs = Völsunga s., Herv = Hervarar s. ok Heiðreks, Bósa = Bósa s. ok Herrauðs, Yngv = Yngvars s. víðförla, Ánsb = Áns s. bog-sveigis, Hálf = Hálfs s. ok Hálfstreka, Grím = Gríms s. loðinkinna, Illg = Illuga s. Gríðarfóstra. No examples of the sá inn idiom were found in Hálf-danar s. Brönufóstra (HdBf), and those in Sörla þáttur (Sörl) and Hrómundar s. Gripssonar (HrmG) have not been deemed relevant to this study.

A number of high-frequency words were left out of the Eigla concordance, including some forms of sá and inn, so this study makes no claim to completeness with regard to those two words.

5. In Sir William Craigie, ed., Sýnisbók Íslenskra Rímna, Fyrsta Bindi (London, 1952), 1-193.
6. In Ólafur Briem, ed., Fornir Dansar (Reykjavík, 1946), 117-189.
7. In Chr. Matras, ed., Fóroya Kvæði (Corpus Carminum Faroensium), Band I, Teil 2, 191-214. This is the longest available version, a reprinting of V. U. Hammershamb's edition in Færðske Kvæder I (1851), 3-58, now designated Ms. H in the enumeration of versions of this ballad.
8. The variation displayed here is in lexical structure and order. For schematic clarity, I have abbreviated the pattern's elements "S" (the sá- or Dem. Pron. element), "P" (its frequent replacement, the Possessive Pron.), "I" (the inn- or Def. Art. element), "A" (Adj.) and "N" (Noun). Thus examples 1-4 show SIA (sá + inn + Adj.) structure; 5-22 are SIAN, 23-28 PIAN, 29-34 NSIA, and 35-39 NPIA. I have found a total of 38 examples of SIAN, 11 of NSIA, 7 of SIA, 6 each of PIAN and NPIA. Most other patterns are unique, and some are not examples of the sá inn idiom, e.g., IANP (inum fyrrum frændum sínum/þínum, Völs 142, 146; inum bezta hesti sínum, Herv 25). Indeed, not even all examples of "canonical" patterns represent examples of our idiom; cf. hest sinn inn bezta (Herv 35) and sonr þeira inn eldri (Ánsb 368), both NPIA.
I hope, however, that the accretion of examples on p. 3 shows, without further argument, why I consider these lexical orders equivalent examples of the sá inn idiom.
9. Sjúðarkvæði (SK) is divided into three tættir, Regin smiður (Rs), Brynhild (Br) and Högni (HÖ). This formula occurs in Br, strophes 4, 46, 154, and 211, and HÖ, strophes 51 and 161.
10. Craigie, Sýnisbók, 48.
11. Ibid., 63.
12. Ibid., 18.
13. Sprenger, op. cit., p. 92.

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14. This metric modulation across line-types brings up the possibility that the sá inn pattern is originally a verse pattern, and therefore that the apparently syntactic pattern sá + inn + Adj. (+ Noun) has an Urmétrik, or at least metrical underpinnings. My study has not proceeded far into such considerations, nor would we have space to include them. We may note, however, that 29 examples were found in verse—eleven in ballads and rímur, ten in Herv, one in Völs, and Sprenger's seven from the Edda. Thirteen of these show the syntactic pattern SIAN (six in ballads and rímur, six in the Edda), six show SIA (all in Heiðreksgátur), and six show NSIA:
15. Christopher Tolkien, ed., The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise (London, 1960), xxv.
 16. Similarly, in Örvd, in mestu tröll (355), it mesta tröll ok óvættir (351), and Grím (it mesta tröll, 190).
 17. The only other reference is inanimate: fjölmennit þat it mikla, p. 30.
 18. L. Michael Bell, "Lexical Patterning in Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar" (Harvard Univ. Ph.D. Diss., 1973), 36-93, esp. 62-66.
 19. This could be called the "Announced Stranger" theme. Its expression in Eigla is of the type "maðr er hér kominn úti, ...mikill sem tröll" (178), cp. 63, and note the four other verbal echoes between the two scenes.
 20. Elliott V. K. Dobbie, Beowulf and Judith, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records IV (New York, 1953), p. 10.
 21. Fr. Klaeber, ed., Beowulf, third edn. (Boston, 1950), lviii.

TABLE 1. SCHEMATIC OF THE "SÁ INN MIKLI" PATTERN IN EIGLA

| Scene | A | B | C | D | E |
|---------------------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| sá inn mikli | 63,65 | 111 | 233 | 157 | 203 |
| "chase" Instruk- tions | 65 | 111 | 233 | 160 | |
| "kill" | 65 | 111 | 233 | 160 | (203) |
| mega atla/marka | 65 | | 233 | (153) | |
| komask í foeri | 65 | | | 160 | |
| allfúss at berjask | | | | 158 | 203 |

Scene A: Skallagrímur vs. Haraldur. B: Egill vs. Eiríkr. C: Egill vs. Arnviðr. D: Egill vs. Önundur, Gunnhildr, & Eiríkr. E: Egill vs. Ljótr inn bleiki.

