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**THE ANGLO-SAXON MIND:  
METAPHOR AND COMMON SENSE PSYCHOLOGY IN OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE**

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
Centre for Medieval Studies, in the University of Toronto

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## Thesis abstract

The Anglo-Saxon mind: metaphor and common sense psychology in Old English literature

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The rich mental vocabulary of Old English plays a central role in the portrayal of mental and emotional processes in Anglo-Saxon literature. An understanding of how this vocabulary reflects the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind is the central concern of this thesis.

Chapter One considers various approaches to the study of mental vocabulary. Most OE mental terms are polysemous and are used interchangeably, and are therefore difficult to distinguish semantically. Focusing on metaphors rather than on individual words may therefore be more fruitful.

Chapter Two outlines the cognitive theory of metaphor which suggests that metaphor has a greater role in patterns of human conceptualization than previously realized. One function of metaphor is to provide epistemic access to otherwise elusive concepts, so that a concept such as mind is typically metaphorized in terms from the physical world.

Chapter Three is a survey of the Anglo-Saxon metaphors of the mind. Physical attributes projected onto the mind such as spatial orientation, texture, size, etc. are considered together with specific metaphors such as 'mind as container' and 'mind as body'. The question of whether these metaphors reflect a distinctly Anglo-Saxon concept of mind is discussed.

Chapter Four examines the particular place in Anglo-Saxon culture of the metaphors of fastening and foundation. The role of these metaphors in the expression of spiritual endeavour is considered in wisdom poetry, hagiography and monastic practice.

Chapter Five considers the contribution of the cognitive approach to the study of the Anglo-Saxon mind, focusing on literary criticism, historical physiology, historical psychology and philology. Arguing that a more sophisticated approach to language is necessary if the Anglo-Saxons' worldview is to be reconstructed, the thesis concludes with theoretical considerations, and suggestions for further research.

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## Chapter One: Approaches to mental vocabulary

The classification of the constituents of a chaos, nothing less is here essayed.

- Herman Melville, Moby-Dick

The organization of the field of mental vocabulary is especially difficult because we obviously lack concrete referents for the terms we are trying to define. This difficulty is reflected in the vagueness with which dictionaries and other reference works treat mental terms. Bosworth-Toller's definition for *ingeþonc*, for instance, consists of a loose string of nouns: "Thought, thinking, cogitation, intent, mind, heart, conscience". Clark Hall's entry for *ferhþ* is even more impressionistic: "mind, intellect, soul, spirit: life: person". In its section on mental faculties, the Thesaurus of Old English has the oddly assorted heading "06 Spirit, soul, heart", under which an even odder assortment of terms is placed: "*ferhþ, heorte, heortscræf, hreþer, lichord, mod, modsefa, sawol*".<sup>1</sup> All of the terms in these various definitions evoke 'the inner life', a domain not susceptible to precise cartography, but they also suggest, I think unfortunately, that to the Anglo-Saxons there was no proper distinction to be made between such notions as 'soul' and 'mind', or between 'thought' and 'heart'. In particular, the method of the TOE entry is not so much taxonomy as it is mere collecting. It is not clear why, if *ferhþ, modsefa* and *mod* are in the list, related terms such as *hyge* and *sefa* should be omitted; similarly, *gast* is left out even though *sawol* is included. A better case might actually be made for the exclusion of *gast* and *sawol* altogether (and a reorganizing of the heading "Spirit, soul, heart"), for there is

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<sup>1</sup> J. Bosworth and T. N. Toller, An Anglo-Saxon dictionary (Oxford, 1964 [1898]) with Supplement by T. N. Toller (Oxford, 1955 [1921]), hereafter referred to as BT and BTS respectively, and Revised and enlarged addenda by A. Campbell (Oxford, 1972), hereafter referred to as BTAdd; J. R. Clark Hall and H. Meritt, A concise Anglo-Saxon dictionary, 4th. edn. (Cambridge, 1960); Jane Roberts and Christian Kay and Lynne Grundy, A thesaurus of Old English: vols I & II (London, 1995), hereafter referred to as TOE.



good reason to suppose that the Anglo-Saxons separated the notions of 'spirit and soul' from those of 'heart and mind'.

*Gast* and *sawol* quite clearly denote the spiritual part of man, which survives the body at death but which does not seem to take part in mundane psychological and experiential processes, as *mod* and the other more purely 'mental' terms do. Naturally, *sawol* and *gast* are frequently used in opposition to the mortal body, *lic*, *lichama* or *flæsc*, and with reference to the next world. This passage from *Juliana* is typical (*JuI* 413):<sup>2</sup>

Ic þære sawle ma  
geornor gyme ymb þæs gæstes forwyrd  
þonne þæs lichoman, se þe on legre sceal  
weorðan in worulde wyrme to hroþor,  
bifolen in foldan.

'I am more concerned with the destruction of the soul and of the spirit than of the body, which must become in this world a feast for the worm in the grave, committed to the earth'.

The devil, under interrogation by the saint, explains that his work is to destroy souls and spirits rather than bodies and (significant by omission) minds. There would have been no question of a word such as *mod* substituting for either *sawol* or *gast* here.

In one of Ælfric's homilies, it appears at first that *sawol* is used in an emotional, experiential sense much as we expect words like *mod* and *sefa* to be used in the poetry (*ÆCHom* I, 30 433.135; italics mine):

Oþre martyras on heora lichaman þrowodon martyrdom for cristes geleafan: ac seo eadige maria næs na lichamlice gemartyrod. Ac hire sawol wæs swiðe geangsumod mid micelre þrowunge. Þa ða heo stod dreorig foran ongean cristes rode & hire leofe cild geseah mid isenum næglum on heardum treowe gefæstnod: Nu is heo mare þonne martyr for þan ðe heo þrowade þone martyrdom on hire sawle þe oþre martyras þrowodon on heora lichaman.

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<sup>2</sup> My citations of Old English and Latin texts will follow (unless otherwise indicated) the system of short titles used by the *Dictionary of Old English* as set out in A. diP. Healey and R. L. Venezky, *A microfiche concordance to Old English: the list of texts and index of editions* (Toronto, 1980; rev. May 1997) and also *Dictionary of Old English: abbreviations for Latin sources and bibliography of editions*, compiled by Pauline A. Thompson with the assistance of Robert Stanton (Toronto, 1992; rev. March 1995).

'Other martyrs suffered martyrdom in their bodies for their faith in Christ, but the blessed Mary was not physically martyred. Her soul was exceedingly afflicted with much suffering when she stood, miserable, before Christ's cross, and saw her beloved child fastened to the hard wood with iron nails. Now, she is greater than a martyr for the reason that she suffered the martyrdom in her soul which other martyrs suffered in their bodies'.

But here again, we have the traditional opposition of soul and body in a religious context. Ælfric is explaining that Mary suffered martyrdom not by the mutilation of her body, but by the violence done to her soul from having to watch Christ suffer on the cross.

In a taxonomy of mental terms, therefore, *gast* and *sawol* are fairly readily separated from the rest. They have been called 'transcendent' terms, and *mod* et alia 'non-transcendent' terms.<sup>3</sup> (Later in this chapter I will admit some cases where this neat division breaks down.)

Words such as *hreþer* and *heorte* might also more usefully appear, together with *breost*, under some separate heading such as "parts of the body associated with the mind or consciousness". Unlike the other words, they are anatomical terms which have a strong connection with mental and emotional processes. That they retained their anatomical meanings is clear. Riddle 93, for instance, creates an enigma of the fact that blood and gore do *not*, contrary to expectation, pour out of the *hreþer* of the riddle-object (apparently an inkpot made of stag's horn) even when it is stabbed with a steel point, that is, a pen (18): *blod ut ne com, heolfor of hreþre*. More than mere body parts, however, and in the poetry particularly, *breost*, *hreþer* and *heorte* are frequently used to indicate the locus of emotion and thought. Thus, in pondering the meaning of the dragon's advent, Beowulf's *breost innan weoll þeostrum geþoncum*, '[his] breast surged within with dark thoughts' (Beo 2331). Furthermore, by a process of metonymy, these words occasionally mean 'the seat of thought and feeling'. Comparing these passages from Elene and Genesis A, we can see how *breost* takes on precisely the same function as *mod* does (my italics):

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Joseph Phillips, Heart, mind and soul in Old English: a semantic study, Ph.D. dissertation (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1985), p. 19.

þa ðam cininge wearð  
 þurh þa mæran word *mōd* geblissod,  
 ferhð gefeonde. (E1 988)

'Then the mind of the king was filled with bliss through those sublime words, his heart gladdened'.

Hæfde Abrahame  
 metod moncynnes, mæge Lothes,  
*breost* geblissad, þa he him his bearn forgeaf,  
 Isaac cwicne. (GenA 2923)

'The Creator of men had filled with bliss the breast of Abraham, kinsman of Lot, when He gave to him his child Isaac, alive'.

The breast, as the seat of the mind, is conceived of in the GenA passage as the receptacle of bliss, just as the mind is in the passage from Elene. In these two citations, *breost* and *mōd* are used indistinguishably. Similarly, at GenB 715, *heorte* is used as though meaning 'mind': *oðþæt Adame innan breostum his hyge hwyrfde and his heorte ongann wendan to hire willan*, 'until, within the breast of Adam, his mind turned, and his heart began to wend to her will'.<sup>4</sup>

*Hreþer*, which originally meant indeterminately 'heart, womb, breast',<sup>5</sup> is in the following passage from Andreas used to mean an entity with intellectual powers (And 814):

Ic wat manig nu gyt  
 mycel mære spell ðe se maga fremede,  
 rodera rædend, ða ðu aræfnan ne miht,

<sup>4</sup> *Breostum* is a dative plural with singular meaning. The plural form is an archaism, referring to the fact that we have two breasts, and reflects usage prior to the generalization of the singular form. See Sweet's note on *heafdum* in CP 16.101.16 (p. 480).

<sup>5</sup> The Gothic cognate for *hreþer* was *hairþra* (pl.), and Lehmann lists 'bowels, heart' as its meaning, noting that it occurs as a marginal gloss to acc. pl. *brusts* with the meaning 'heart or entrails, breast'. OE *hreþer* is defined 'breast, stomach, heart', OHG *herder* 'bowels', and these words are related to OI strong neut. *hreðr* 'penis', and fem. pl. *hreðjar* 'scrotum', and OE pl. *herþan* 'testicles' (Winfred P. Lehmann, A Gothic etymological dictionary [Leiden, 1986], p. 171).

hreðre behabban, hygeþances gleaw.

'I know yet many great and glorious tales of what this man performed, the ruler of the heavens, which you, wise of mind, could not comprehend or contain in your breast'.

This is very like the use of *mod* with *behabban* that occurs in the Pastoral care (CP

63.459.13):

Durh ða gemetgunge ðæs hwætæs is getacnod gemetlico word, ðylæs hira mon ma geote on ðær undiope mod ðonne hit behabban mæg, ðæt hit ðonne oferflowe.

'Through the measuring of wheat is symbolized measured words, lest one pours more of them into the shallow mind than it may contain, so that it overflows'.

In both places the mind (whether *mod* or *hreþer*) is envisaged as a container which has a limited, mortal capacity for the receipt of wisdom.

I have distinguished *gast* and *sawol* from the other mental terms, as words that denote a spiritual rather than a psychological entity. As such, their behaviour throws relatively faint light on how the Anglo-Saxons conceived of the mind and its processes. I have also distinguished *breost*, *hreþer* and *heorte* as words that have a bodily referent. These words, by contrast, are significant psychological terms, but it is important to be aware of the process by which they evolved as such from anatomical terms, for their status is somewhat different from that of the main body of 'middle' terms, neither spiritual nor bodily but mental. I have collected a tentative list of such 'middle' terms, more to illustrate their variety and number than to provide an exhaustive inventory. Many of these terms occur only in poetry, or have a skewed distribution across the poetry/prose divide. I will make observations about this later. Although I think the simplices *breost*, *hreþer* and *heorte* should be considered separately, I have included their compounds in this list because, suffixed with noun-forming elements such as *-cofa*, 'chamber', and *-gehygd*, 'thought', they cease to be properly anatomical terms and resemble the other mental terms more closely. The terms:

mod, modsefa, modcræft, modgehygd, modgemynd, modgeþanc, modgeþoht,  
modhord, modstapol

hyge, hygecræft, hygesceaft, hygeþanc

gehygd, ingehygd

ferhþ, ferhþcofa, ferhþcleofa, ferhþgewit, ferhþloca, ferhþsefa

sefa

geþanc, ingeþanc

gewitt, gewitloca

breostcofa, breostgehygd, breostgeþanc, breosthord, breostioca, breostsefa  
heortscræf

hreþercofa, hreþerloca

myne

gemynd

andgit

gesceadwisnes

willa

geþoht

wisdom

There are any number of unanswerable questions raised by these terms when viewed together. Why, for instance, does *sefa* never form compounds as the first element, and why does it form apparently tautological compounds with its equivalent terms such as *modsefa*, *ferhþsefa* and *breostsefa* (though apparently not *\*hygesefa* or *\*heortsefa*)? Why is *breost* so much more productive in forming compounds than *heorte* or *hreþer*? Without access to an Anglo-Saxon's intuition about his native vocabulary, we may never progress beyond flimsy conjecture with regard to the precise distinctions between words which otherwise

behave as near synonyms. We might more profitably seek to understand the range of functions played by these terms, and then to fit individual terms into that pattern.

I am aware that my list of mental words is a motley assembly; like Melville's leviathans, these words are simply a chaos when viewed collectively. It is possible to create two tidyish pigeonholes at either hand with the spiritual and anatomical terms respectively, but the intermediate terms resemble more a badly kept dovecote, where the birds hop from one nesting hole to another so that it is hard to know which hole they actually belong to.

As I hinted above, these mental terms collectively play a range of functions, which we might very tentatively list as follows: they denote, variously,

- 1) the seat of thought and feeling (the mind or heart),
- 2) the seat of thought but less of feeling (the mind or intellect),
- 3) thoughts or intentions produced by the mind,
- 4) abstract qualities associated with the mind, such as wisdom,
- 5) memory.

I should emphasize that this scheme is merely a working model with which I can demonstrate the behaviour of mental terms. Having posited these five semantic pigeonholes, I might now attempt to sort some of the words in my list into the various slots; but it becomes immediately apparent that many of the words go into more than one slot. This is hardly surprising; after all, polysemy is a fact of life. But I would not be content to produce a synopsis in which I merely listed words under the various headings and found at the end that some words made several appearances. Equally, I do not wish to take a word and list the different meanings it has. With either of these methods, I would merely be reproducing the work of a thesaurus-maker and a lexicographer, respectively, and making a poor job of it. I want instead to trace the flight of an individual word, and to represent its polysemousness not as the cut and dried branches of a tree diagram but as a subtler process of shape-shifting. To do this for every word in my list is not the intention

of this thesis, but I will treat a number of words to give an idea of how mental vocabulary works.

*Ingehygd* is as good a word as any to begin with. It is mainly used to gloss *intentio* and *scientia*, which *perhaps* means that its primary meanings fall, respectively, under my headings 3) thoughts or intentions produced by the mind, and 4) abstract qualities associated with the mind. Words which denote a thought or intention produced by the mind often stand with words for the mind in a possessive genitive relation. Thus, Bede 2 9.130.30: *ða onwende heo hine from þære yflan inngehygde his modes*, 'then she turned him from the evil intention of his mind'. In the Psalms, too, the phrase *in toto corde meo* is rendered *mid ealle ... inngehygde heortan minre*, 'with all ... the resolve of my heart' (PPs 118.145).<sup>6</sup> In these instances, *ingehygd* is something subordinate to the mind, which has the mind or the seat of thought as its basis. Sometimes, it seems clear that the *ingehygd* is an ephemeral, pragmatically formed product of the mind, as in ÆLS (Eugenia) 162: *ða andwyrde Eugenia þyssere olecunge, and cwæð to þam wife mid þisum ingehyde*, 'then Eugenia replied to this flattery and said to the woman, with this intent'. But in other cases it is hard to know whether to picture *ingehygd* as something ephemeral and separable from the mind, or as a particular quality of the mind, integral to its nature. In the Meters of Boethius, immoderate indulgence in gormandizing gives rise to a *wodðrag micel*, 'a great madness' (25.42):

sio swiðe gedræfð    sefan ingehygd  
monna gehwelces,    þonan mæst cymeð  
yfla ofermetta,    unnetta saca.

'It powerfully stirs up the *ingehygd* of every man's mind, whence comes the greatest of evil presumptions and of profitless quarrels'.

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<sup>6</sup> All citations of Latin equivalents for the Paris psalter will be taken from the Roman psalter, unless otherwise noted; Robert Weber (ed.), Le psautier romain (Rome, 1953).

I have left *ingehygd* untranslated because I am unclear as to what it refers. It is a thing possessed by the *sefa* but whether it refers to thoughts specifically, the quality or orientation of thought, or a part of the soul, like anger or desire or rationality, we do not know enough to know.

In other places, this apparent potential of *ingehygd* to mean some permanent feature of the mind leads to its being used for the mind itself (or perhaps vice versa: I do not know which came first). Ælfric asks (ÆCHom II, 30 239.116): *hwæt fremað þe þæt ðin cyst stande ful mid godum and ðin ingehyd beo æmtig ælces godes?* 'What good does it do you that your chest stand full of goods and your mind be empty of any virtue?' The *ingehygd* in this sentence is pictured as something analogous to a chest for storing things; incidentally, the clarity of imagery allows us to understand that here the word stands for 'the mind', as a synonym for *mod*. Similarly, *ingehygd* is the seat of thought in CP 17.117.16: *ond eac we magon suigende geðencean on urum inngehygde, ðeah we hit ne sprečen*, 'and we might also silently think in our mind, although we do not speak it'. Juliana's devil, in his account of how he sizes up his victims, reveals that judging the disposition of the *ingehygd* is all part of the process (Ju 398):

ic beo gearo sona  
 þæt ic ingehygd eal geondwite  
 hu gefæstnad sy ferð innanweard  
 wiðsteall geworht.

'I am immediately ready to survey the *ingehygd*, how secured the mind is within, the defence fashioned'.

Again, it is difficult to translate *ingehygd* accurately because we do not know what precise relation it has to *ferhþ*; whether it stands in apposition to *ferhþ* or if *ingehygd* refers to some quality of the *ferhþ*. Bradley translates 'conscience' which is fine and reasonable but not of absolute authority.<sup>7</sup> It is remarkable that the verb *geondwlitan* suggests a

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<sup>7</sup> S. A. J. Bradley, Anglo-Saxon poetry (London, 1982), p. 312.



space which can be scanned or looked over or through, and that once more it is the nature of the image that directs our understanding of *ingehygd*.

*Ingehýgd* denotes at times the fleeting thoughts or ideas that arise in our minds, and at others a more enduring though somewhat indefinable feature of the mind, and at other times again it refers to the mind itself. In yet other instances it appears as an abstract quality associated with but not part of the mind. Glossing *scientia*, *ingehýgd* is part of the name of the Tree of Knowledge (ÆIntSig 30.192): *treow ingehýdes yfeles & godes*, 'the tree of the knowledge of evil and good'. Even more intriguingly, Ælfric defines cherubim as *gefýllednyss ingehýdes oððe gewittes*, 'the perfection of knowledge or intellect' (ÆCHom I, 24 377.180). In such a usage, *ingehýgd* apparently transcends the human altogether, and the interiority of contemplation by which we understand the prefix *in-* is somewhat difficult to picture with regard to immortal, incorporeal cherubim.

This is by no means an exhaustive account of the meaning of *ingehýgd*, but I hope to have shown how complex it is as a mental term, and how inaccessible some of its usages appear to be. *Ingeþonc* shows a similar range: a primary meaning is 'thought of the mind', as in CP 21.155.20: *ða creopendan wuhta beinnan ðam wage getacniað ða ingeþoncas ðe wealcað in ðæs monnes mode*, 'the creeping things within the wall betoken the thoughts which revolve in the human mind'. *Ingeþonc* also means 'the seat of thought', as in Met 26.117:

ac þa unðeawas ælces modes  
and þæt ingeþonc ælces monnes  
þone lichoman lit þider hit wile.

'but the vices of each mind and the mind of each man inclines the body where it will'.

In these lines *ingeþonc* seems to equal *mod* in an algebraic construction: 'the x of the y and the y of the z'. But it is difficult to be absolutely certain. In Met 22.8:

Sece þæt siððan on his sefan innan,  
and forlæte an, swa he oftost mæge,

ælcne ymbhogan ðy him unnet sie,  
 and gesamnige, swa he swiðost mæge,  
 ealle to þæm anum his ingeðonc,  
 gesecge his mode þæt hit mæg findan  
 eall on him innan þæt hit oftost nu  
 ymbutan hit ealneg seceð,  
 gooda æghwylc.

'Let him then seek that within his mind, and surrender, as often as he may, each care which is not useful to him, and let him gather, as much as he may, all his *ingeþonc* to that one (purpose?), that he say to his mind, that it can find everything within itself, each of the good things, which it now always and frequently seeks without'.

*Ingeþonc*, as Peter Clemoes notes, is a key term in Alfred's mental vocabulary, and Clemoes suggests that "*Ingeðonc*, the inner, thinking, conscious self, was apprehended as a dominant factor in psychological character",<sup>8</sup> in other words, that it was given full status as a term for the mind in sense 1) the seat of thought and feeling. This may generally be true for *ingeþonc* across Alfredian texts, but in particular instances such as this one, it is impossible to say whether 'mind' or 'intention' might be the best understanding of the term. This is a problem not merely of the 'we shall never know because we are not Anglo-Saxon' sort, but it is an intrinsic feature of mental vocabulary that its referent remains ultimately ineffable. For we might try to understand 'intention' as 'the mind brought to a particular focus', but then, it is not surprising that in a sentence such as this the precise distinction between 'mind' and 'intention' should be unrealized, because the distinction is somewhat unreal.

Clemones suggests that "in verse the word was involved in the traditional native association of 'mind' with, as Godden has put it, 'emotion and a kind of passionate volition and self-assertion'", and that it was "part of poetry's resources for emotive expression".<sup>9</sup> But I am not certain that *ingeþonc* and *ingehygd* had the emotive potential of the other

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Clemones, *Interactions of thought and language in Old English poetry* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 390.

<sup>9</sup> Clemones, p. 391.

'mind' terms of Old English verse, *mod*, *sefa*, *ferhþ* and *hyge* (about which, more later). In *Elene*, for example, *ingeþonc* is used not really, as Clemons suggests, as the form or seat of 'desire', but in the sense 'intention' again (*EI* 679):

þæt me halig God  
 gefylle, frea mihtig, feores ingeþanc,  
 weoruda wuldorgeofa, willan minne,  
 gasta geocend.

'That the Holy God, mighty Lord, Giver of gifts to men and Saviour of souls, may fulfil for me the purpose of my life, my desire'.

Certainly, *willan minne* here expresses *Elene's* singleminded desire to find the true Cross, but although *feores ingeþanc* is in apposition, there is no reason to understand *ingeþonc* as specifically evoking the emotion, rather than signifying *Elene's* plan. Most of the verse occurrences of *ingeþonc* appear to be similarly non-emotive, even though they may appear in contexts involving strong emotion. An exception to this rule is *ChristC* 1013:

*ingeþoncum forhte beofiað fore fæder egsan*, 'they tremble despairingly in their minds for fear of the Father'. Here, the stark terror of the Last Judgement is expressed as being seated in the *ingeþonc*. It may have been on the strength of this citation that *BT* included 'heart' in its definition of the word (quoted on p. 1). But I think this meaning of *ingeþonc* is, to use terms from birding, occasional or vagrant. There was nothing to prevent the Old English poet from using the word in this manner, but this was not its primary meaning.

We might consider, by way of comparison, the use of *mod* in a prose passage such as this one (*CP* 9.59.3):

Hwæt is ðonne ðæt rice & se ealdordoom butan ðæs modes storm, se simle bið cnyssende ðæt scip ðære heortan mid ðara gedohta ystum, & bið drifen hider & ðider on swiðe nearwe bygeas worda & weorca, swelce hit sie ongemong miclum & monigum stancludum tobrocen?

'What is, then, that authority and rule but a storm of the mind, which is always rocking the ship of the heart with the waves of the thoughts, and which is driven hither and thither on the exceedingly narrow bends of words and works, such that it might be dashed among large and numerous rocks?'

Alfred's characteristically enthusiastic metaphorizing might be just a little over the top for modern tastes, but in a passage like this we see at once the difference between *mod* and *ingeþonc*. *Mod* expressed the experiential jumble of life in a manner to which terms like *ingehygd*, *ingeþonc*, and the closely related *gehygd* and *geþonc* could only really be auxiliary.

The terms examined so far fall primarily under 2) and 3) of my little scheme. I now look at the behaviour of *andgit*, which might be considered as belonging to 4) abstract qualities associated with the mind, and *gemynd*, which occupies 5) memory more or less solitarily.

*Andgit*, like all the terms already considered, is semantically shape-shifting. I have tentatively called it an abstract quality because one of its primary meanings is 'meaning' itself, as attested in Alfred's moving account of how he translates *hwilum word be worde*, *hwilum andgit of andgiete*, 'sometimes word for word, sometimes sense for sense' (CPLetWærf 62). By a rather elegant relation, *andgit* not only means 'meaning', but also 'that by which meaning is understood, id est, understanding'. This is analogous to the manner in which present-day English *smell* can mean 'sense of smell' ('he found his way to the kitchen by smell') or 'a smell' ('once there he enjoyed the various appetizing smells'); of course, this feature of *andgit* is also closely paralleled by the behaviour of present-day English *sense*. *Andgit*, used to mean 'understanding', is the sense found in *Beo* 1059: *forþan bið andgit æghwær selest, ferhðes foreþanc*, 'therefore is understanding always best, the forethought of mind'. Bradley translates "spiritual understanding and forethought", which seems right.<sup>10</sup> Understood this way, *andgit* is an abstract quality like wisdom, an ideal virtue which mortal minds must strive to cultivate. As a gloss for *intellectus*, *andgit* becomes something one asks to be granted by God: various psalters have

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<sup>10</sup> Bradley, p. 439.

*da mihi intellectum* rendered *syle me andgit*, 'give me understanding'.<sup>11</sup> *Andgit* thus seems to be something which may be possessed by an individual mind, like wisdom (Alc [Wam 35] 90): *ærest heo lærð his modes andgit, þæt hit þa scarpere byð* 'first she teaches the understanding of his mind, so that it then will be sharper'.

*Andgit* sometimes refers to an integral part of man's mind, the rational part, as in Ælfric's account of Nebuchadnezzar's return to sanity (ÆCHom II, 33 253.119): *ic Nabuchodonosor ahof mine eagan up to heofonum and min andgit wearð forgifen* 'I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes to the heavens, and my understanding was returned'. From here it is a short step to conceiving of *andgit* as something rather like the seat of thought, as in ÆAdmon I 8.26: *bide þe sylfum æt Gode þæt he sylf þe forgife snotere heortan and þurhwacol andgit þæt þu cunne tocnawan þæs deofles costnunga* 'pray you to God that he give you a wise heart and a wakeful mind, so that you can recognize the devil's promptings'. As with the several instances of *ingebonc* discussed above, the difference between 'understanding' and 'mind' in such an instance is somewhat indistinct, and almost meaningless. Even more remarkable is this passage from ÆCHom II, 14.1 138.31: *se hælend hi aðwoh mid þweale wiðutan fram fenlicere fulnysse mid his fægerum handum and wiðinnan eac heora andgit aðwoh fram eallum horwum healicra leahtra* 'the Saviour washed them externally of their swampy foulness, with a bath and his fair hands, and internally also he washed their mind from all the muck of their heinous sins'. The context seems to demand that we understand by washing the *andgit* something more comprehensive than purifying a mere part of the mind; a full service was provided, as it were.

Nevertheless, one could also 'have' an *andgit* of something, referring to a specific cognition, as in PPs 100.4: *ic awyrgde fram me wende and cyrde; nolde ic hiora andgit ænig habban, þe tælnyssa teonan geneahhige wið heora þam nehstan nið ahofan* 'I denounced, turned and drove from me, I would not have any knowledge of them, the ones

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<sup>11</sup> PsGIG (Rosier) 77.72, PsGI (Lindelöf) 118.69, 118.34, etc.

who frequently stirred up enmity, the injury of insults, against their neighbour'. As a mental term, *andgit* is somewhat peripheral, but the nature of its semantic versatility is worth observing, because characteristic of so much of the vocabulary.

We now turn to *gemynd*, which is one of the most interesting words of the group, not least because its reflex gives us our word *mind*. The most important meaning of *gemynd* is 'memory', and accordingly it glosses *memoria*, *recordatio*, *commemoratio* and so on. But the complexity of the word's meaning is such that its entry in the BTS has one of the most elaborate schemata of any headword in that dictionary. Apart from 'the faculty of memory', *gemynd* is also recorded as meaning 'the state of being remembered', 'that which is remembered', 'a reminder', 'a record', 'the action or state of thinking about something', 'the moral tendency or character' and 'mind, consciousness, intellect'. The examination of how these senses developed from one another would require the writing of a separate thesis; it suffices merely to observe how important the concept of memory was even in a pre-faculty psychology. The prominence given to memory in the Augustinian notion of the soul as a trinity of *sapientia*, *voluntas* and *memoria* only served to reinforce an idea already important to the Anglo-Saxons. We might think of poems such as The wife's lament and The wanderer to appreciate the role of memory in Old English elegiac verse. I wish here to examine briefly the interplay of two meanings of *gemynd*, 'memory' and 'mind'.

Ælfric describes the role of memory thus (ÆCHom I, 20 342.197): *purh ðam gemynde se man gepencð þa ðing ðe he gehyrde oððe geseah oððe geleornode* 'through the memory man thinks of those things which he has heard or seen or learnt'. The application of this can be seen elsewhere in Ælfric's writings, as in ÆCHom II, 9 73.24: *he gecneordlæhte æfter wisra lareowa gebysnungum and næs forgyttol ac gefæstnode his lare on fæsthafelum gemynde* 'he diligently studied after the examples of the wise teachers, and was not forgetful, but fastened his learning in tenacious memory'. Similarly, in ÆCHom I, 2 194.124: *þæt tacen þe se engel þam hyrdum sæde, we sceolon symle on urum*

*gemynde healdan* 'that token which the angel told to the shepherd we should always hold in our memory'. The image of the memory as a container in which we can hold something is essentially the same as the one which Ælfric uses for *mod* in ÆCHom I, 16 310.104: *mid þam cwyde sind þa ealle getacnode þe crist on lichaman ne gesawon: and þeahhwæðere hine healdað on heora mode þurh geleafan* 'with this saying are all those signified who never saw Christ in the flesh: and nevertheless they hold him in their mind through faith'. One can also hold an attitude or a virtue in one's mind, as in ÆCHom II, 12.1 120.362: *culfran we offriað gif we soðe bilewitnyse on urum mode healdað* 'we offer doves, if we hold true innocence in our mind'. The image of fastening something in one's memory, seen in the second quotation of the paragraph, is also applicable to the mind (LS 10 [Guth] 4.46): *þa semninga swa he of bendum & of brogan wæs his costunge ða he ða þam earhwinnendan stræle on þam mode gefæstnode þæs Cristes ceman* 'then at once his trial was of fetters and terror when he then fastened the arrow which makes one craven in the mind of Christ's warrior'.<sup>12</sup> *Gemynd* was a complex and polysemous word, but from these instances, it is not hard to see how the notions of memory and mind overlapped, so that *gemynd* eventually displaced *mod* as the superordinate 'mind' term during the Middle English period. Already in Old English, it was possible to use *gemynd* thus (LS 13 [Machutus] 16r.4): *sum cild wæs þæt se unrihtwisa deofol ofsæt & þurh fif geara rynu wæs of his gemynde se mid racenteagum gebunden wæs* 'there was a certain child that the unrighteous devil obsessed, and through a period of five years he was out of his mind, the one who was bound in fetters'.

The main difficulty with studying mental vocabulary in Old English (and most probably in other languages too) is that the words and concepts do not match up to each

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<sup>12</sup> See the DOE entry for *earg-winnende*, which notes that *earhwinnendan* is "a crux occurring in a corrupt passage: perhaps adjectival, modifying *stræle* ... and meaning (1) 'arrow which makes one craven/vile, ... perhaps an attempt to render *sagitta desperationis* of Latin source; or (2) 'arrow attacking the cowardly'". A substantival sense is also suggested: "(arrow) of the cowardly fighter" (A. diP. Healey et al., Dictionary of Old English [Toronto, 1986-]).

other in a tidy, one-to-one fashion. As I have shown, many of the words in the set possess a number of senses, and furthermore these senses are mostly shared by or relevant to all the other terms in the group (bear in mind too that my list of terms is a provisional one). The polysemousness of individual terms such as *ingehygd* is a vital part of their synchronic operation. We are not dealing here with a word such as *sole*, which can refer to the underside of my Birkenstock sandal or to the Dover fish. This is the sort of polysemy that may as well be regarded as homonymy by persons unenthused by etymology. The semantic bifurcation that led to the flourishing of two entirely separate branches, i.e. the one pertaining to fish and the other to footwear, is no longer really relevant to the operation of either sense. By contrast, the various senses of *andgit* or of *geþanc* are interrelated and important to how the vocabulary functions as a whole. The semantic split that *ingehygd* exhibits between 2) seat of thought and 3) thoughts or intentions produced by the mind, is not a split in the semantic identity of the word later to result in entirely disparate meanings. It is a semantic split which occurs as a result of the mind being of the nature it is: as a referent it is abstract and shape-shifting according to what images are called upon to depict its workings. Yet the collective nature of the *langue* (and who knows? maybe of the nature of mind as well) means that certain grooves are worn which result in a finite number of shapes shared by the vocabulary as a whole (again, my little scheme of five items is tentative). Charting the polysemy of a word like *andgit* with, say, a tree diagram would therefore do no justice to how closely involved the various senses are with each other.<sup>13</sup> A more appropriate botanical metaphor for an individual word might

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<sup>13</sup> I am thinking, for example, of the diagram which J. J. Katz and J. A. Fodor produce for the word *bachelor* in "The structure of a semantic theory", in The structure of language: readings in the philosophy of language, ed. J. A. Fodor and J. J. Katz (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964), 479-518. The polysemousness of *bachelor* is represented by what they term "polyadic branching". The various senses of the word diverge from one another at nodes which differentiate according to semantic markers like (*human*) or (*animal*). The process of disambiguation in a speaker's mind when making sense of a particular occurrence of the word is thus pictured as a process of successive elimination: "every case



be the manner in which a cluster of cells at the end of a shoot will develop differentially into the various parts of a flower. To view the terms collectively, however, I prefer to return to the image I proposed at the beginning of this section of a somewhat disorganized dovecote.

I had proposed this because I see the vocabulary as an array of items which are individually defined but which yet have a certain interchangeability with one another. If we view each pigeonhole as a semantic category, and each pigeon as a word, then we may imagine a dovecote in which the pigeons have the peculiar habit of liking to occupy a number of pigeonholes rather than just one, even though they might tend to stay in one more than others.<sup>14</sup> Some words have a smaller range than other words. The terms *hreþer*, *heorte* and *breost* mean 'the seat of thought and feeling' more or less exclusively when they are not behaving purely anatomically. I think this is because, by their very nature, they are restricted to meaning something like a container or a place, and this means that 'thoughts and intentions produced by the mind' or 'abstract qualities associated with the mind' would tend to be precluded. Words that are suffixed with *-cofa*, 'chamber', *-loca*, 'stronghold', *-cleofa*, 'cave', or *-hord*, 'treasure', tend to be similarly restricted. For instance, in all its six occurrences, *gewitloca* never means anything other than 'seat of thought'. Once again, we know this from the nature of the image. In the Meters of Boethius, it is said that the true happinesses (*gesælða*) are the more easily known (Met 12.25):

gif þu up atyhsð ærest sona  
and ðu awyrtwalast of gewitlocan  
leasa gesælða, swa swa londes ceorl  
of his æcere lycð yfel weod monig.

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of selection can be represented as the exclusion (by some sentential material) of one or more branches" (p. 498).

<sup>14</sup> If it pains the reader to think of urban pigeons, then I suggest more beautiful members of the family *Columbidae* such as the mourning dove or the green-winged pigeon.

'if you at once pull out and uproot from your mind all the false happinesses, just as a tiller of land plucks out many evil weeds from his acre'.

The *gewitt* is envisaged as an enclosure or a stronghold, and the resulting term, *gewitloca*, is in turn likened to a piece of cultivable land. But although it is generally true that some types of mental terms tend to mean one sort of thing fairly exclusively, it is still impossible to draw solid lines for boundaries. We saw this with *ingeþonc* in its anomalous occurrence as a word meaning 'seat of thought and *feeling*' and we also see it in the sole occurrence of the word *gastgehygd*, which occurs in Andreas and which means 'thoughts of the mind'. The anomaly of this compound, of course, consists of the first element *gast* being a word which I had insisted earlier was a purely spiritual rather than psychological term (I still insist it, though relatively *sotto voce*). Given that it is a hapax legomenon, we might theorize that it was an experimental nonce-formation that never caught on among the Andreas-poet's colleagues (though again we shall never know how commonly used a word it actually was), but it still illustrates how fluid these terms were.

Nevertheless, there are a number of words which are fairly inflexible in meaning 'the seat of thought'. These are the anatomical terms, and the compounds formed with the abovementioned suffixes, and also *mod*, *sefa*, *ferhþ* and *hyge*. *Mod* is without question the superordinate term for the mind in Old English. *Sefa*, *ferhþ* and *hyge* are by and large poetic terms.<sup>15</sup> In the glosses, *mod* is the main Old English word used to gloss *mens*, though in certain texts *geþoht* and *geþanc* predominate. These last two words are, however, like *ingehygd* et alia, rather more versatile semantically than *mod*; in addition I would guess that they tend to mean 2) the seat of thought but less of feeling rather than 1) the seat of thought and feeling. It is remarkable that most of the words which mean 'seat of thought and feeling' are mainly if not exclusively poetic terms. (Appended to this chapter

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<sup>15</sup> See Roberta Frank's treatment of the prose occurrences of *ferhþ* and *sefa* in "Poetic words in late Old English prose", in From Anglo-Saxon to early Middle English, ed. M. R. Godden, D. Gray and T. Hoad (Oxford, 1994), 87-107.

is a frequency table of words for the mind in Old English, showing distribution across prose, verse and glosses.) Malcolm Godden has remarked that *mod*, *sefa*, *ferhþ* and *hyge* are the most important psychological terms in the poetry, and regards them as being "more or less interchangeable".<sup>16</sup> To what degree more or less is a matter upon which I imagine much ink will be spilt as more work is done on Anglo-Saxon psychology. The previous scholarship on the question, by Phillips and Soland respectively, has been somewhat unsatisfying.<sup>17</sup>

As the first part of this chapter illustrates, I believe that a certain interchangeability was an important feature of mental terms: the mind is an abstract and elastic concept after all. But interchangeability need not be equated with synonymy. An analogous set of words comprises the terms *breost*, *heorte* and *hreþer* which clearly do not mean the same thing: the breast, the heart and the womb (or whatever *hreþer* means) are different parts of the body. Nevertheless, when these words were employed to denote the seat of thought and emotion, the real distinctions that existed among them became subordinate to the narrative purpose of expressing emotional experience. We might think of this as a sort of locally determined, pragmatic synonymy. Likewise, *mod*, *sefa*, *ferhþ*

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<sup>16</sup> M. R. Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the mind", in Learning and literature in Anglo-Saxon England, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), 271-298 at p. 289.

<sup>17</sup> Phillips, see note 3 above; and Margrit Soland, Altenglische Ausdrücke für 'Leib' und 'Seele' (Zürich, 1979). The usefulness of Soland's work is severely restricted owing to the fact that she considers a very small number of poetic texts only, primarily Beowulf and a 'Kontrastcorpus' of several poems from the Exeter Book. Phillips's work is more substantial, drawing on the entire corpus, and I shall address my main criticisms of his approach where specific points arise in the discussion that follows. My main reason for dissatisfaction with both Phillips and Soland is that they assume from the outset that the mental terms can be differentiated: both devote separate chapters to each term, and repeat themselves a great deal as a result. I have addressed Phillips's treatment of the mental terms in my article "Mental cultivation in Guthlac B", Neophilologus 81 (1997), 625-636. I also do not agree with Phillips's assumption that mental and spiritual vocabulary can be investigated without reference to the nature of the soul or of the mind (p. 16). See also Richard North, Pagan words and Christian meanings (Amsterdam, 1991), which I will treat in more detail in Ch. 5.

and *hyge* are undoubtedly semantically differentiated, but this does not mean that their differences were salient in every occurrence.

The likelihood of knowing what the precise distinctions were among these words can be evaluated by looking at the means by which we determine the meaning of Old English words. Günter Kotzor has made up a handy list of seven commonly used methods:

- i) the translational method, i.e. the use of linguistic material translated from one language into another, especially in the form of glossaries, glosses, and literary sources;
- ii) the contextual method, i.e. the determination and delimitation of semantic content by the use of linguistic (as well as extra-linguistic) context, especially in the form of collocation patterns, defining context or delimiting context;
- iii) the diachronic method: the determination of semantic content with the aid of linguistic diachrony, i.e. for our purpose, with the aid of Middle English or Modern English material;
- iv) the morphological method: the establishing of paradigmatic patterns as an aid to semantic analysis, especially in the word-formation of the language concerned;
- v) the etymological method;
- vi) the comparative method using material from cognate languages;
- vii) the contact method evaluating language contact, especially loan relations, for the establishing or confirmation of semantic content.<sup>18</sup>

These are methods for determining the meaning of *individual* words. By scrutinizing their applicability to discovering the distinctions among a *group* of words, I am jumping a step or two ahead. But any method of finding out the differences among several words must rest on finding out the meanings of the words singly. Any method which fails adequately to

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<sup>18</sup> I have taken this list more or less verbatim from Kotzor, "Wind and weather: semantic analysis and the classification of Old English lexemes", in Problems of Old English lexicography: studies in memory of Angus Cameron, ed. Alfred Bammesberger (Regensburg, 1985), 175-195 at p. 176.

define a single word is obviously unreliable for making semantic distinctions among a set of words.

For our purposes, method iii), the diachronic method, is probably the least promising. As a method of determining the meaning of historical words it is inherently weak because it does not take account of the fact of semantic change over time. The senses of our present-day *mood* are surely a poor basis for the interpolation of the meaning of OE *mod*. Moreover, of our four terms only *mod* and *hyge* survive into Middle English, and *hyge* only just.<sup>19</sup> *Sefa* and *ferhþ* vanish without a trace, it seems.

Method v) may be considered together with method vi) since etymology is almost always discussed alongside the comparison with cognates from other languages. As Kotzor observes, the etymological method is "dangerous at least if applied to the semantic analysis of a specific synchronic state of a given language with a definite cultural setting and particular conditions of linguistic use".<sup>20</sup> This is not a warning to be dismissed, since for most philologists, the etymologies of words have an almost irresistible fascination about them. Three of the four words under examination present delightful genealogies. *Mod* goes back to an Indo-European root *mē-*, *mō-*, *mə-*, which Pokorny defines as "heftigen und kraftigen Willens sein, heftig streben" ('to be of violent and powerful will, to strive violently').<sup>21</sup> It is related to Latin *mos*, *moris* 'caprice, nature, disposition, custom, style, law' and German *Mut* 'courage' and Old Icelandic *móðr* 'anger'. The Indo-European root of *sefa* is *sap-*, *sab-*, which gave rise to Latin *sapa* and German *Saft* and English *sap*, all meaning 'juice, sap etc.'. These are all related to Latin *sapio*, which means 'to taste (of something)', hence 'to taste (something)' and then 'to know, to be wise'. Thus,

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<sup>19</sup> The Middle English dictionary (ed. Hans Kurath et al. [Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952- ]) has only six citations for *hie* n., from three very early texts, Ormulum, Layamon's Brut and Trinity homilies.

<sup>20</sup> Kotzor, p. 183.

<sup>21</sup> Julius Pokorny, Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch (Bern, 1959); *mod* p. 704-705, *sefa* p. 880, *feorh* p. 822.

Old Icelandic *sefi* and Old English *sefa* mean 'mind'. This connection between juice and knowing may go back to an ancient European conception of intelligence as a moistness, one's 'native juice', as it were.<sup>22</sup> *Ferhþ* is related to *feorh* 'life', which seems ultimately to have sprung from Indo-European *perk<sup>u</sup>u-s*, which apparently means, of all things, 'oak tree'. Pokorny deems the relation of *ferhþ* and *feorh* to this complex as "unsicher", however. Oddly, he does not treat *hyge*, Old Icelandic *hugr*, Old High German *hugu* anywhere in his Wörterbuch.

These etymologies are full of seductive possibilities for semantic interpretation. The close relation that *ferhþ* bears to *feorh*, for example, has led at least one scholar to imagine that *ferhþ* denotes a more physically based entity than the other mental terms.<sup>23</sup> Those Germanic cousins of *mod* which mean 'anger' and 'courage' certainly illuminate the tendency of *mod*'s derivatives to mean these things (see next paragraph). These considerations may even have influenced Malcolm Godden's summation of the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind as "a kind of passionate volition and self-assertion".<sup>24</sup> I myself like to indulge in the fancy that *sefa* forms tautological compounds with other mental terms because these compounds mean 'breast-sap', *breostsefa*, 'life-sap', *ferhþsefa* etc. But when we bear in mind Kotzor's reminder that it is the "specific synchronic state" of Old English mental vocabulary that we are interested in, then we must beware reading into these words meanings which belonged to an earlier stage in their history. As Hans Schabram observes, for a language as richly attested as Old English (compared, that is, to other Germanic languages of the same period), there is no reason why etymology and comparison with

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Broxton Onians, The origins of European thought about the body, the mind, the soul, time and fate (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 61-65.

<sup>23</sup> Phillips, p. 71.

<sup>24</sup> Godden, p. 295.

cognate languages should take priority over contextual analysis in semantic interpretation.<sup>25</sup>

By the morphological method, Kotzor means "definable lexical relations within a more or less synchronous state of the language, especially patterns of word-formation such as affixation".<sup>26</sup> To my knowledge, no one has yet attempted to distinguish *mod*, *hyge*, *sefa* and *ferhþ* by examining the respective differences in their compounding and affixing behaviour. One problem, interesting in itself, is that the words show very uneven susceptibilities to these processes. *Mod* and *hyge* bind with other morphemes more freely than *sefa* or *ferhþ*. As mentioned previously, *sefa* apparently never forms the first element of compounds, and as a second element almost exclusively with the other words of its set, with the exception of *wissefa*. Neither *ferhþ* nor *sefa* appear to combine with prepositional prefixes such as *ofer-* or *un-*, unless we admit the name of Beowulf's invidious detractor, *Unferþ*.<sup>27</sup> The four words are thus difficult to compare on a morphological basis. Of the reluctance of *ferhþ* and *sefa* to bind with other morphemes, we can do hardly more than express a sense of wonder; nevertheless, one or two things may be observed of *mod* and *hyge*. In some of its derivations, *mod* manifests the sense 'courage' (compare the modern German cognate *Mut* which means exactly this) where a similar form with *hyge* does not. Thus, *modleast* means 'cowardly, lacking courage', while *hygeleast* means 'thoughtless'. *Modig* means 'high-spirited, courageous', while *hygdig* means 'thoughtful, considerate'. *Mod* has definite associations with the notions of courage and anger, just as *hyge* has a tendency to mean, purely, 'thought'. However, *oferhyge* does not

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<sup>25</sup> Hans Schabram, "Etymologie und Kontextanalyse in der altenglischen Semantik," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 84 (1970), 233-253 at p. 233.

<sup>26</sup> Kotzor, p. 181.

<sup>27</sup> This is the interpretation put forward by Fred C. Robinson in "Personal names in medieval narrative and the name of Unferth in *Beowulf*", ch. 17 in *The Tomb of Beowulf and other essays on Old English* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993); first published in *Essays in honor of Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams*, ed. H. Creed (Birmingham, Alabama, 1970), 43-48.

mean 'excessively intellectual' as we might expect, but together with *ofermod*, means 'pride, arrogance'. In drawing out distinctions between words like *mod* and *hyge* therefore, we are dealing with sometimes unpredictable nuances; we must speak of 'tendencies to mean' rather than 'definitions'.<sup>28</sup>

This becomes clear too when we consider the translational method, which is possibly the method which philologists most readily resort to for a quick fix. As Kotzor observes, "the lemma-gloss equation would seem to imply easy identification of meaning. But ... by accepting the equation implied, we often enough have only shifted the problem of semantic analysis to the original language". This may be illustrated with an example from PsCaA 1 (Kuhn) 11.2: & *lioma halges gastes ingeot urum gehygdum. (iubarq: sci sps infunde nostris sensibus)*. The sense of this is: 'and the light of the Holy Spirit pour into our minds' (the verb is an imperative). In attempting to determine whether *gehygd* means 'thought of the mind' or 'the mind' in this instance, it is tempting to refer to the meaning of *sensus*. But the Oxford Latin dictionary lists ten meanings for *sensus*, including 'that which occurs to the mind, an idea, thought', 'the faculty of making distinctions, judgement, understanding', 'the faculty of feeling emotions, heart', 'self-awareness, consciousness' and 'an undefined faculty, instinct'.<sup>29</sup> As we have seen, mental terms have a tendency to be polysemous, and referring to the Latin often increases, rather than narrows, the range of meanings available for interpretation.

Moreover, the lemma-gloss relation is not always simple: in the Paris psalter, for example, the word *cor* gives rise at least twice to the phrase *heortan hyge* 'mind of the heart' (PPs 85.11, 94.10). This phrase had obvious alliterative appeal, and we understand its purpose as tautologously intensifying. As evidence for the meaning of *hyge*, however, it is not immediately useful. For the relation of an Old English word to its Latin

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<sup>28</sup> In my last chapter I will briefly treat this problem from the perspective of pragmatics.

<sup>29</sup> A. Souter et al., Oxford Latin dictionary (Oxford, 1968-1982), s.v. *sensus*.



equivalent in a literary source, it is instructive to read Peter Clemoes's account of *ingeþonc* in the Alfredian texts:

*Ingeþonc*, 'inner thought', is a frequently occurring word signifying an individual's internal, personal state of mind in the king's translation of Gregory's *Regula pastoralis* and in his two prose dialogues. It renders word for word a variety of Latin words in the *Regula pastoralis* - some seven in all - but in eleven of the twenty-one instances of these relationships the Latin equivalent is *intentio*. In another thirteen instances the word was occasioned simply by an expression of 'inwardness' in the Latin (*interior*, *intimus*, *intus*, *interius* or *introrsus*) and in a further three or four by a reference to 'self' (*apud se*, *semetipsis* or *nobismetipsis*). Quite often nothing in the Latin required its use at all.<sup>30</sup>

Obviously, Old English vocabulary was not locked in any sort of algorithmic relationship with Latin vocabulary. Phillips's attempt to distinguish the 'mind' words from one another is partly based on his belief that, because these words consistently glossed different lemmata, they must mean different things.<sup>31</sup> This is reasonable to a point, but rests on an overly simplistic view of the vocabulary. First of all, while *heorte* might almost invariably be used to gloss *cor* (and we have just encountered some instances where the gloss was for literary reasons more complex) the equations for the more purely mental words are not as simple as he says. *Mod*, for instance, is not the exclusive gloss for *mens*: it shares this distinction with *geþanc* and *geþoht*. *Sefa* is merely auxiliary to *andgit* in glossing *sensus*. The case for drawing a sharp distinction between *sefa* and *mōd* on the basis of their always glossing different Latin words is thus weakened. Most readers of Old English would consider *sefa* and *mōd* to be more like each other than *sefa* and *andgit* or *mōd* and *geþanc*. Surely, too, the Anglo-Saxon glossators to some extent enjoyed the fact that *sensus* alliterated with *sefa*, and *mens* with *mōd*. That they did not always pause to think if they had chosen the most appropriate gloss is demonstrated by PsGID (Roeder)

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<sup>30</sup> Clemoes, pp. 388-389.

<sup>31</sup> Phillips, p. 17.

77.72, where the phrase *in sensu manuum* 'by the sense of touch' is rendered *on sefan handa* 'in the mind of the hands', which is plainly nonsensical.

As Kotzor notes, the translational method can be considered a special case of method vii, which takes account of the role of language contact in determining the semantic development of a given word. But of the four words we have been discussing, only *mod* occurs with great frequency in prose, and since by far the greater portion of 'contact' with Latin resulted in prose texts, the contact method can only be evaluated with reference to its usefulness in determining the meaning of *mod*. This leaves us with the contextual method, which I wish to consider twice: here in relation to distinguishing our four words for the mind, and later in the elaboration of the method I adopt in this thesis.

The contextual method, depending as it does on the close examination of a word's syntagmatic relations, is probably the soundest of all the methods which Kotzor names. Unlike the etymological and diachronic methods, it is based on the study of a word's synchronic interaction with other words, thus being proof against the attribution of meanings inappropriate to the period (although of course, studies involving the Old English corpus inevitably deal with a range of texts that spans four centuries). It also avoids the distraction which is an inherent danger with methods that involve comparison with other languages, such as the translational, contact and comparative methods. Studying the collocations of a given word also presents the scholar with a large number of determinants, unlike the study of glosses, which for any one word might only produce a handful of clues (that is, lemmata) to work with. More facets of a word's meaning are, one hopes, thereby revealed.

The application of the contextual method to determining the respective meanings of *mod*, *sefa*, *ferhþ* and *hyge*, meets, however, with a number of obstacles. One is that these words survive in very unequal numbers (see frequency table appended to the end of the

chapter) and it is difficult to know what weight to put on negative evidence.<sup>32</sup> The amount of information we possess about the collocations of *mod* exceeds by more than tenfold that for the next most frequent term, *hyge*. If, therefore, *hyge* never collocates with a certain verb in the corpus, this does not mean it never did, and it might not be altogether sound to distinguish *mod* from *hyge* on the basis of such absences. Another serious limitation to this kind of study is that we cannot factor out the exigencies of alliteration and meter when we consider the collocations of *hyge*, *sefa* and *ferhþ*, which are predominantly poetic words. As a matter of marginal interest, *mod* alliterates in 66% of its occurrences in poetry, *sefa* in 77%, *hyge* in 86% and *ferhþ* in 96%. The three predominantly poetic terms have higher alliterating frequencies than *mod*. I hesitate to draw any strong conclusions from this. These figures could mean that poets used *hyge*, *ferhþ* and *sefa* respectively with particular purposes in mind, and that they naturally formed the nuclei for alliterative phrases because they were key terms. On the other hand, the figures also suggest that when a mental term was *not* the key term in a line, *mod* was the default term. A default relation to the other terms of the group suggests a degree of interchangeability.

We understand little about the process of poetic composition, especially in an oral formulaic tradition. The requirements of alliterative verse must have placed certain constraints on word choice. But these constraints were neither absolute nor negligible, and between these two extremes we do not know how to second-guess poets of a previous millennium, and the degree to which *mod*, *sefa*, *ferhþ* and *hyge* were differentiated by their alliterating collocations seems indeterminable. No doubt the best poets were able to control, rather than be controlled by, the form of their native verse, but it is also undeniable that in a verse tradition so characterized by alliteration the tolerance for what

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<sup>32</sup> Phillips's reasoning on his use of negative evidence is circular: "Can I plausibly make the claim, then (as in many cases I will), that because a word does not appear in a construction in the extant Old English texts it also would not appear in that construction even if we had available all the Old English texts ever written? Clearly, such a claim would be invalid in some cases, but in others, where a semantic reason for the absence can be adduced, it is almost certainly valid" (p. 5).

I earlier termed pragmatic synonymy must have been higher than in our own language today. The terms for God might furnish an instructive analogy. *Scyppend*, *Metod*, *Drihten* and *Wealdend* all have different meanings - Creator, Lord, Ruler, etc. - but they all refer to the same entity, and to that extent, they are interchangeable. Sometimes when a poet used *Scyppend*, he was clearly emphasizing the creating aspect of God more than the ruling aspect, as in these lines from Cædmon's hymn (5):

He ærest sceop eorðan bearnum  
heofon to hrofe, halig Scyppend.

'He first created the earth for men, and heaven for a roof, the holy Creator'.

But at other times, there was no particular motivation for using *Scyppend* over any of the other terms, as in this sentence which comes at the end of Bede's prose account of Cædmon's life (Bede 4 25.348.22): *ond seo tunge, þe swa monig halwende word in þæs scyppendes lof gesette, he ða swelce eac þa ytmæstan word in his herenisse ... betynde* 'and the tongue, which had set so many saving words in the praise of God, concluded thus also its last words in his praise'. There must be instances in the corpus where, for example, *sefa* occurs because no other word would have done in its place, but against these occurrences there are many more where no doubt *sefa* fulfilled a more general purpose.

If the contextual method does not ultimately help us to distinguish these mental terms from one another, it is nevertheless very useful in characterizing them as a group. It is the concept of mind which these words collectively represent, and which the contextual method can reveal if we use the collocations to integrate rather than differentiate. I shall say more about how I propose to do this later. First we should consider the last of Kotzor's methods, the contact method.

As I earlier suggested, this method is not particularly useful for poetic vocabulary, since with the exception of the Paris psalter, Meters of Boethius and a few minor poems, most Old English verse does not show significant influence from Latin (our

most important contact language).<sup>33</sup> *Mod*, therefore, is the main term which we can consider under this method, especially as it is used to render *mens*. But there are two immediate considerations.

First, in a contact situation a word might acquire a special purpose which was particular to that situation only. In Alfred's translations of Augustine, Boethius and Gregory, and in Ælfric's adaptation of Alcuin's De animae ratione liber (in ÆLS [Christmas]), the word *mod* when rendering *mens* takes on philosophical features and nuances which are absent from the *mod* of Beowulf or of The wanderer. These meanings which result from contact with Latin are an important part of the history of *mod*, and obviously, important in the history of the development of Anglo-Saxon psychological thought. It should be clear, however, that as a method of establishing or confirming the primary meaning of *mod*, studying the meanings acquired by the influence of Latin *mens* has the obvious disadvantage that writers and translators such as Alfred and Ælfric did not always represent average Anglo-Saxon usage. I shall treat the status of such authors shortly and merely observe at present that the occurrences of certain key words in texts resulting from situations where language contact occurred cannot be taken without qualification to give evidence of the place of these words in the Old English *langue*. These texts form a significant portion of the corpus as a whole, but key terms like *mod* were often put to specialized use.

This is not to say that the occurrences of *mod* where it appears in translation for *mens* should be discounted as evidence for the word's semantics: the association of these two words was so frequent and widespread that the meanings which *mod* thereby acquired

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<sup>33</sup> Because I am addressing the problems associated with semantic differentiation of mental terms by lexical means, my use of the word 'contact' here is narrowly restricted to refer to situations where Old English texts can be shown to bear a close verbal similarity to a Latin source. In many contexts, a wider understanding of the term is useful, if not critical; see Patrick W. Conner's discussion of a 'semiological' conception of language contact, in "Source studies, the Old English Guthlac A and the English Benedictine Reformation", Revue bénédictine 103 (1993), 380-413, at pp. 380-84.

probably had more than a "literary loan existence".<sup>34</sup> But by this point we are dealing not with merely lexical problems. This brings us to our second consideration with respect to the contact method: the concept of mind is a culturally specific notion, and there are surely limits to what *mens* can tell us about *mod*.

What do we know about the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind which was particular to that culture? The answer, as far as there is one, necessitates an excursus into matters not philological. As apparent from my earlier discussion of the words *heorte*, *breost* and *hreþer*, the locus of the Anglo-Saxon mind was the chest rather than the head. This can be demonstrated with any of the references used in the discussion of the anatomical terms, and also with this rather intriguing passage from Ælfric's sermon for the second Sunday in Advent. The text which forms the basis of the homily is Luke 21:25-31, and Ælfric draws particular attention to verse 28: *his autem fieri incipientibus respicite et levate capita vestra quoniam adpropinquat redemptio vestra* 'but when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand'.<sup>35</sup> Ælfric's explanation of this passage (ÆCHom I, 40 526.78; italics mine):

þonne se oga þæs micclan domes bið æteowod, ahebbað þonne eowre heafda, þæt is gladiað on eowrum mode, for þi þonne ðes middaneard bið geendod þe ge ne lufedon. Þonne bið gehende seo alysednys þe ge sohton. *On halgum gewrite bið gelomlice heafod geset for þæs mannes mode, for þan ðe þæt heafod gewissað þam oþrum limum, swa swa ðæt mod gediht ða geðohtas. We ahebbað ure heafda þonne we ure mod arærað to gefean þæs heofonlican eðles.*

'When the terror of the Last Judgement is revealed, then lift up your heads, that is, be glad in your mind, for then this world which you did not love is ended; then the remission of sins which you sought is at hand. *In holy scripture the head often symbolizes man's mind, for the head directs the other limbs just as the mind directs the thoughts. We lift up our heads when we lift up our mind to the joy of the heavenly kingdom.*

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<sup>34</sup> Kotzor observes how some attestations of Old English vocabulary may exist only because they were invented to translate technical vocabulary from Latin, and demonstrates this by examining the terminology for a twelve-fold system of wind direction. He concludes that the Old English terms for wind direction only had a "literary loan existence"; Kotzor, p. 187.

<sup>35</sup> All biblical quotations in Latin are from the Vulgate and all translations in English are from the Douay-Rheims version. See bibliography of works cited for full references.

That Ælfric felt compelled to explain this at all is telling, and the nature of his explanation suggests that for him, the relationship between the head and the mind was not one of physiology, but one of analogy. This passage illustrates how complex the nature of contact was between Latin and Old English. In such a thing as the location of the mind, Anglo-Saxon authors were aware enough of their own beliefs that when encountering an association between *mens* and *caput* in Latin writings, they conceived of the disparity as a cultural difference and explained it to their readers accordingly. This marvellous piece of evidence allows us to guess (though no more than this) what Alfred had in mind when he translated this sentence from Gregory's Regula pastoralis (GREG.MAG. Reg.past. 2.7.159):

Capilli uero in capite, exteriores sunt cogitationes in mente: qui dum super cerebrum insensibiliter oriuntur, curas uitae praesentis designant.

'The hairs on the head are the outer thoughts of the mind: which, although they grow unfelt above the brain, denote the anxieties of the present life'.

as (CP 18.139.16):

ðæt feax ðonne hira heafde getacnað ða uterran geðohtas, ðæt grewð & scinð ofer ðæm brægene, & his mon ðeah ne gefred.

'The hair of their head thus betokens the outer thoughts; it grows and flourishes over the brain, yet one does not feel it'.

Like Ælfric, Alfred may have had an awareness of cultural difference between his own conception of the brain and Gregory's, perhaps as today we might feel when reading, say, descriptions of traditional Chinese medicine and its conception of energy flow in the body.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, as I shall later demonstrate, in Alfred's writings there is evidence

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<sup>36</sup> The removal of the consciousness from the chest to the head is naturally a matter which cannot be dated precisely, but as Eric Jager notes, the primary influence was Galen, and in medieval Europe one of the first authors to identify the brain as the seat of the intellect

to suggest that his conception of the mind differed in certain key respects from that found in vernacular poetry, from which we can speculate that for this translator-king at least, some of what he read in Latin may have played a role in forming his own idiosyncratic notions of what *mod* was all about. The location of the mind is a relatively gross matter with which to trace differences between the Latin and Old English conceptions of mind, yet it may be impossible to know how clear or sharp the awareness of this difference was in the minds of Ælfric and others.

The discussion has thus far removed itself from the relatively dry and stable terrain of lexicology to the rather more swampy regions of comparative psychology. But it seems imperative that these cultural and psychological matters be engaged in for the discussion of mental vocabulary not to become vapid or meaningless. The matter of the mind's location illustrates certain key features of the entity whose names we are studying. It is worth pausing to elaborate upon it.

Although we are not normally aware of it, consciousness has no fixed location in the body. In our head-centred culture, it seems natural to assume that the mind is in the head because that is where the brain is.<sup>37</sup> The mind and the brain are not identical, however, even though they might be closely related. We do not experience consciousness as palpable neural activity, in the same way as we experience our pulse as the muscular pumping of the heart. When we think of our minds as being in our heads, we tend to think of a dark space behind our eyes. This dark space, obviously, is imaginary - it does not actually exist - and its location in our heads probably has more to do with the association that consciousness has with sight than with any sensation we have of our brain at work. The cranial location of the brain, then, does not actually determine the fact of our locating our minds there, even though we are used to thinking that it does. In fact, the mind has no

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was Bernardus Silvestris (fl. 1136). See Eric Jager, "The book of the heart: reading and writing the medieval subject", *Speculum* 71 (1996), 1-26 at pp. 2-3.

<sup>37</sup> This is, in fact, precisely what the *TOE* does on behalf of the Anglo-Saxons, with the spurious entry at 06.01 "The head (as seat of thought): *heafod*".



location whatsoever except as we imagine it, and our imagining of its location is anatomically arbitrary and culturally determined.<sup>38</sup> The Japanese, for example, think of the belly or *hara* as the seat of thought and feeling.

The location of the mind, however 'arbitrary', may have certain consequences for the way a people thinks about itself. Our culture speaks of a split between the head and the heart, meaning a dichotomy of reason and passion, but in a culture which located the mind in the heart only, such a conflict may not have been clearly conceived of. The Anglo-Saxons appear not to have had such a fragmented view of the self's operations, though by Chaucer's time the split between reason and passion was already well-established. In this way (but *only* in this way), Troilus and Woody Allen have something in common when the first says:

Thus am I with desir and reson twight  
Desir for to destourben hire me redeth,  
And reson nyl nat; so myn hert dredeth.  
(Troilus and Criseyde IV. 572-574)<sup>39</sup>

and the other (in the 1990 film Crimes and misdemeanours): "It's very hard to get your head and heart to work together in life. In my case, they're not even friendly".

By contrast to later notions, the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind seems to have been relatively unified. In the poetry we repeatedly encounter uses of mental terms which suggest that thought and feeling were conceived of as aspects of the same experience. In

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<sup>38</sup> see Julian Jaynes, The origin of consciousness in the breakdown of the bicameral mind (Boston, 1976), pp. 44-46. I suppose, however, that this anatomical arbitrariness is not manifested to its full potential in human societies; I have never heard of any group that located the mind in their foot, for example. Onians plausibly suggests that the initial association of consciousness with the chest had to do with the extreme sensitivity of the thoracic and abdominal organs to outside stimuli (Ch 2, and p. 119 note 3). Jaynes makes much the same argument at pp. 259-272. For more on the importance of the chest in Old English literature, see Eric Jager, "Speech in the chest in Old English: orality or pectorality?" Speculum 65 (1990), 845-859, and "The word in the 'breast': interiority and the Fall in Genesis B", Neophilologus 75 (1991), 279-290.

<sup>39</sup> Larry D. Benson (ed.), The Riverside Chaucer, (Oxford, 1987).

this manner, we might understand the Anglo-Saxons to have possessed, as Onians puts it, "a primal unity of mind in which perception or cognition is associated with or immediately followed by an emotion and a tendency to action".<sup>40</sup> Onians wrote these words as a description of the psychology of the Homeric Greeks in a book which outlines the development of ancient European thought about life, the universe and everything. His account of how and why the earliest Europeans centred their consciousness in the chest and the consequences which this had for their conception of life is moderately illuminating for our study of Anglo-Saxon psychology, which we can see as having inherited these ancient notions. We should, however, beware of thinking of the Anglo-Saxons as 'primal' in any way.<sup>41</sup> As we have seen, Anglo-Saxons like Alfred and Ælfric had a currency with Latin learning, in which abstract thought was highly advanced. I tentatively suggest that we think of Anglo-Saxon psychology as representing a transitional stage between 'unity' and the later fragmentation into a psychology of faculties. Certainly, words such as *ingeþonc* and *ingehygd* etc. appear to denote thought as abstracted from feeling.

For there is a difficulty which we face in trying to understand how to think of Anglo-Saxon psychology, which is that it is not homogeneously reflected across the entire corpus. As Malcolm Godden has observed, there appear to be two distinct traditions of Anglo-Saxon thought on the mind. He calls these traditions 'classical' and 'vernacular'. The classical tradition is "represented by Alcuin of York ..., King Alfred and Ælfric of Eynsham, who were consciously working in a line which went back through late antique writers such as St. Augustine and Boethius to Plato", while the vernacular tradition is

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<sup>40</sup> Onians, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> In my concluding chapter I touch on some of the difficulties involved in using the classic studies of Homeric psychology as models for our investigations into Anglo-Saxon psychology.

"more deeply rooted in the language, represented particularly by the poets".<sup>42</sup> While Godden does not actually insist on it, this manner of putting things creates an identity between the classical tradition and prose writing on the one hand, and the vernacular tradition and poetry on the other. This is handy, but certainly not the only way of understanding the situation.

In trying to grasp how the psychology of a people manifests itself in language, it seems useful to appeal to a distinction which academic psychologists make, between common sense psychology (CSP) and scientific psychology (SP).<sup>43</sup> CSP is "essentially the vocabulary we use to explain ourselves and others. It is the vocabulary of the mental".<sup>44</sup> It is differentiated from scientific psychology in that whereas the latter "attempts to explain and predict generally, CSP is interested in explaining the particular".<sup>45</sup> In other words, we might not find that scientific psychology was very useful in explaining precisely why our maiden aunt gets on our nerves. Perhaps the reason why a comparatively well-known neurobiological term such as *synapse* has gained so little currency in present-day CSP is because it is not handy for explaining interpersonal interactions and behaviour. Common sense psychology is so called because it shows a practical intelligence. It is literally the means by which we make sense of ourselves and

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<sup>42</sup> Godden, p. 271.

<sup>43</sup> see Scott M. Christensen and Dale R. Turner (eds.), Folk psychology and the philosophy of mind (Hillsdale, New Jersey, 1993). 'Common sense psychology' is an alternative term for 'folk psychology'. Folk psychology is so named because it is thought of as being to scientific psychology as folk physics is to research physics. The analogy is true to the point that folk psychology is adequate for our everyday purposes just as folk physics is, but false in that while folk physics is demonstrably wrong, the status of folk psychology with respect to scientific psychology is much more complex, and not surprisingly, an issue of considerable controversy among academic psychologists. I prefer 'common sense psychology', following Kathleen V. Wilkes, who has expressed distaste for the term 'folk'.

<sup>44</sup> Christensen and Turner, xvi.

<sup>45</sup> Kathleen V. Wilkes, "The relationship between scientific psychology and common sense psychology", in Christensen and Turner, 167-187 at p. 171.

others. For this reason, we are most likely to find that CSP is embedded in narrative, whereas SP, by definition, is embedded in discourse.

Common sense psychology, however, is not a single coherent theory of the mind. It is eclectically composed of all manner of frameworks. Many of these, indeed, originate in academic theorizing, and have found their way into everyday speech via the fad. We only have to think of the classic films of Woody Allen, such as Manhattan and Annie Hall, to remember characters who converse babblingly about themselves using half-digested bits of Freudian psychoanalysis and other such theories of mental life. Somewhat less amusingly, there are real-life instances of people seeking "ego reinforcement through consciousness-raising by going where the energies are in my extrinsic peer group orientation".<sup>46</sup> Note that the main terms of the sentence, *ego*, *consciousness raising* and *peer group*, all have fairly wide currency today. One need not have read a word of Freud to have the words *id*, *subconscious* and *neurosis* in one's active vocabulary. We might speak concernedly of a friend as being repressed or refer to the collective unconscious in contexts far removed from academic psychology.

Furthermore, we need not stick, in our common sense psychology, to any one framework even within a sentence. It is possible to say of someone, *she has an overdeveloped ego but her heart's in the right place*, and be well understood, even though this is putting together two theories which are literally millennia apart. The way in which people talk about their thoughts, personalities, hopes, dreams and fears has always borrowed terms from more rigorous theorizing, and in many cases given them longer life than the theories themselves. A man can still be *phlegmatic* or *sanguine* even though no one has subscribed to the theory of humours for several centuries. In certain ages too a particular object will serve as an analogue for the mind: in Chaucer's day and throughout the Renaissance, the mirror was one such object. From Old English words such as

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<sup>46</sup> Tom McArthur (ed.), The Oxford companion to the English language (Oxford, 1992), s.v. *psychobabble*.

*breostcofa*, *gewitloca* and *heortscraef* we can guess that the notion of an enclosed, protected space was important for the Anglo-Saxon conception of mind.

In later medieval literature, this borrowing of concepts can be seen to be especially lively in works such as Piers Plowman and Troilus and Criseyde. But then, as now, once models leave their original contexts and enter the realms of poetry or common language, their academic rigour is often lost and a certain creative elasticity takes over. With this in mind, the psychologist Kathleen V. Wilkes has made some very interesting observations about our mental vocabulary. It is a framework, she says, which possesses 'a riotous richness':

We can exploit overlapping shades of meaning, nuances, ambiguities, to convey accurately and precisely whatever we want ... Consider the size of Roget's *Thesaurus*, and then consider what proportion of it is given over to 'mental' terms - a colossal proportion. Consider too how few of these terms have *sharp* definitions; it is precisely because they are free of such, are in fact amorphous and nuance-ridden, that they enjoy the flexibility and richness that allows us to wield them to such effect in a given context. The richness of the context ensures that what is conveyed is precise, accurate and economical.<sup>47</sup>

Wilkes's observations about the productive vagueness of CSP terminology agree with my earlier assertions about the shifting, 'unpindownable' nature of mental vocabulary. We should not, when examining everyday psychological vocabulary, expect a word to be of fixed meaning and for that meaning to apply in every case. By contrast, the use of terminology within the academic discipline of psychology is strictly defined and more or less consistent with itself. This is an important distinction to grasp, since it is a clue to the difference, not just between Sigmund Freud and Woody Allen, but also between Ælfric and the poet of Beowulf.

The availability in common sense psychological speech of so many different models and frameworks, the intellectual jetsam of past ages, means that our everyday language has a layered, archaeological quality. Compared to present-day English, Old English by

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<sup>47</sup> Wilkes, p. 174.

contrast has fewer layers just because it is almost the earliest, deepest stratum of our language. But this distinction between common sense psychology and scientific psychology makes it possible for us to see that the difference between Ælfric and the Beowulf-poet is not just a matter of prose and poetry, or of the classical versus the vernacular traditions, but also a matter of genre and intention, factors which influence the type of precision with which words are used.

In a work such as ÆLS (Christmas), Ælfric produces a psychology which is obviously modelled on Alcuin and Isidore, who in turn were working within an Augustinian framework. He is at pains to relate these ideas about the nature of the soul to his listeners in terms which they will find familiar. He thus delivers a speechified gloss of Latin vocabulary (ÆLS [Christmas] 183):

Hyre name is *anima* þæt is sawul and seo nama gelympð to hire life . And *spiritus* gast belimpð to hire ymbwlatunge. Heo is *sensus* þæt is andgit oððe felnyss þonne heo gefret. Heo is *animus* þæt is mod þonne heo wat. Heo is *mens* þæt is mod þonne heo understent. Heo is *memoria* þæt is gemynd þonne heo gemanð. Heo is *ratio* þæt is gescead þonne heo to-scæt. Heo is *uoluntas* þæt is wylla þonne heo hwæt wyle.

'Its name is *anima*, that is 'soul' and the name pertains to its life. And *spiritus* 'ghost' pertains to its contemplation. It is *sensus*, that is 'understanding' or 'feeling' when it perceives. It is *animus*, that is 'mind', when it knows. It is *mens*, that is 'mind', when it understands. It is *memoria*, that is 'memory', when it remembers. It is *ratio*, that is 'reason', when it discriminates. It is *uoluntas*, that is 'will' when it wills something'.

But Ælfric is also interested in drawing fine distinctions between these terms, opining that *ælc sawul is gast ac swa þeah nis na ælc gast sawul* 'every soul is a spirit but not every spirit is a soul' (ÆLS [Christmas] 188). He is splitting a hair here that the vernacular poets never even came close to ruffling. This is the sort of refinement of distinction which C. S. Lewis aptly called a tactical definition, and it is worth heeding his characteristically arch comment on tactical definitions: "I do not of course say (for I don't

know) that such definitions cannot have uses of their own. But that of giving information about the actual meaning of a word is not one of them".<sup>48</sup>

In their use of the Old English terminology, authors such as Alfred and Ælfric quite self-consciously redefine terms like *mod* for particular purposes. Alfred's conception of the mind is, in places, rather idiosyncratic. There is, in the poetry, the abovementioned distinction between the 'transcendent' and 'non-transcendent' terms: *gast* and *sawol* are what survive of a person after death, and as such are transcendent. *Mod* and its companion terms, on the other hand, appear to refer to the psychological entity operative in life, but which seems not to survive death. Alfred, however, is deliberately insistent that all the knowledge which one acquires through one's *mod* in life should remain with one in the afterlife (Solil 2 64.23):

Nu ic gehyre þæt min sawel is æcu and a lifað, and eall þæt min mod and min gescadwisnesse goodra crefta gegadrað, þæt mot þæt mod þa simle habban, and ic gehere æac þæt min gewit is æce.

'Now I hear that my soul is eternal and lives forever, and all that my mind and my reason gather of good skills, that the mind may always have, and I hear also that my understanding is eternal'.

For Alfred, the ecstasy of arriving in heaven is as much an ecstasy of the mind in the process of knowing as of the soul in feeling. In another passage from his translation of Boethius, he shows again his determination to make the mind matter in the next world (Bo 18.45.26; italics mine):

Ac sio sawl færð swiðe friolice to hefonum, siððan hio ontiged bið, & of þæm carcerne þæs lichoman onlesed bið. Heo forsihð þonne eall ðas eorðlican þing, & fægnað þæs þæt hio mot brucan þæs heofonlican, siððan hio bið abrogden from ðæm eorðlican. Þonne þæt *mod* *him selfum gewita bið Godes willan.*

'But the soul travels very freely to heaven, after it is untied and released from the prison of the body. It renounces then all earthly things, and rejoices that it can partake of the

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<sup>48</sup> C. S. Lewis, Studies in words (Cambridge, 1960), p. 19.

heavenly after it is withdrawn from the earthly. Then the mind is a witness for himself of God's will'.

This insistence that the *mod* transcends death is in contradiction of the use of that word in the poetry. This is highly fascinating in itself as an indication of Alfred's personal philosophical position, but it does not constitute evidence about the common sense psychology of Anglo Saxons precisely because it is so idiosyncratic. Alfred's and Ælfric's use of their native vocabulary was at certain points shaped by their reading of Latin; it was learned, theoretical and self-conscious. To this extent, it is a use of vocabulary which resembles more closely that of scientific psychology. We might call it 'philosophical psychology', since 'scientific' would be an anachronism and a misnomer.

We might compare with this a passage from Juliana, quoted earlier but here presented at greater length (Ju 397):

þeah he Godes hwæt

onginne gæstlice, ic beo gearo sona,  
 þæt ic ingehygd eal geondwite,  
 hu gefæstnad sy ferð innanweard,  
 wiðsteall geworht. Ic þæs wealles geat  
 ontyne þurh teonan; bið se torr þyrel,  
 ingong geopenad, þonne ic ærest him  
 þurh eargfare in onsende  
 in breostsefan bitre geþoncas  
 þurh mislice modes willan,  
 þæt him sylfum selle þynceð  
 leahtras to fremman ofer lof Godes,  
 lices lustas.

'Though he know in his spirit something of God, I am immediately ready, that I might survey all his intention, how fast his mind be within, the defence constructed. I open the gate in the wall through injury; when the tower is penetrated, the entrance opened, then I at once send in to him, with the shooting of an arrow into his breast-mind, bitter thoughts through the various desires of his mind, that it seems to him better to perform sins and lusts of the flesh than the praise of God'.

In this passage, the inner life of the devil's victim is referred to in a number of ways, with our familiar array of nouns *ingehygd*, *breostsefa*, *ferhþ* and *mod*, but also with the adverbs *gæstlice* and *innanweard*. By contrast to Ælfric's persnickety precision in his list of



mental terms and to Alfred's idiosyncratic usage, the Old English poet is content to present an assortment of terms, all of which refer cumulatively and ultimately to the same thing. The difference between *breostsefa* and *ingehygd* is here an irrelevant matter. The overriding picture is of the vulnerability of a person's mind and soul to the insidious attacks of the devil.

We might again compare these lines from *Juliana* to this passage of Ælfric's from elsewhere in his *œuvre* (*ÆLS [Auguries]* 166):

þonne gesihþ se deofol þæt ge hine forseoð, and him bið þonne wa on his awyrigedum mode, þæt ge swa anræde beoð, and nimð andan to eow, and wile eow geswencan mid sumere untrumnyse, oððe sum eowre orf ardlice acwellan, forðan þe he mot ælces mannes afandian, on manega wisan, hwæðer his mod wille abugan þurh ða ehtnyse fram ðam ælmihtigan Gode.

'Then the devil sees that you despise him, and there is then woe to him in his accursed mind, that you are so resolute, and he takes a grudge against you, and wishes to torment you with a certain illness, or violently kill one of your cows, because he must test each man in many ways, to see whether his mind will turn away from the almighty God through this persecution'.

This passage does not depend, like the one from *Juliana*, on an accumulation of mental terms for the simple reason that variation was much less a feature of prose style. But in the description of the devil's misery, and then of the devil's attack on the individual mind to try to turn it away from God, we can see that Ælfric's use of *mod* here very much resembles what we find in the poetry. Also reminiscent of the poetry is the way in which *mod* is used as the place where emotions are felt, as in this passage from another of Ælfric's saints' lives (*ÆLS [Eugenia]* 104):

Philippus ða se fæder forwearð on mode, and seo modor Claudia mid murcnunge wæs fornunen, and eall seo mægð on mode wearð astyred and sohten þæt mæden mid mycelre sarnyse.

'Then Philip the father was grieved in his mind, and the mother Claudia was consumed with sorrow, and all the kin became stirred up in their mind and sought the maiden with much pain'.

Here in prose we find the vernacular tradition of the mind which comprehended both feeling and thought. This was the commonsensical way of talking about the mind which Ælfric shared with the rest of the community when he was not writing discursively upon the subject.

Equally, it was possible to write poetry of a philosophical turn. Alfred manages to produce in his Meters of Boethius a verse explication of the threefold nature of the soul, with this description of the role of reason (Met 20.197):

Sio gesceadwisnes    sceal on gehwelcum  
 þære wilnunge    waldan semle,  
 and irsunge    eac swa selfe;  
 hio sceal mid geþeahte    þegnes mode,  
 mid andgite,    ealles waldan.  
 Hio is þæt mæste mægen    monnes saule  
 and se selestas    sundorcræfta.

'The reason ought always to govern the will in everything, and its own anger also; it should completely rule the mind of a thane with thought and understanding. It is the greatest might of man's soul and the best of special powers'.

This is certainly not traditional poetry, but it illustrates again that the division between common sense psychology and philosophical psychology did not follow that between poetry and prose.

What the division does seem to follow is the line which divides narrative from discourse. Narratives, both prose and verse, are therefore our hunting ground for the common sense psychology of the Anglo-Saxons. We should bear in mind, however, that genre is something which need not be consistent within a text. Some texts, such as sermons, can switch from discourse to narrative and back again within a paragraph, say if an exemplum is used to illustrate a point of spiritual teaching.<sup>49</sup> For instance, although I

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<sup>49</sup> A point that Hans Jürgen Diller makes in his article, "Joy and mirth in Middle English (and a little bit in Old): a plea for the consideration of genre in historical semantics", in Middle English miscellany: from vocabulary to linguistic variation, ed. Jacek Fisiak (Poznan, 1996), 83-105 at pp. 84-85.

have designated Alfred's use of mental vocabulary as being somewhat idiosyncratic, it was naturally not so all the time. In sentences such as the following one from the Pastoral care, his idiom was as 'purely' Anglo-Saxon as anything in the poetry (38.271.10): *ða suiðe suigean ... beoð micle hefiglicor gedrefde on hiera heortan ðonne ða oferspræcean, forðæm for ðære suigean hiora geðohtas beoð aweallene on hiora mode* 'the very silent ... are much more heavily afflicted in their hearts than the overly talkative, for their thoughts boil in their mind because of their silence'. This having been said, we must address the problem of how we can characterize that body of thought which we may call Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology.

In my earlier discussion of individual mental terms, I frequently resorted to using the operative image as a guide to deciding what sense a word exhibited in a particular occurrence. Thus, for example, when Ælfric asks *hwæt fremap þe ðæt ðin cyst stande ful mid godum and ðin ingehyd beo æmtig ælces godes?* 'what good does it do you that your chest stand full of goods and your *ingehyd* be empty of any virtue?', we may guess that *ingehyd* in this case means 'seat of thought' rather than 'thoughts produced by the mind' because one's *ingehygd* is compared to a chest. We understand that the container image indicates 'mind' and that the things contained indicate 'thoughts'. As I also noted earlier, the image of an enclosed, protected space is one of the basic metaphors upon which the Anglo-Saxons built their conception of the mind. In formulating this image, Ælfric was not being original, for, as words like *breostcofa*, *gewitloca* and *modhord* prove, it was very much in the Anglo-Saxon disposition to think of the mind in this way. This metaphor of the chest is not unlike the container image which we discussed in relation to the occurrence of *mod* and *hreðer* with the verb *behabban* (CP 63.459.13 and And 814), where the mind is pictured as a container with a limited capacity for holding wisdom. More elaborate than any of these is the passage from Juliana where the mind is envisaged as a fortified tower which can be assailed by storming the gate and shooting arrows in. With these instances in mind, we may return to an example of *gehygd* which I had previously

left indeterminate (PsCaA 1 [Kuhn] 11.2): *& lioma halges gastes ingeot urum gehygdum* 'and the light of the Holy Spirit pour into our *gehygd*'. We reasonably assume that the metaphor operating here, that of light pouring into an enclosed space like a room, allows us to fix the sense of *gehygd* in this citation as 'seat of thought'.

Note that these metaphors come fully formed, with parts included. In the metaphor where the mind is pictured as a container, thoughts are envisaged as grains of wheat which quickly fill up the mind to capacity. Where the mind is pictured as a field, thoughts are like plants among which one can sort the crop from the weeds. In Juliana, where the mind is metaphorized as a tower, the devil shoots bitter thoughts like flaming arrows into the stronghold. If the mind is imagined as a room, then naturally the influence of the Holy Spirit is conceived of as light streaming in to illuminate it.

The mind as container is not the only type of metaphor we encounter. Just as frequently we encounter the mind as an object which moves towards or away from other objects (see ÆLS [Auguries] 172: *hwæðer his mod wille abugan ... fram ðam ælmihtigan Gode* 'whether his mind will turn away ... from the almighty God'); the mind is something which can be oppressed, bound *mid racenteagum* 'with fetters' (LS 13 [Machutus] 16r.4) or conversely made to expand, so that it is *rume* 'spacious' (e.g. Jud 97); the mind is also a kind of liquid that can be stirred up (*astyrian*), churned around (*weallan*) or heated up (*onhætan*). Clearly, the syntagmatic relations that mental terms form help us determine what the metaphor is. In the examples above, the verbs *ingeotan*, *behabban*, *abugan*, *bindan* and *astyrian* control the image we form of the mind as we read. Equally, adjectives such as *rum* and *gefæstnad* and nouns such as *cyst*, *-loca*, *-hord* etc. help reveal the metaphor. In this way, the contextual method of fixing a word's meaning also helps us determine the various forms of the concept of mind.

As I observed at the beginning of the chapter, the difficulty of mental vocabulary is that it lacks a concrete referent. But it is for precisely this reason that the notion of the mind lends itself to the generation of metaphors with such fecundity. Some of these

metaphors were no doubt formed for the nonce; others were habitual, idiomatic and *commonsensical*. Earlier I expressed the thought that the polysemousness of mental terms reflected the manner by which the notion of mind was differentiated into a number of shapes (which I represented with my scheme of five semantic categories). What is essentially amorphous is given a structure, and from this structure our metaphors spring.

The main object of this thesis is to study some metaphors for the mind in Old English and to see what these metaphors reveal about the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind. I will limit myself to a study of the mind as the seat of thought and feeling. As these last paragraphs suggest, it is important to have a theory of metaphor so that we can understand what the value of metaphors is as evidence of a psychological concept. This will be the subject of Chapter Two.

TABLE 1 The frequency of occurrences of some words for 'mind' in Old English\*50

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Prose</u>	<u>Verse</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
<i>mod</i>	2720	1980	416	262
<i>sefa</i>	112	7	90	15
<i>hyge</i>	170	28	133	4
<i>ferhþ</i>	54	(1)**	53	0
<i>ingehygd</i>	207	109	4	94
<i>ingeþonc</i>	108	87	16	5
<i>modsefa</i>	44	0	44	0
<i>gewitloca</i>	6	1	5	0
<i>gemynd</i>	539	330	47	160
<i>andgit</i>	800	443	16	170
<i>hreþer</i>	49	0	49	0
<i>heorte</i>	2856	1003	158	1685
<i>breost</i>	400	218	73	54

\* there is a margin of error for these preliminary figures as I have almost definitely missed several attested spellings while searching through the corpus. However, the table probably gives a fairly accurate idea of the relative frequencies of the words.

\*\* this is the occurrence in Bede 5 8.406.25 of the phrase written *wide ferh in ecnesse*, which as Roberta Frank has observed (see note 15) is a form of *ferhþ* in three MSS.

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50 Searching the Dictionary of Old English corpus, WWW-accessible version by University of Michigan Humanities Texts Initiative, TEI-P3 conformant edition conversion by J. Price-Wilkin and T. Ariga (Online: <http://www.hti.umich.edu/english/oec/>; last updated December 7, 1997).

## Chapter Two: The role of metaphor

Poor Mr Casaubon had imagined that his long studious bachelorhood had stored up for him a compound interest of enjoyment, and that large drafts on his affections would not fail to be honoured; for we all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors, and act fatally on the strength of them.

- George Eliot, Middlemarch

It is difficult to take a lexical approach to the study of Anglo-Saxon psychology because, as I showed in the previous chapter, the individual words of the Old English mental vocabulary are not precisely delineated from one another. Rather, there seems to be a range of functions which the vocabulary as a whole fulfils - the seat of thought and feeling, thoughts and intentions of the mind, qualities or attributes of the mind etc. - and within this range of functions, individual words do double or even triple duty. A word such as *ingehygd* can refer variously to 'the seat of thought' or 'an intention' or 'the attribute of rationality', and it is only from the context of its occurrence that we can tell which role it is fulfilling. The contextual information that allows us to guess the meaning of a mental term often comes in the form of an image or a metaphor. For example, images of containers or protected strongholds signal that it is 'the seat of thought' which is the referent. There are certain metaphors that recur in the reading of Old English literature, and one learns to recognize each for what it signifies. A line such as *weoll him on innan hyge* 'his mind seethed within him' (Gen B 353), where the mental process is described in terms of a boiling liquid, is easily recognizable to anyone acquainted with Old English verse as an indicator of strong (mostly negative) emotion. Such metaphors were part of the shared currency of ideas that Anglo-Saxons had about the mind and the ways in which it worked. Their occurrence in both prose and poetry suggests that it was the natural, everyday Anglo-Saxon way of talking about things. Of course, certain usages may have been exclusively poetic, but I am guessing from the presence in our own everyday language

of expressions such as *it's in the back of my mind* that many of these poeticisms were probably elaborated upon ordinary everyday tropes, in the same manner as Robert Frost's much-anthologized poem "The Road Not Taken" builds on popular expressions for life as a journey occasionally involving a choice of paths.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it is not too much to assume that the metaphors for the mind which we find in Old English verse and prose bring us close to the common sense psychology of the Anglo-Saxons.

That a concept so central to human experience as the mind should be accessible largely only through the tropes which express it in casual speech may seem strange, but there is increasing evidence that the mind is not an anomalous concept in this sense. In the past decade and a half, the role of metaphor in human cognition has received a great deal of attention. Lakoff and Johnson's Metaphors we live by (1980) analyzed the pervasive presence of metaphor and metonymy in everyday language to suggest that these tropes actually determine cognition to a greater degree than previously realized.<sup>2</sup> The main argument of their theory is that human conceptual systems are largely metaphorical, that is, that we largely structure our view of the world through metaphors. Intangible things, especially, are understood in terms of more tangible things so that they are easier to grasp. Inflation, for instance, is often metaphorized as 'an enemy', resulting in statements such as *The president vowed to fight inflation*. As is apparent from the foregoing, their theory rests on the assumption that the metaphors of ordinary language

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<sup>1</sup> See Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., The poetics of mind: figurative thought, language and understanding (Cambridge, 1994), Ch. 1 for a discussion of how poetic conceits are often derived from expressions already current in ordinary language.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, Lakoff and Johnson's observations about the cognitive force of metaphor are not new, as the epigraph to this chapter makes plain. As Eva Feder Kittay observes, "the lineage of current discussions of the cognitive import of metaphor is traced back to that Romanticism, tempered with Kantianism, epitomized by Coleridge" (Eva Feder Kittay, Metaphor: its cognitive force and linguistic structure [Oxford, 1987], p. 6). What is new about Lakoff and Johnson's work is that, by studying ordinary language, they have brought the analysis of metaphor from its place as a philosophical and literary concern into the arena of empirically based disciplines such as anthropology, cognitive science and linguistics.



are the linguistic manifestation of the cognitively real; when we come to talk of something in a certain way, we actually think of it in that way too.

The cognitive theory of metaphor is highly compelling with regard to the mind, because it makes coherent what we have already seen so far about the nature of Anglo-Saxon expressions for mental processes. Old English mental vocabulary is imprecise and shape-shifting because its referent is an abstract thing, but as I showed at the end of the last chapter, the images and metaphors that are used to describe the mind are by contrast clearly defined and structured. It is easier to understand the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind by studying these metaphors than to focus on individual words. That these metaphors are our best resource for studying Anglo-Saxon psychology is, by Lakoff and Johnson's analysis, not a matter of accident, but a matter of the natural cognitive strategy which humans possess for making sense of intangible experience. This is not to say that there were *no* ways of talking about the mind which did not make use of metaphor. Verbs such as *þencan* and *hycgan* seem to be simple in this way: their semantic power is literal, not figurative. But verbs like *think* are rather flat and un-descriptive for conveying interior experience. For describing more complex or compelling mental processes, language largely relies on metaphor.

In Metaphors we live by, Lakoff and Johnson concentrate on how concepts are structured metaphorically, but they do not actually provide a detailed analysis of what a metaphor is. To fill this gap, it seems sensible to follow Eva Feder Kittay's development of metaphor, for while she endorses the cognitive theory, her work explicitly acknowledges the debt owed to figures in the philosophical and literary tradition such as Max Black and I. A. Richards, so that there is a bridge between cognitive science and literary criticism.

Kittay calls her theory of metaphor a 'perspectival' theory, since it emphasizes the role of metaphor in obtaining new perspectives on those things metaphorized.<sup>3</sup> Metaphor

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<sup>3</sup> While I obviously subscribe to this idea that metaphors offer new perspectives on things, I recognize that there are large, shadowy questions that have yet to be

is found in any expressive medium (for example, film, painting or dance), but it is easiest to study in language because language is the most elaborated, conventional and structured of these. Metaphor, therefore, is "the cognitive activity by which a language speaker makes use of one linguistically articulated domain to gain an understanding of another experiential or conceptual domain".<sup>4</sup> Simply, metaphor makes use of comparison in a particular way. For her theory to work, Kittay insists on a view of language as a system which depends on contextual relations for its meaningfulness. In other words, our comprehension of anything linguistically expressed depends on our knowledge not just of its immediate context but also of the larger language system, or the *langue*. This view of language is naturally of a piece with the Saussurean view of speech as being meaningful only because we can identify sounds as being related to and differentiated from other sounds in a speech system. Because, therefore, all language depends on context and contrast for meaning, Kittay observes that metaphor is continuous with literal language. But it is also distinct in some ways.

In Kittay's analysis, there are six salient features of metaphor. They are:

- 1) that metaphors are sentences, not isolated words;
- 2) that a metaphor consists of two components;
- 3) that there is a tension between these two components;
- 4) that these components need to be understood as systems;
- 5) that the meaning of metaphor arises from an interplay of these components; and
- 6) that the meaning of a metaphor is irreducible and cognitive.<sup>5</sup>

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satisfactorily answered. The central one of these concerns the extent to which we may view metaphors as actually *creating* the similarities they highlight. Did the mind possess container-like qualities before someone said it did? Do metaphors reveal how things are or do they *make* the nature of things? The relevance that these questions bear to my thesis is something I treat briefly in my conclusion.

<sup>4</sup> Kittay, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Kittay, pp. 22-39. Unless otherwise indicated, the quotations in the following discussion of these six features come from these pages.

By 1) she means that the unit of a metaphor is often larger than a phrase.

Although Kittay writes that metaphors are "sentences", she in fact admits that metaphors are as large as they have to be: "A unit of metaphor is any unit of discourse in which some conceptual or conversational incongruity emerges". Furthermore, metaphors are characterized by having first-order meaning, the literal and conventional senses of an utterance, and second-order meaning, the 'metaphorical' meaning which is a function of the first-order meaning.

With regard to (2), that a metaphor consists of two components, the dichotomous structure of metaphor has been given a number of names. I. A. Richards called the two components of metaphor 'tenor' and 'vehicle', while Max Black called them 'focus' and 'frame'. Kittay's terminology is 'vehicle' for the part of the metaphor that carries the literal and conventional utterance of first-order meaning, and 'topic' for the thing spoken about. For example, in the metaphor *Man is a wolf*, the vehicle is 'wolf' and the topic 'man' or 'the idea of man'. From this analysis we can see that the topic of a metaphor is not to be confused with its second-order meaning (for otherwise we would have the merely tautologous *Man is a man*). The meaning of a metaphor is not identified with either the vehicle or the topic, but it arises from an interplay of both. This means that metaphorical language operates somewhat differently from literal language, even though, as we saw above, the two are continuous with each other.

To explain this, Kittay distinguishes the level of expression from the level of content. In a conventional sign, the signifier operates at the level of expression and the signified is at the level of content. The content level thus fixes signification. In a metaphor, however, the level of expression together with the level of content both contribute to fixing signification. In the example *Man is a wolf*, the level of expression at which 'wolf' is yoked to 'man' creates content.

Up to this point, the difference between a conventional sign and a metaphor seems only to be that a metaphor is dichotomous but a conventional sign is not. It seems to me

that for a statement such as *Man is a mammal*, which is not metaphorical, one could similarly argue that the level of expression at which 'mammal' is predicated of 'man' also creates the content level of the statement. But the difference between *Man is a wolf* and *Man is a mammal* is that while 'man' is generally understood to belong to the category of 'mammal', he is not understood to belong to the category of 'wolf'. It is the juxtaposition of incongruous ideas which really gives rise to metaphorical meaning. Given that 'wolf' and 'man' are conventionally agreed to be different, incompatible categories, then, the level of expression at which 'wolf' and 'man' are associated does therefore create a peculiar kind of content which is absent in the statement *Man is a mammal*. Kittay states that "metaphors are categorical statements in which a given entity is placed under two (or more) concepts or in two (or more) categories which are incompatible". This incompatibility is what she refers to in (3), that there is a tension between the two components of a metaphor.

Now (4), that these components need to be understood as systems, evokes the view of language which Kittay insists upon for her theory, that all language is contextually and systematically related. Kittay's predecessors Richards and Black had both recognized that metaphor depended on a "transaction between contexts", and Black had spoken of a "system of associated commonplaces" which was what the vehicle brought to the metaphor (i.e. that a wolf is predatory and ravenous etc.). Kittay insists, however, that the tension between vehicle and topic in a metaphor results from *both* being systems of associated commonplaces. The idea of man, in all its multifariousness, is brought into conjunction with the idea of wolf, with all of *its* associations. This interplay between the two components of the metaphor is what is referred to in (5).

The system represented by each component in a metaphor is identified by Kittay as its semantic field: "When a set of words, a lexical set, is applied to a domain unified by some content, a content domain, we have a semantic field". The meaning of any word is therefore partially determined by its position in relation to the other words in its

semantic field. These relations can be those of affinity (as *angel* is to *cherub*) or of opposition (*angel* to *demon*). But as we have seen, the field of mental vocabulary is far from being so clearly mapped out. It is shrouded in mist; the shapes of its stones are ill-defined. As one of the components in a metaphor, therefore, the mind as a topic is in an unequal position to its vehicle. The vehicle (a container, for example) is by contrast well-defined, easy to grasp. Its relations of affinity and opposition (small or large, open or closed) are clear enough to be applied to the topic. In this way, as Kittay observes, "metaphor can, through a transposition of relations, structure an as yet unstructured conceptual domain or reorder another semantic field, thereby altering, sometimes transiently, sometimes permanently, our ways of regarding our world". This is exactly the *function* of metaphors of the mind.

By claiming that metaphors are irreducible (6), Kittay means that the interplay of the two complex components results in various implicit propositions. These are what Lakoff and Johnson call the entailments of a metaphor. Calling man a wolf, for example, entails that while the metaphor is operative we do not see man as a creature of gentleness and peace. But the meaning of 'wolf' applied metaphorically to the idea of man is not just 'violent' or 'ravenous'; it is more than the sum of any string of adjectives one could predicate of 'man'. We may explain a metaphor in literal terms, but by definition these statements will fail to capture the full meaning of the metaphor. This is because the crossing of categorial boundaries is crucial, and it is for this reason that the meaning of a metaphor cannot be reduced to literal statement. As Kittay remarks, "The irreducibility of metaphor is importantly tied to the incongruity between the domains of the topic and vehicle".

This irreducibility of metaphor is what gives force to the argument that metaphor is an important cognitive strategy. It is useful for us to think of inflation as an enemy or of the mind as a container, because otherwise we would find it hard to think of these things at all. Our conceptions of the world are thus shaped to a large extent by metaphor:

it is one of the primary ways in which we accommodate experience. As Kittay asserts, it is an *epistemic* access to the metaphorical referent that we gain. Ill-defined yet central aspects of life such as mind and emotion are made knowable to us through metaphor.<sup>6</sup>

This is not to say that these areas of experience are any less central than others, but that the human cognitive strategy for dealing with their abstract nature is to shape them according to the contours of other, more concrete areas of experience.

It is an important aspect of Kittay's analysis, and of Lakoff and Johnson's theory, that the metaphorization of concepts is not merely an intellectual convenience. When we conceptualize an emotion such as anger in terms of the behaviour of boiling liquids in expressions such as *I just have to let off some steam* or *he blew his top*, we are not merely expressing a rationally formulated similarity. Rather, anger is *felt* to be like a seething brew.<sup>7</sup> But what does this statement mean? Part of the irreducibility of metaphor is that its meaningfulness is, as Johnson puts it, *non-propositional*.<sup>8</sup> That is, there is an aspect of metaphor which does not admit of formal representation and cannot be expressed, say, as a statement whose truth can be affirmed or denied; or in terms of the 'finitary predicate

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<sup>6</sup> This analysis of metaphor is compatible with the three hypotheses traditionally put forward for why people speak metaphorically at all (Gibbs, pp. 124-134). The three hypotheses are the inexpressibility hypothesis, the compactness hypothesis and the vividness hypothesis. The first observes what we have just seen, that metaphors give us a way of talking about things we could not otherwise easily talk about. The second suggests that metaphors express compactly what literal language would take much longer to do. The claim for the irreducibility of metaphor goes further than this, but the compactness hypothesis makes much the same point. The vividness hypothesis suggests that metaphors convey our experiences more vividly than literal description. This agrees with my earlier observation that verbs like 'think' are less evocative than metaphors like 'mulling over' or 'brooding' etc.

<sup>7</sup> George Lakoff and Zoltan Kövecses, "The cognitive model of anger inherent in American English", Berkeley cognitive science report no. 10, 1983; cited in Mark Johnson, The body in the mind: the bodily basis of meaning, imagination and reason (Chicago, 1987), pp. 88-89.

<sup>8</sup> Earlier, I quoted Kittay as explaining that the interplay of the components of a metaphor result in various implicit *propositions*. Johnson's claim here renders the use of this word suspect, but as I state in the same sentence, I believe that what Kittay terms as 'propositions' in her theory are called 'entailments' by Lakoff and Johnson. She means the implications and consequences of a metaphor, rather than its essential meaning.

symbols' and 'argument symbols' of logic or mathematics; or as a state of affairs in the world holding between, for instance, an entity and its predicates.<sup>9</sup> Understanding the cognitive theory of metaphor involves accepting that the conceptualization of reality takes place at a level not easily described, and traditionally bypassed in philosophical accounts of mental knowing. To create a suitable epistemological framework for the explanation of how metaphorical concepts are formed, in fact, Johnson has to propose a new theory of the imagination.<sup>10</sup> For now, the two concepts from this theory most necessary for my elucidation of the role of metaphors in the conception of the Anglo-Saxon mind are those of the *image schema* and the *experiential gestalt*.

As discussed above, abstract entities tend to be metaphorized in terms of more concrete domains. In Johnson's theory, the image schema plays a crucial role in this process by which physical experience is mapped onto an abstract domain. Let us see how this works in relation to the container metaphor, which I have already established is an important one for the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind. The first thing to observe is that the experience of physical containment is absolutely pervasive in our daily lives. This morning I got out of bed, went into the bathroom, and then into the kitchen, put some breakfast into my body (the preparation of coffee and cereal further involved many in-out relations), went out of my house, into the library, into an elevator and am now sitting in my carrel, hunched over in a brown study. The pattern of in and out, therefore, and the notion of containment generally, can be identified as an *image schema* or a "dynamic pattern that functions somewhat like the abstract structure of an image, and thereby

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<sup>9</sup> Johnson, p. 3. As he explains, "argument symbols refer to entities, and ... predicate symbols represent the properties and relations of those entities".

<sup>10</sup> Johnson, Ch. 6.

connects up a vast range of different experiences that manifest this same recurring structure".<sup>11</sup>

It is Johnson's claim that image schemata should not be confused on the one hand with propositional reasoning or on the other hand with specific rich images. With regard to the latter, image schemata are one level of abstraction above specific images, so that when I think of the notion of 'in and out' I am thinking of a pattern more abstract than, say, if I were to imagine myself going into carrel 12084A of the Robarts library. It is this abstraction which gives image schemata the flexibility to be applied to such a wide range of events and activities. Moreover, image schemata are not merely patterns that can be distilled from past experiences. To the extent that they control our conceptualization of things and events, schemata can operate as 'plans' of a sort for interacting with objects and people. As Johnson remarks, "they give expectations and anticipations that influence our interaction with our environment".<sup>12</sup> Moreover, although image schemata arise from physical experience, they do not remain as private, incommunicable experiences to the individuals experiencing them. The expectations and anticipations that image schemata give to our actions are culturally mediated. As Johnson emphasizes, "Our community helps us to interpret and codify many of our felt patterns. They become shared cultural modes of experience and help to determine the nature of our meaningful, coherent understanding of our 'world'".<sup>13</sup> Obviously, in the cultural mediation of understanding, language plays a crucial role, but it is worth emphasizing once again that in Johnson's

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<sup>11</sup> Johnson, p. 2. As Johnson notes, the notion of a *schema* as a non-propositional structure of imagination originated with Kant, and today it is typically used to describe those structures of thought which underlie conceptual frameworks, scripted activities (such as buying a car or getting married), narrative structures and so on. Johnson's view of the schema is that it emerges at the preconceptual, bodily level, and he discusses the notion in the context of work in cognitive science which seeks to establish 1) the cognitive reality of image schemata and 2) the relation of schemata to physical perception and motor programs.

<sup>12</sup> Johnson, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, p. 14.



view, image schemata are formed and projected at a pre-conceptual level, and are non-propositional in nature.

The non-propositional nature of these image schemata does not mean that they are without structure. The notion of containment, for example, obviously involves a space enclosed by a continuous boundary, and an object which can move in or out of this bounded space. The notion of a path involves a beginning and end point and a trajectory of motion through all the intervening points. In addition, the idea of a trajectory involves directionality and perhaps speed, acceleration, momentum and so on. Note that the patterns thus described are dynamic. One could make a diagrammatic representation of the path schema by drawing an arrow moving from point A to B, but the two-dimensional, static nature of the diagram would not adequately capture the dynamic pattern of the schema. Consonant with the recurring, dynamic nature of the image schema is the fact that its internal structure is coherent, unified, and irreducible. No one part of the 'path' schema as I have described it could be omitted from the notion without damaging its integrity. Because image schemata have a controlling form and an internal structure, Johnson identifies them as having *gestalt* characteristics. Furthermore, since we experience image schemata holistically and not part by part, this aspect of the meaning of image schemata can be termed an *experiential gestalt*.

I would like to illustrate the operation of image schemata and their gestalt structures by briefly examining the various manifestations of the path schema in Old English. The primary meaning of the word *weg* 'way' was that of a physical path, the ground traversed in getting from one point to another. As discussed above, the notion of *weg* as referring to a physical path necessarily involves a point of origin and a point of destination, and thereby a direction of travel. Note that these aspects all assume that the person or thing doing the travelling is the orientational reference. At GenA 2873, therefore, Abraham and Isaac set out on their journey to the place of Isaac's sacrifice:

Efste þa swiðe and onette

forð foldwege, swa him frea tæhte  
 wegas ofer westen, oðþæt wuldortorht,  
 dæges þridan up ofer deop wæter  
 ord aræmde.

'He then greatly hastened and hurried forth on the land-path, as the Lord taught him, the ways across the wilderness, until, gloriously bright, the beginning of the third day arose over deep water'.

Father and son follow physical paths across the wasteland. Their destination is fixed, and thus their direction of travel. Their journey is also characterized by haste, and takes place within a time frame of three days.

The structure of the physical *weg* was projected onto other domains in the Anglo-Saxon organization of reality, so that, for instance, spiritual endeavour was conceived of in terms of a path. At Andreas 1680:

Lærde þa þa leode on geleafan weg,  
 trymede torhtlice, tiredigra  
 wenede to wuldre weorod unmæte,  
 to þam halgan ham heofona rices ...

'[the saint] then urged the people onto the way of the faith, brightly strengthened, brought to joy an innumerable host of blessed ones, to the hallowed home of the kingdom of heaven ...'

To live according to the Christian faith was to follow the *geleafan weg* 'the way of faith'. The point of origin was this world, the destination heaven, and the direction of travel, from here to there. In Old English, *lifes weg* was a stock phrase for this journey. But just as earthly journeys were often uncomfortable, so the *lifes weg* could sometimes be long (GuthB 1180: *þæt þu gesecege sweostor minre ... on longne weg to þam fægran gefean* 'my journey on the long way to that lovely joy') or harsh (Ju 279: *þæt þu me gecyðe ... hwæt þes segn sy ... þe mec læreð from þe on stearcne weg* 'that you tell me ... what this sign might be ... which exhorts me on your behalf onto this harsh road').

The integrity of the metaphor's gestalt structure was such that elaborate extensions could be built upon the basic trope without fear of its clarity being obscured. Thus CP 11.65.12:

Se bið eallenga healt se ðe wat hwider he gaan sceal, & ne mæg for his modes untrymnesse, ðeah he geseo lifes weg, he ne mæg medomlice ongan, ðonne he hæfð to godum weorce gewunad, & læt ðonne ðæt aslacian, & hit nyle uparæran to ðam staðole fulfremedes weorces; ðonne ne magon ðider fullice becuman ða stæpas ðæs weorces ðieder ðe he wilnað.

'He is altogether lame, the one who knows where he should go, but cannot for the infirmity of his mind; though he see the way of life, he cannot worthily begin; when he has accustomed himself to good work, and then he lets it slack and will not raise it to the level of perfect work; then the steps of the work cannot fully arrive where he wishes them'.

The meaning of this passage relies on our (and the Anglo-Saxon's) gestalt understanding of the path schema. The *lifes weg* incorporates into its structure the notion of destination, direction of travel and the successful undertaking of that travel. These conditions together form the meaning of 'path' or *weg*. Their violation, as in the passage just quoted, results in another kind of meaning. If an individual is too feeble to stick to his purpose and complete the journey as he had begun it, then he must be considered spiritually lame. Because one's path leads directly to one's destination, following it is crucial for getting there (PPs 66.2):

And we þæs on eorðan andgyt habbað,  
ure wegas wide geond þas werpeode  
on þinre hælo healdan motan.

'And we have understanding of this on earth: our broad paths must hold to your salvation through this world'.

Thus, the internal structure of the path schema underlies all of its uses, literal and metaphorical.

As has already been hinted at, it is the 'embodied' nature of the metaphors in ordinary language which gives them their significance. As Johnson explains,

Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interaction with objects.<sup>14</sup>

Human conceptualization is partially determined by human biology and behaviour. Thus, for example, our investment of the notion of heaven with the value 'up' is ultimately based on our existence as upright, bipedal creatures. Frameworks of spatial orientation exist, after all, that do not rely on the notion of up and down, for instance Cartesian coordinates. As Lakoff and Johnson show, 'up and down' is a basic orientational metaphor in ordinary language.<sup>15</sup> An orientational metaphor gives spatial orientation to the concept in the target domain (in Kittay's terms, the topic). Thus, among the concepts which are partly structured by an up-down orientation, are those of emotion (*I feel up, he's in high spirits, she felt downhearted.*) and socio-economic status (*high society, social climber, upper class, the trickle-down effect*) and morality (*she's not above cheating, he's got on his high horse again*). The importance of this orientational metaphor in, say, the Anglo-Saxon religious context is easily demonstrated, as in Dan 596: *ac his mod astah, heah fram heortan* 'and his mind rose up, high from his heart', and Res 39: *onstep minne hige, gæsta god cyning, in gearone ræd* 'raise my mind, good king of spirits, in ready counsel'. Our biology predisposes us to incorporate verticality as a basic scheme of reference in our worldview, and to assign a positive value to 'up'. If we had been shaped as halibuts we might assign a much greater importance to the horizontal, and then heaven might always lie in front of us.

Likewise, our notion of containment, as I showed before, arises out of the pervasiveness of in-and-out relations in our daily lives. 'In and out', like 'up and down', is a basic scheme of reference in the human conceptualization of spatial location which has been projected onto other realms. In the catalogue of my morning's activities, the last

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<sup>14</sup> Johnson, xix.

<sup>15</sup> Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors we live by (Chicago, 1980), Ch. 4.

item, *hunched over in a brown study*, was a metaphorical extension of the in-out pattern. There is no real reason why the state of mind denoted by *brown study* should be thought of in terms of the containment schema, except that we have projected our bodily experience of physical containment onto the mental domain. Once operative, the container schema partially defines our understanding of states of mind, so that we think of ourselves as moving *in* or *out* of them. The notion of containment also structures our conception of domains such as the social (*he wants to get out of this marriage* or *she is in the church choir*) or the emotional (*he's in a blue funk*, *she has fallen out of love*). There is no absolute reason why our scheme of reference for such situations should be controlled by a binary system (*in* or *out*) except that, as Lakoff and Johnson suggest, our bodies are bounded entities, and 'in and out' is fundamental, not only to our movements in and out of buildings, cars, and so on, but also to many of the bodily functions we have to perform. Again, that this orientational metaphor was also prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon conception of abstract states is easy to illustrate: ÆCHom I, 37 506.273 *sop ic þe secge nu todæg þu becymst mid me into neorcsewa wanges myrþe* 'truly I say to you now, today you come with me into the joy of paradise', and ÆCHom I, 10 259.41 *nu synt we ute belocene fram þam heofenlican leohte: and we ne magon on þisum life þæs ecan leohtes brucan* 'now we have been locked out from the heavenly light, and we might not in this life enjoy the eternal light'. 'Fall in love' was an Anglo-Saxon expression as well (ApT 1.9): *þa gefeol his agen mod on hyre lufe mid unrihtre gewilnunge* 'then his own mind fell in love with her with unrighteous desire', rendering the Latin *incidit in amorem filiae suae*.

As Lakoff and Johnson argue, the basis of the metaphors we live by is *experiential*, and this encompasses every aspect of our situation as biological, social, cultural and linguistic animals: "'direct physical experience' is never merely a matter of having a body of a certain sort; rather, every experience takes place within a vast background of cultural

presuppositions".<sup>16</sup> Consequently, there are metaphors which are culture-bound and have nothing to do with biology, for example, the TIME IS MONEY metaphor which is operative in many cultures where a capitalistic ethos is dominant. It is by this metaphor that sayings are generated such as *he's living on borrowed time* or *she has invested lots of time in job applications and now she wants some returns*. Likewise, it is Mr Casaubon's tragedy that he understands life and love in terms of banking and the Protestant work ethic. Our understanding of life is a vast network of metaphorical mappings across domains. There is hardly an aspect of life which is not used as a metaphorical basis for conceiving of some other aspect of life. Our experience of plants and how they grow is projected onto our understanding of intellectual life, so that an idea may take root in our minds or fancies spring from fertile imaginations. (Lady Bracknell altered this somewhat when she spoke of ignorance as a delicately cultivated bloom.) We perceive more than culinary flavours with the divisions of taste, so that life, like chocolate, can be bitter or sweet, an expression of the face sour, and a business deal smell of fish. Mappings from the concrete to the abstract are generally helpful, so that we may talk of minds and personalities as machines (*she's heading for a breakdown, he has a few screws loose up there*). But we are occasionally also moved to reverse the arrangement, so that a photocopier may have a mind of its own, or a television set be temperamental.

As Lakoff and Johnson note, the concepts from the source domain which are metaphorically applied to shape the concepts in the target domain are not adopted wholesale. Every metaphor consists of a used part and an unused part. The image schema derived from the source only incorporates what are deemed to be the essential components for the metaphor to be meaningful. Thus, as we saw with the path schema, points of origin and destination and direction of travel are the bare bones of the schema. But because travel implies not only movement through space but also time, this used part of the

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<sup>16</sup> Lakoff and Johnson, p. 57.

metaphor can be extended so that the metaphorical journey can be called long, as by Guthlac, or hard, as by Juliana. Other aspects of 'path' and 'physical journeying' are, however, left out of the projection. One could say *She has got her stiletto heel stuck in a crack in the path of life*, but it would be unusual and a little overwrought, since one's footwear and the micro-terrain of the path are unused parts of the 'life is a journey' metaphor. Similarly, a friend of mine once remarked that if he had anything more to put on his plate, there would be gravy on the tablecloth and brussel sprouts rolling off in many directions.<sup>17</sup> The charm of this utterance lay in the novelty of imagining a table setting and menu for the expression *I've got enough on my plate*. Utterances such as these draw on parts of the underlying metaphor traditionally left unused, but their meaning is almost instantly grasped because the structure of the original metaphor is already in place. The point remains, however, that the mapping from source to target domain in any metaphor is partial.

The reason for this is that there are particular aspects of the thing metaphorized that need to be highlighted. When we refer to how busy we are by saying that we have enough on our plate, all that we need to convey with the metaphor is that we have all the food (=responsibilities) we can eat (=manage) for now. The image schema of this metaphor must consist of something like a disc of limited size already carrying as many items as it can. These are the used parts of the metaphor; all we need to explain that we are busy enough already. To extend the metaphor to include gravy and brussel sprouts, the image schema has to be converted to a specific rich image, and then the utterance takes us by surprise because most metaphors are applied only with the spare pattern of their conventional, culturally mediated image schemata in mind.

The other important consequence of noting the partial nature of metaphors is that we can now explain why some concepts are shaped by many metaphors and not just one.

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<sup>17</sup> Jacob Etches, very busy undergraduate.

Knowledge, for example, is variously metaphorized as a tree (*astronomy is a branch of physics*) or a jigsaw puzzle, or a process of colonization, with the researcher as pioneer and the limits of knowledge a frontier. The aspects of the concept 'knowledge' that we need to express are more than can be adequately captured with a single metaphor, and so instead we use many. As we have seen, and as I shall further illustrate in the next chapter, it was certainly the case with the Anglo-Saxon mind that many metaphors were habitually called upon for the elucidation of its nature.

As Lakoff and Johnson observe, the fact that more than one metaphor might exist to structure a concept does not mean that they are incompatible or incongruent with one another.<sup>18</sup> It might be bad taste to mix one's metaphors but it is not always bad logic. Many metaphors which are applied to the same topic share structural similarities but highlight different aspects of the thing. Let us examine the various Anglo-Saxon metaphors for the concept of religious sin, in order to see how this works.

Roughly speaking, a sin is an act which violates a God-given rule and which, going against the moral order of the universe, adversely affects the state of the sinner's soul. My brief enquiries into the matter have revealed that the Anglo-Saxons conceived of sin in a number of ways: as a stain, as a wound, as fire, as a snare or trap, as a disease, as darkness and as a heavy load. The two most common metaphors for sin in Old English appear to be 'stain' and 'wound', and as we shall see, there is a great degree of structural overlap between the two.<sup>19</sup> Old English religious poetry speaks of being wounded by sin, as in this passage from *Andreas* (405):<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Lakoff and Johnson, Ch. 17.

<sup>19</sup> The prevalence of the metaphor 'wound' for sin may be related to the earlier sense of OE *synn*, that of a crime or misdeed perpetrated in violation of human law; *synn* was often paired with *sacu* 'strife', as in *Beo* 2472: *þa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata* 'then was there wrongdoing and strife between the Swedes and the Geats'. The association between *synn* and *wund* in such cases would then have been literal rather than figurative.

<sup>20</sup> see also *Jul* 355, *Sat* 130 and *Soul I* 67.



Hwider hweorfað we hlafordlease,  
 geomormode, gode orfeorme,  
 synnum wunde, gif we swicað þe?

'Where shall we go, lordless, sorrowful of mind, deprived of good, wounded by sins, if we depart from you?'

Just as frequently, it seems, the image is one of a soul stained (HomFr I 15):<sup>21</sup>

Wea bið in mode  
 siofa synnum fah, sare geblonden,  
 gefylled mid facne þeah he fæger word  
 utan ætywe.

'Evil is in his mind, the spirit stained with sins, bitterly corrupted, filled with misdeeds, though he outwardly displays fair words'.

Occasionally, it seems, words for 'stain' became so habitual for 'sin' that the two metaphors might mix quite naturally, as in these familiar lines (Dream 13):

Syllic wæs se sigebeam, ond ic synnum fah,  
 forwunded mid wommum.

'Wondrous was the tree of victories, and I stained with sins, wounded with blemishes'.

Of course, in this of all poems, the imagery of wounds and stains takes on an especial force because the Rood is wounded with Christ's wounds, stained with his blood and sweat.

Let us now examine some aspects of the concept 'sin'. A sin committed violates a given original state of purity. Traditional Christian doctrine holds the individual responsible for the sin he or she commits, and a sin is a finite entity, susceptible of isolation from the continuum of other acts, and quantifiable in terms of its seriousness. Sins may thus be enumerated, and because they are discrete in this manner, they can be said to be conspicuous. Sins cause damage to the state of a sinner's soul, and the nature of

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<sup>21</sup> see also GenB 1520, 2682.

this damage is long-lasting, and reparable only by atonement and absolution. Because sin causes damage to the soul, it causes pain and distress to the sinner, both because the sinner feels guilt and the again-bite of his in-wit, and also because the accumulation of sins creates a downward path to hell.

All these aspects of sin are admirably highlighted by the metaphor 'wound'. A wound violates the original state of health of a body. A wound is inflicted by an identifiable act and is a finite entity. Wounds are localized on a body, visible, and vary in terms of their seriousness. A wound causes injury to a body and is reparable only through healing (whence, of course, the Old English term for Christ, *Hælend*). A wound is painful, and can lead to death.

That the metaphor 'a sin is a stain' shares many of these features can be seen by the following table:

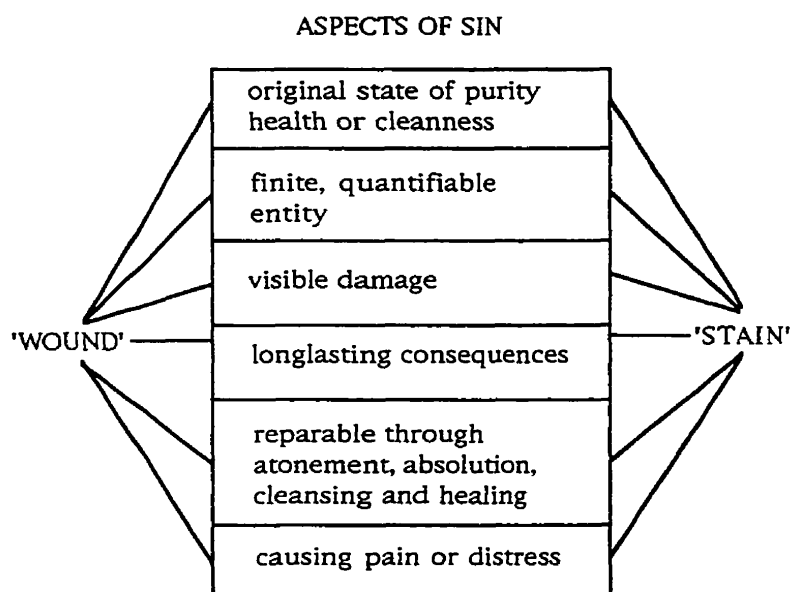


TABLE 2 The structural overlap shared by two metaphors for the concept 'sin'.

Given that the two metaphors appear to fulfil very similar functions, one might ask why they are both necessary at all. As with words, no two metaphors are exactly alike, even

though the amount of semantic overlap might be considerable. Efficiency seems to be important in linguistic systems, so that perfect synonymy is not tolerated, but an equally important factor seems to be the range of expression available, since nuance, originality and evocativeness are also prized in the use of language. Again, Kathleen Wilkes's observation that "we can exploit overlapping shades of meaning, nuances, ambiguities, to convey accurately and precisely whatever we want" is apt.<sup>22</sup> Both 'stain' and 'wound' seem to operate similarly as metaphors for 'sin', but their emotional appeal is different. I would guess that the visible deformity of 'stain', and the distress, approaching shame, that this evokes is the metaphor's most important aspect. 'Wound', on the other hand, naturally taps into our fear of injury and pain, as we are creatures of flesh and blood.

We may now compare the 'wound' metaphor with a less closely related one, that of 'sin is a burden'. In GenA, God surveys the state of the world before announcing the Flood (1292):

Geseah unrihte eorðan fulle  
 side sælwongas synnum gehladene  
 widlum gewemde.

'He saw the earth full of wrong, the wide plains laden with sin and polluted with defilement.'

The notion is of sin as a burden which is heaped on the world or, as in this passage from the Pastoral care, on the individual sinner (CP 37.269.8):

Forðy bið inne on ðæm ofne geworden to leade se se ðe sua bið geðrysced mid ðære hefignesse his synna ðæt he furðum on ðæm broce nyle alætan his geornfulnesse & ðas eorðlican wilnunga.

'Therefore he is turned to lead in the furnace, the one who is so oppressed with the weight of his sins that he will not abandon his desires and earthly longings even in that adversity'.

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<sup>22</sup> Wilkes, "Scientific psychology and common sense psychology", p. 174.

'Burden' as a metaphor for sin does not seem to share many similarities with 'wound' or 'stain'. The image schemata of 'wound' and 'stain' seem to share a basic structure; roughly speaking, a plane is envisaged on which one particular, localized area stands out as the point of damage or injury. By contrast, the image schema of 'burden' does not involve a plane, but incorporates into its structure the up-and-down orientation inherent in our notion of gravity. A downward force acts on a pliable object, causing stress. The meaning of 'sin as a burden' is primarily that sin has a detrimental effect on the naturally upright, noble nature of man, causing fatigue and creating a downward pull, and as we have already seen, 'down' has generally a negative value in our worldview.

Despite these differences between 'sin as a burden' and 'sin as a wound or stain', there are yet a few similarities we may remark upon. In the phrases *hefignesse his synna* 'the heaviness of his sins' and *synnum gehladene* 'laden with sins', the plural oblique forms of *synn* make it clear that, as in the other two metaphors, sins are envisaged as discrete, quantifiable entities. The worse the sin, the heavier the lump. But like wounds and stains, weights are countable things. Possibly the most important similarity across the three metaphors, however, is the notion of an original state which is then distorted or damaged by sin. To be laden with heavy things is to be bent over, oppressed, but once this weight is removed, the body springs back to its natural, upright posture.

That the various metaphors for a single referent share identifiable structural qualities shows that these metaphors are, to an extent, coherent with one another. It is not a random process which results in 'wound', 'stain' and 'burden' being applied as metaphors for the concept 'sin'. The concept of sin was abstract enough that the Anglo-Saxons needed to structure it in terms of more concrete experience. Nevertheless, sin was an idea compelling enough that the metaphors chosen to express the different aspects of its nature have, as a group, some coherence and a certain systematicity about them. It was with good reason that no one ever spoke of sins as sunbeams or as waves, for these natural

phenomena would have been disqualified both on account of their structural unsuitability and their emotional inappropriateness.

It is important to note that metaphors are not metaphorical in an absolute sense. Much depends on the conceptual organizations already present in a culture or society. An expression which is metaphorical in one cultural or linguistic group may well be construed as literal in another. In our post-Darwinian times, most people accept that the statement *Man is an ape* is literal (though an *ad hominem* remark such as *Clemenceau is an ape* would generally still be construed as a metaphor and an insult). In pre-Darwinian times, or in those social or religious groups which reject evolutionary theory, the statement would still have to be taken metaphorically, or not at all. Conversely, we now view the statement *I think in my heart* as a figurative one because we generally think that we think in our heads, but in Anglo-Saxon times this would have been taken as a statement of fact.

The study of specific metaphors cannot therefore be divorced from the study of their social context. People must share cultural assumptions about categories in order to recognize and understand metaphors.<sup>23</sup> Yet the comprehensibility of metaphors is not the only reason for saying that metaphors have a cultural aspect: they also often serve the function of reinforcing social bonds based on "a common stock of experiences, interests, and sensibilities and the ability to call upon that information when interpreting language".<sup>24</sup> These social bonds can be relatively superficial, and shared only by a small circle within a language community, or they can be very deep and common to all the

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<sup>23</sup> For a cognitive approach to categories, see George Lakoff, *Women, fire and dangerous things: what categories reveal about the mind* (Chicago, 1987). There is a debate in cognitive and anthropological circles about the extent to which metaphor in ordinary language is a matter of cognition or culture. See Naomi Quinn's article "The cultural basis of metaphor" in *Beyond metaphor: the theory of tropes in anthropology*, ed. James Fernandez (Stanford, 1991), 56-93, and Gibbs's response to her argument, pp. 192-206.

<sup>24</sup> Gibbs, p. 134.

speakers of that language. When discussing the fact that metaphorical talk often "presupposes and reinforces intimacy between speaker and listener", Gibbs is really referring to slang, instancing the fact that the metaphorical expressions shared by college students for some of their extra-curricular activities (sex and inebriation) are often used to sort group identity. I remember encountering the phrase 'anal-retentive' when I first arrived in this university, and finding out that it applied to a certain type of compulsive personality. This is a phrase which metaphorizes character in terms of bodily dysfunction.<sup>25</sup> Having learnt this, I am now able to grasp the meaning of elaborative statements such as *He doesn't have enough fibre in his diet*, which obliquely refer to the expression 'anal-retentive'. This rather striking trope, like slang, is only appropriate to certain registers and exists in the active vocabulary of only certain of my acquaintances, yet its relative superficiality does not mean it is any less forceful in meaning. I have no doubt that for these people the figure has an irreducible cognitive value. On the other hand, there are metaphors which are so deeply embedded in our *langue* that their figurative nature is taken entirely for granted, and their use is pervasive of the entire linguistic community and not confined to a sub-group. The investment of the notion 'up' with a positive value and 'down' with a negative one is such a metaphor. As I have

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<sup>25</sup> It has been pointed out to me that the phrase *anal retentive* may not be properly metaphorical, since it really originates in Freudian psychoanalytic theory, where it describes "(a person) displaying excessive orderliness and parsimony, interpreted by psychoanalysts as the result of fixation at the anal stage of development" (Oxford English Dictionary additions series vol. 1, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner [Oxford, 1993], s.v. *anal* sense 4). Whether Freud's analysis of the 'anal stage' has any physiological basis is probably arguable, and decisions as to the metaphorical status of *anal retentive* are therefore similarly moot. I would be inclined to argue that, at least in the ordinary language which is my point of departure in the above discussion, the phrase has the status of a metaphor. Incidentally, this phrase is a perfect example of the way that common sense psychology borrows from academic psychology, as I discussed in Ch. 1. The difference in usage is illustrated by the following examples cited by OED additions, from the Journal of clinical psychology and The growing pains of Adrian Mole respectively: "They found that anal retentive females (as measured by the Blacky test) performed significantly better" versus "My mother said, 'You're an anal retentive, aren't you?' and my father said 'You're tight-fisted, and you've always got your perfectly groomed head in a book'".

observed with the models of common sense psychology, language has an 'archaeological, layered' quality, so that the conceits of past ages now form part of the terrain of our language. The cultural bonds that underlie these metaphors now run so deep that they are hardly apparent to us. Between the relative superficiality of slang and the embeddedness of ancient tropes there is a continuum of intervening strata.

The metaphors of the mind by which the Anglo-Saxons lived must have been culturally potent in this way, though it is not certain how transparent or opaque their metaphorical nature would have been to an Eadburga or an Oswiu. Oral formulaic poetry would have reinforced the shared 'stock' of common associations and evocations. Many of the metaphors used of the mind in Anglo-Saxon poetry appear to be formulaic (for instance *weoll him on innan hyge* Gen A 353; *breost innan weoll* Beo 2331; *weoll on gewitte* And 769; *weoll of gewitte* Beo 2882). Perhaps when treating verse we ought to think of the social bonds of language as operating doubly: once at the level of interpreting metaphor, and again at the level of poetic composition and reception.

Even when an expression is so ancient that its figurative nature is no longer apparent to its users, its metaphorical nature is still easily retrieved.<sup>26</sup> The 'aliveness' of a metaphorical idiom to the speakers of a particular language is an interesting measure of this idiom's embeddedness in that society, but even 'dead' metaphors still constitute evidence for the patterns of conceptualization that have taken place in that culture.<sup>27</sup> It must be apparent by now that this whole investigation rests on my acceptance of the notion of linguistic and cultural relativity, that is, that "knowledge is obtained through

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<sup>26</sup> An exception to the general retrievability of dead metaphors is the perennially puzzling OE *garsecg* 'spear-man' for 'ocean'.

<sup>27</sup> Max Black calls this distinction between 'dead' and 'live' metaphors a "trite opposition", but I do not see that his proposed threefold scheme of 'extinct', 'dormant' and 'active' is *much* more useful, except perhaps tangentially, in that the thrill of taking a scholarly interest in metaphor is rather like that of living under a volcano. See Max Black, "More about metaphor", in Metaphor and thought, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge, 1979), 19-43 at p. 26.

culturally mediated conceptual schemes ... [which] are made up of folk and scientific theories, linguistic and cultural categories, and social practices which we acquire as a result of the trajectory of our life experience, situated in a particular culture, language, space, and time".<sup>28</sup> This is not to deny the existence of universals in human experience. Studies in cognitive science have begun to show that there are limits to the extent to which language can shape our understanding of reality, but it seems reasonable to assume that there is an interdependency between the two.<sup>29</sup> As Eve Sweetser points out, the fact that one culture might refer to the future as being in front while another refers to it as being behind does not mean that these two cultures experience time differently:

Languages can choose to lexicalize different ways of thinking about a domain such as time in spatial terms, but ... the possible repertory of time vocabularies is nonetheless limited and ... the limits are determined by the human perceptual system. The understanding that we have universal, perceptually determined possible options for spatializing time does not eliminate the possibility that strong lexicalization of one option could culturally influence thought patterns. But it does make it clear that the simple presence of divergent ways of talking about time in terms of space (where both ways represent "universal" options) is no argument for equivalent divergence in conceptual patterns.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the metaphor theory which this study adopts for the examination of the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind rests on an understanding of language as being primarily shaped by human cognition, and this necessarily places a limit on the variety of 'realities' that could be constructed. Nevertheless, the crosslinguistic differences that do exist reflect the varying adoption by cultures of certain conceptual possibilities over others.

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<sup>28</sup> William A. Foley, Anthropological linguistics: an introduction (Oxford, 1997), p. 169.

<sup>29</sup> The work done on colour perception and colour terminology by Berlin, Kay and others, for instance, has established that humans do see the colour spectrum in the same way, and that the differences in colour terminology across languages are relatively minor as compared to the similarities which do exist for all humans. See, however, remarks in my concluding chapter.

<sup>30</sup> Eve Sweetser, From etymology to pragmatics: metaphorical and cultural aspects of semantic structure (Cambridge, 1990), p. 7.



The fact that metaphorical language *does* pervade other languages is evidence for the theory that language is shaped by a universal, cognitive tendency to conceptualize reality in metaphorical ways. The psychologist Solomon E. Asch collected examples from seven languages (Old Testament Hebrew, Homeric Greek, Chinese, Thai, Malayalam, Hausa and Burmese) to show that all these languages contained terms which simultaneously describes both physical and psychological qualities; for example, in all seven languages the word for 'sweet' was also applied to the description of personalities with positive meaning.<sup>31</sup> Asch had tried to explain the presence of 'physical' words in psychological vocabulary by suggesting that we experience other people's personalities by their physical actions and behaviour: "The observer and observed are distinct systems between whom there is no psychological continuity; our knowledge of others is mediated by the physical energies that leave them and reach us".<sup>32</sup> But rather than place our faith in the actual existence of 'vibes', we can now see that the application of these metaphors as a natural phenomenon, interesting in its detail but not particularly unique against the web of metaphorical mappings by which we live. In countless instances across many languages, metaphor constitutes the only explanation of the form of a word. The German *Baumwolle* for cotton, for instance, refers to a metaphorical yoking of sheep with trees. The Chinese for 'computer' is *diàn nǎo* 'electric brain'. In the creole language of Papua New Guinea, Tok Pisin, the phrase for the tributary of a river or stream is *han wara* 'hand water', and the word for 'moustache or beard' is *mausgras* 'mouth-grass'.

In terms of 'embodied' meaning, Foley cites the interesting case of Copala Trique, a Mixtecan language of Mexico, in which many prepositional relations are expressed through

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<sup>31</sup> Solomon E. Asch, "The metaphor: a psychological inquiry", in Person perception and interpersonal behavior, ed. Renato Tagiuri and Luigi Petrullo (Stanford, California, 1958), 86-94.

<sup>32</sup> Asch, p. 91.

the use of body-part terms.<sup>33</sup> In Copala Trique, the notion of interiority is expressed with the word for stomach, so that, for instance, the sentence *John entered the church* is rendered:

katu<sup>5h</sup> gwa<sup>4</sup> rike<sup>3!</sup> nuwi<sup>4</sup> a<sup>32</sup>  
 entered John stomach of church DECL.

This metaphorical use of body parts is extended grammatically, so that even temporal and logical relations are expressed using them. The sentence *He will go within three days* again uses the word for stomach:

ka<sup>?</sup> an<sup>2h</sup> zo<sup>3?</sup> rike<sup>3!</sup> wa<sup>?</sup> nu<sup>1h</sup> gwi<sup>3</sup> a<sup>32</sup>  
 will go he stomach of three days DECL.

Note that the process of metaphorization here is not radically different from that in English. In English, the use of the preposition *in* with temporal statements such as *He will go within three days* shows the same extension of meaning from a spatial to a temporal dimension. The difference between English and Copala Trique is only that in Copala Trique, the prepositional notion of *in* is expressed as 'stomach'. In English we might employ a very similar metaphor (*she is deep in the bowels of the Robarts library*) but we have not grammaticalized this option or extended it to an idiomatic expression of time relations. The grammaticalization of body parts in Copala Trique constitutes rather powerful evidence for the idea that embodied experience contributes to, if not forms the basis of, the conceptualization of abstract things.

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<sup>33</sup> Foley, pp. 188-190. The work he cites is B. Hollenbach, "Semantic and syntactic extensions of Copala Trique body-part nouns", in Homenajea Jorge A. Suarez: Lingüística indoamericana e hispánica, ed. B. Cuarón and P. Levy (Mexico City, 1990), 275-296.

We do not have to look to exotic languages to see evidence of metaphorical influence in grammar. In my earlier discussion of the 'path' metaphor in Old English, I had omitted to mention that there were other uses of this metaphor which, used over and over, were rubbed smooth into the loose change of Anglo-Saxon grammatical currency. *Ealneweg* or *ealneg*, for instance, was the ancestor of our 'always'. The semantic train of thought seems to have been that, if one destination lay at the end of every path, then all paths *always* led to the same conclusion. Thus, Alfred words his kingly prohibition on the removal of the copies of the Hierdebooc (CPLetWærf 9.5):

Forðy ic wolde ðætte hie ealneg æt ðære stowe wæren, buton se biscep hie mid him habban wille oððe hio hwær to læne sie, oððe hwa oðre biwrite.

'Therefore I wish them always to remain in their place, unless the bishop wish to have them with him, or they be lent out anywhere, or anyone make a copy from them'.

In the glosses, *ealneweg* is tied to *iugiter*, which itself comes from *iugis*: the yoking together of successive moments to produce an eternity. As Sweetser observes, "the way in *anyway* and in Italian *tuttavia* historically comes from the physical domain. But logical structures and conversational structures are at least partly understood in terms of physical travelling and motion. An argument or a conversation follows or covers some particular path through the mental areas it traverses".<sup>34</sup>

The following chapters focus on the metaphors of the mind in the Old English language, in an attempt to discover something of the common sense psychology of the Anglo-Saxons. But I hope I have said enough to indicate the wider importance of metaphor in human cognitive processes. It remains to observe that it is not just ordinary language that metaphor pervades. It is widely accepted, in the wake of Thomas Kuhn's book, The structure of scientific revolutions, that most scientific theories have an implicit,

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<sup>34</sup> Sweetser, p. 46.

controlling metaphor or paradigm underlying their construction.<sup>35</sup> That metaphors control and constrain the direction and limits of people's thinking is well-known to those who try to debunk deeply held but mistaken assumptions about their field of study. In his exegesis of Darwin, the evolutionary scientist Stephen Jay Gould is concerned with, among other things, exploding the 'ladder' metaphor by which many lay people understand the evolution of *homo sapiens*. A ladder wrongly suggests progress, as though all history led up to the emergence of man on the top rung. As Gould writes: "Life is a copiously branching bush, continually pruned by the grim reaper of extinction, not a ladder of predictable progress. Most people know this as a phrase to be uttered, but not as a concept brought into the deep interior of understanding. Hence we continually make errors inspired by unconscious allegiance to the ladder of progress, even when we explicitly deny such a superannuated view of life".<sup>36</sup> With regard to role of metaphor in the understanding of electricity, the cognitive scientists Gentner and Gentner have conducted experiments to show that subjects will make different predictions about the resultant voltage of various wiring arrangements (serial versus parallel combinations of batteries and resistors) depending on whether they have been taught to understand electron flow as behaving like a fluid or like a moving crowd.<sup>37</sup> More pertinent to the subject of this thesis, Gentner and Grudin, in a retrospective survey of articles in the journal American psychologist, found that, through ninety years of academic writing on the mind, no fewer than 265 mental metaphors were resorted to: "The chief finding was that the nature of the mental metaphors changed over time. Spatial metaphors and animate-being metaphors predominated in the early stages, then declined in favor of

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, The structure of scientific revolutions, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1970); see also his article "Metaphor in science", in Ortony, 409-419.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, Wonderful life: the Burgess Shale and the nature of history (New York, 1989), p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Johnson, pp. 109-112.

systems metaphors, often taken from mathematics and the physical sciences".<sup>38</sup> And in the science of language, Saussure of course referred to a chessboard in his explication of the relation between synchronic and diachronic perspectives on language.<sup>39</sup> At any one point in a game, the relative positioning of chess pieces can be commented on without reference to past moves (synchrony), but for understanding how they got there the previous moves have to be known (diachrony). Roy Harris has pointed out the limitations of the chess metaphor for language, writing that the rules of chess are too rigidly fixed to be usefully analogous with those of language.<sup>40</sup>

The awareness that metaphors are but a way of thinking of things, yet that they are difficult to dispense with altogether, is something we find in the writings of medieval mystics. The figurative language which mystics use to describe union with God is intriguing by virtue of its attempt to describe the indescribable, yet occasionally we will find a writer rebelling against the constraints even of tropes. Here, the author of The cloud of unknowing points out the inadequacy of 'embodied' language (Ch. 57):

I graunte wel þat in oure bodely obseruance we schul lifte up oure iȝen & oure hondes ȝif we ben steryd in spirit. Bot I sey þat þe werke of oure spirit schal not be directe neiþer upwardes ne donwardes, ne on o syde ne on oþer, ne forward ne bacward, as it is of a bodely þing. For whi oure werke schuld be goostly, not bodely, ne on a bodely maner wrouȝt.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Dedre Gentner and Jonathan Grudin, "The evolution of mental metaphors in psychology: a 90-year retrospective", American psychologist 40 (1985), 181-192 at p. 181.

<sup>39</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in general linguistics, ed. by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (New York, 1959 [1915]), pp. 22-23, 88, 110.

<sup>40</sup> Roy Harris, "On redefining linguistics", in Redefining linguistics, ed. Hayley G. Davis and Talbot J. Taylor (London, 1990), 18-52 at p. 29. For the role of metaphor in historical linguistic theory, in particular the envisioning of the Great Vowel Shift, see Roger Lass, Historical linguistics and language change (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 32-42.

<sup>41</sup> Phyllis Hodgson (ed.), The cloud of unknowing and the book of privy counselling, Early English Text Society no. 218 (Oxford, 1958 [1944]).

Yet elsewhere he exhorts: *Pou maist lerne to lift up þe fote of þi loue* (Ch. 14).

Judging by their poetry and much of their prose, the Anglo-Saxons held the mind to be of central importance in their understanding of personal conduct and experience. They called this inner principle by various names. We can now understand that affixed forms such as *ingeþonc* and *ingehygd* incorporated into the word's structure the orientational metaphor by which the mind is seen as contained *inside* the body. Suffixes such as *-hord*, *-cofa* and *-loca* are also metaphors made morphological. In a compound such as *hordcofa* we can see the extent of the metaphor's potency: it became so habitual, at least in poetry, to refer to the mind as a treasure hoard or a chest that a compound with the literal meaning 'treasure chest' stands in for the mind with no need for a fixing element like *breost-* or *ferhþ-*.

The function of the metaphors of the mind in Old English was to provide the Anglo-Saxons with epistemic access to a domain of life which, though elusive and amorphous, was and is obviously central to human experience. That the Anglo-Saxons metaphorized the mind in so many ways is not an isolated phenomenon but merely one more piece in a growing body of evidence that this is a basic strategy of human cognition. The metaphors which we apply in order to make sense of the world around us emerge out of our continuous experience as physical beings, interacting with our environment. This does not mean that physical, concrete domains of experience take any kind of priority over abstract domains, merely that they are easier to talk and think about and that their terms are projectable onto less well-structured fields. Similarly, the fact that the abstract realms such as thought and emotion are largely conceived of in physical terms does not mean that they lack salience *prior* to being metaphorized. The metaphors help to structure the topic, but they never entirely represent it. For this reason, the speakers of a language are rarely content to structure a domain as compelling as that of emotion or of the mind with only one metaphor: they choose many, because each metaphor has a different function to fulfil. A metaphor is chosen for its ability to highlight particular aspects of

the concept in question. A multi-faceted concept requires a multiplicity of metaphors for its elucidation, and as we have seen, these metaphors overlap with each other to some degree because they each shadow a shape which will not show itself, but which is there nevertheless.

In the next chapter I present a survey of Anglo-Saxon metaphors of the mind. If we survey the various tropes which were pressed into service for conveying the realm of inner experience, we may go some way towards understanding what the Anglo-Saxons wanted to say about how they felt and thought.

### Chapter Three: The metaphors of the Anglo-Saxon mind

"May I be excused? My brain is full."

- Gary Larson, The Far Side

The work of this chapter is to survey the main metaphors which the Anglo-Saxons used to express mental experience, but since my stated object is to characterize Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology, it seems important that I should ask the question: to what extent does such a thing as the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind exist apart from that of any other culture? In Chapter One I observed a number of discrepancies between the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind and our own, namely that they located their minds in the chest, that *mod* encompassed both emotion and intellect, and that the psychological entity denoted by *mod* was distinguished from that denoted by *sawol* or *gast*. These three items of 'difference' are significant notions to guide our understanding of Anglo-Saxon mental life.<sup>1</sup> But what more can be said? And will the survey of mental metaphors that I make in this chapter reveal Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology as a distinct cultural artefact? A full answer to this must be postponed until the study of the Anglo-Saxon mind has matured as a field (and even then it will be a tough one) but for now, I wish to observe that this question is intimately related to that of language contact, which I had examined earlier in relation to lexical study. As will be evident in this and the next chapter, many

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<sup>1</sup> Rather, of the first two there can be little doubt, but of the third it may be wise to preserve some scepticism. As I observed in the first chapter, *mod* etc. is distinguished from *sawol* and *gast* rather consistently in the poetry, and Alfred's use of *mod* where normally *sawol* would have occurred marks his usage as idiosyncratic. As evidence for a real division in concepts, however, this linguistic patterning might be misleading. Churchgoers today habitually refer to their souls in relation to the afterlife, not the mind, but this does not mean that the ancient European division of soul from mind still operates. Rather, the choice of words depends on the perspective being taken by the speaker. Speech habits die hard, and it is just possible that in this matter Anglo-Saxon usage resembled ours more closely than we think.



of the metaphors used to express mental processes in Old English were used also in Latin, and because so much of the Old English that survives is in translation of or closely based upon Latin originals, we need to address the matter of whether to treat these metaphors as shared or derived.

The traditional response to this sort of similarity has been the 'sources and analogues' approach.<sup>2</sup> The cognitive theory of metaphor, however, allows us to see that the identification and treatment of sources must be informed by an understanding of how shared linguistic expressions may reflect cognition *ab initio*, and not only the flow of ideas between cultures. Because conceptualization follows certain patterns innate to the human mind, there must be many metaphors which are equally shared and originated by all the cultures which possess them.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, culture has its part to play. It is well to remember that our knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon culture and language is very much skewed by the conditions in which that knowledge comes down to us: a small number of written texts produced by a highly selected portion of society. As Patrick Conner has recently reminded us, this portion of society had an "intensely textual culture", and "the style of monasticism which contextualized much Old English writing demanded the kind of attention to texts which would have sharpened the individual's perception of thematic intersections among them".<sup>4</sup> In discovering the metaphors of the mind in Old English writings, one hears biblical and patristic echoes everywhere, and the fact must be acknowledged that language does not only reflect cognition but also cultural influence. The Old English language especially, as it has survived for us, reflected Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>2</sup> A good example is Peter Clemons's "Mens absentia cogitans in The seafarer and The wanderer", in Medieval literature and civilisation: studies in memory of G.N. Garmonsway, ed. D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron (London, 1969), 62-77, which I will discuss further in my final chapter.

<sup>3</sup> My use of the word *innate* is tentative: as I discuss briefly in Ch. 5 (note 72), the question of how the cognitive approach relates to matters of linguistic nativism has not yet been addressed.

<sup>4</sup> Conner, "Source studies", p. 381.

Christian adoptions of words, images and symbols, and some subtle sorting is in order. As I indicated in the last chapter (see note 23), the question of the extent to which metaphor in ordinary language is a matter of cognition or culture is being debated in the academic circles of anthropology and cognitive science. Even without the special problems faced by Anglo-Saxonists, it does not appear to me that a consensus will be easily reached in this dialogue. I will therefore confine myself to suggesting a number of methods for sorting the metaphors which I examine in this chapter.

As I observed in my first chapter, writers such as Alfred and Ælfric occasionally show a philosophical use of mental vocabulary which cannot really be called natively Anglo-Saxon. Nevertheless, as I went on to say, at many points in their writing they revert to an idiom for describing mental and emotional life which shares much in common with that found in poetry. It is always tempting to prioritize the evidence gleaned from Old English texts in the following order of 'native purity': verse, original prose and prose based on Latin. The divide between poetic and prosaic vocabulary, after all, is a real one which seems to reflect Anglo-Saxon feeling about the Germanic heritage and its accompanying modes of thought. But metaphors are more complex than words, and as much of what follows in this chapter will show, the divide between poetry and prose is never as wide, if it exists at all, with metaphors as it is with vocabulary.

In Kittay's definition of metaphor, "a unit of metaphor is any unit of discourse in which some conceptual or conversational incongruity emerges" (see Chapter Two, p. 52). She also asserts that "metaphors are sentences, not isolated words", but as my examination of Old English vocabulary has already shown, metaphors can be contained in units of language as small and basic as morphemes. Compounds such as *breostloca* and *heortscræf*, for instance, contain a conceptual incongruity at the morphological level. A metaphor such as 'mind as stronghold' manifests itself both at the levels of the morpheme (*-loca*) and the paragraph ([u] 397–409). Mark Johnson's notion of the non-propositional image schema implies that a single metaphor underlies all its various linguistic manifestations: one could perhaps posit from this a 'deep structure' of metaphor analogous to that

theorized by generative grammarians. The recognition that metaphors manifest themselves at various levels of language thus offers up another possible method of sorting them. Perhaps the ranking of metaphors for 'Anglo-Saxonness' could take place according to what levels they occur at: the morpheme, lexeme, sentence or paragraph. Here the archaeological model of strata is again useful, for the more basic the unit of language at which a metaphor occurs, perhaps the more deeply embedded in that culture. A metaphor which only exists at the level of the paragraph, for instance, might be judged to be relatively superficial to that culture.

Without taking the frequency of metaphors and their differentiated occurrence in prose and poetry into account, however, the results of such an approach would be inaccurate and misleading. The compound mentioned above, *heortscræf*, occurs only once and in 1Day II, which is a translation from Bede's De die iudicii. The line from the Latin poem which inspired the formation of *heortscræf* can be identified (19): *nec lateat quidquam culparum cordis in antro* 'and let not anything of the sins of the heart lie hidden in a cave'. *Heortscræf* is a characteristic Old English formation, but the metaphorization of the mind as a cave turns out to be a literary one derived from Latin. The case of *bealcettan* 'to belch' also furnishes an obvious example of how a metaphor which exists at the level of the word or sentence cannot be taken *prima facie* to be deeply culturally embedded. *Bealcettan* occurs with a mind-word as follows in PPs(prose) 44.1: *min heorte bealcet good word* 'my heart belches the good word'. The metaphorization of the application of learning as eructation is used also by Ælfric in ÆCHom II, 9 73.26: *he hlod ða mid þurstigum breoste ða flowendan lare. ðe he eft æfter fyrste mid hunigswette þrotan þæslice bealcette* 'then with a thirsty breast he drank up the flowing lore, which he then after a time belched forth suitably with a honey-sweet throat', in a passage derived from Paulus Diaconus.<sup>5</sup> Apart from this use by Ælfric, and one by Alfred in his

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<sup>5</sup> PAULDIAC.Vit.Greg. 2 *hauriebatque iam tunc sitibundo fluentia pectore doctrine, que post congruenti tempore mellito gutture eructaret* 'and then with a thirsty breast he drank up

translation of Boethius (Bo 22.51.5, in translation of BOETH.Cons.phil.pr. 3.1.3) all the other uses of *bealcan* or *bealcettan* in this sense are in psalter glosses, glossing *eructare*. This is, in fact, one of the clearest cases we have of a 'loan-metaphor', whose existence in the surviving corpus we can assume to have derived almost entirely from Latin, and which must probably be excluded from our account of Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology.

Frequency and whereabouts of occurrence (whether in an 'independent' text or one based on Latin) are important guides while sorting the Old English mental metaphors. There is also the consideration of the structure of a metaphor: how simple or complex. As I noted in the last chapter, there are orientational metaphors such as in-out and up-down which pervade the language of mental life through and through, and which form the very bedrock of mental metaphorization. It is possible to posit a rough hierarchy in the structure of metaphors, from the basic to the complex. Basic elements would consist of the projection of notions such as quantity, orientation or quality (texture or temperature, for instance); an intermediate level might consist of simple image schemata which incorporate two or more basic elements (e.g. the container metaphor, which incorporates both up-down and in-out); and finally, specific complex metaphors such as mind-as-body or mind-as-garden-plot. It might be possible to argue a direct correlation between the simplicity of metaphorical elements and their cultural embeddedness. But we must bear in mind that, by Mark Johnson's account of the operation of image schemata and experiential gestalts, it does not appear that we should think of cognition in such an atomistic manner. The cognition of experience is not organized as building blocks, but as whole patterns distilled from recurring experiences in life. Nevertheless, the metaphors of Anglo-Saxon mental life *can* be arranged in order of increasing complexity, and this is what I shall do, without implying anything about their order of priority in cognitive formation.

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the stream of teaching, which later at a suitable time he would belch forth with a honeyed throat'.

Ultimately, the best method for determining the existence of a uniquely Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology may be to do cross-linguistic comparisons of metaphors with the main contact and cognate languages of Old English, that is, Latin and Old Norse respectively. I will forbear for now addressing the question of the distinctness of Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology. It is, after all, a large, shadowy, subjective matter, and at this stage in the investigation of my topic, an 'answer' operates as well as an assumption.<sup>6</sup> The utility of surveying Old English mental metaphors lies both in the recognition that such a survey can be made at all, and in that the groundwork may be established for more detailed work on the linguistic expression of mental processes.

Many of the metaphors surveyed in this chapter had a wider role in Anglo-Saxon culture than that of structuring the concept of mind. The adjective *clæne* 'clean', for instance, denoted absolute purity and was important in the Old English religious idiom generally. Christ is *se clæna brydguma* 'the pure bridegroom', and Mary's womb is *clæne*. Heaven is *se clæna ham* (And 978) and the time of Lent is a *clæne tid* (ÆCHom II, 7 60.1). Biblical examples of this metaphorical use of cleanness abound,<sup>7</sup> and would have supplied a model for Anglo-Saxon writers. But that the notion of *clænes* as expressing an absolute state was rooted in the Old English *langue* is indicated by Alfred's use of adverbial *clæne* to express the completeness with which learning had declined in England (CPLetWærf 13): *swæ clæne hio wæs oðfeallenu* 'so completely was it declined'. Of the following survey, up-and-down, darkness-and-light and hot-and-cold were also metaphors with a general, pervasive presence in Anglo-Saxon conceptualization. In my next chapter I examine a single metaphor with a view to demonstrating how its importance in Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology derived from its wider significance in the culture.

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<sup>6</sup> In my concluding chapter I will make some remarks about the consequences of assuming a distinct Anglo-Saxon concept of mind.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Io 13.11 *sciebat enim quisnam esset qui traderet eum propterea dixit non estis mundi omnes* 'for he knew who he was that would betray him: therefore he said: you are not all clean'.

What follows here is a brief, experimental sketch of the main mental metaphors. As Kittay observes, the interplay between the two components of a metaphor can be said to be an interplay of semantic fields. I will attempt to illustrate, with each of the metaphors that follows, the structure of the semantic field which results from the interplay of source and target domains. In places, where the metaphor in question is illustrated with a citation which derives from a close Latin source, I cite the Latin in a footnote, but I only include this evidence where the metaphor is frequent and widespread in the corpus, so that we can take its presence in Old English as indigenous. The most obvious biblical parallels are likewise cited in footnotes. But because the two languages were so much in contact, and the religious idiom of such great importance culturally, it is futile to attempt a sharp separation of 'native' from 'loan'.

#### In and out

For the imagining of mental activity, 'in' is without doubt the most fundamental orientational metaphor, locating everything the mind does within its confines. The importance of this metaphor for the portrayal of mental experience may be a cultural and linguistic universal. Many of the metaphors examined later in this chapter depend on the projection of in-out relations onto the mind.

The most simple use of 'in' is to specify the place where mental and emotional processes take place; witness the number of mental terms prefixed by *in-*, such as *ingeþonc*, *ingehygd* and so on. Thinking, imagining and remembering all take place in the mind:

Dan 624 *gemunde þa on mode þæt metod wære, heofona heahcýning, hæleða bearnum ana ece gast* 'then he remembered in his mind that the Creator, high king of the heavens, was for the children of men the only eternal spirit'.

Beo 179 *helle gemundon in modsefan* 'they considered hell in their minds'.

Sat 22 *ðuhte him on mode þæt hit mihte swa, þæt hie weron seolfe swegles brytan* 'they thought in their mind that it might be so, that they themselves could be the rulers of heaven'.

Wan 41 *þinceð him on mode þæt he his mondryhten clyppe ond cysse* 'he thinks in his mind that he embraces and kisses his lord'.

The interiority of these processes means that they can be hidden from the sight of others:

GuthA 465 *fela ge fore monnum miþað þæs þe ge in mode gehycgað* 'there are many things you hide before men which you think in your mind'.

Emotions also take place in the mind:

HomFr 1 15 *wea bið in mode, siofa synnum fah* 'misery is in the mind, the mind stained with sins'.

GuthA 386 *ne sceal se dryhtnes þeow in his modsefan mare gelufian eorþan æhtwelan þonne his anes gemet* 'the servant of the Lord should not love the wealth of the earth in his mind more than his own measure'.

GenB 733 *swa þu his sorge ne þearft beran on þinum breostum ... murnan on mode* 'so you need not bear the misery of it in your breast ... grieve in your mind'.

GenA 2261 *ða wearð unbliðe Abrahames cwen, hire worcþeowe wrað on mode* 'then Abraham's woman became unhappy, wrathful in mind with her servant'.

These emotions can be habitual qualities of character or immediate responses to particular situations, but in either case the 'in' relation is expressed as a dative of place.

The in-out relations of the mind can be said to possess a temporal aspect. This is most clear when an idea or a power is portrayed as being sent into the mind, with an accusative of motion towards or into, by an external agent, usually God:

Dan 484 *forþam ælmihtig eacenne gast in sefan sende, snyttro cræftas* 'for the Almighty sent an ample spirit and wise skills into his mind'.

Beo 1841 *þe þa wordcwidas wigtig dryhten on sefan sende* 'the wise Lord sent those words into your mind'.

ChristB 487 *sibbe sawað on sefan manna þurh mehta sped* 'sow peace in men's minds through the abundance of your powers'.

GuthA 473 *sealde him snyttru on sefan gehygdum, mægenfæste gemynd* 'He gave him wisdom in the thoughts of his mind, a strong purpose'.

The onset of certain mental experiences is portrayed as infusions into the mind.

Likewise, the conclusion of particular emotions is seen as expulsion:

GenA 1114 *and me cearsorge mid þys magotimbre of mode asceaf þeoden usser* 'and our Lord expelled unhappiness from my mind with this child'.

In the above citation, God relieves distress by putting sorrow and anxiety *out* of the mind, thereby restoring happiness and spiritual well-being.

The interiority of mental experience meant that if all was well with someone, they were assumed to be *in* their right mind. Like us, the Anglo-Saxons went 'out of their minds' when they went crazy, when the mental space was no longer inhabited by its proper principle. If the devil unseated or obsessed one, it was a kind of knocking out of the self from a limited space:

LS 10.1 (Guth) 12.2 *se awyrgeda gast him on eode, þæt he of his gewitte wearð* 'the cursed spirit went into him, so that he went out of his mind'.<sup>8</sup>

LS 13 (Machutus) 16r.4 *sum cild wæs þæt se unrihtwisa deofol ofsæt & þurh fif geara rynu wæs of his gemynde* 'there was a certain child that the unrighteous devil obsessed, and through a period of five years he was out of his mind'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The idea of being out of one's mind is reflected in Lat. *dementia*. Cf. FELIX.Vit.Guth. 41, 126 *in tantum autem inmensa dementia vexabatur ita ut membra sua propria ligno, ferro, unguibus dentibusque, prout potuit, laniaret* 'so greatly indeed was he disturbed by immense dementia, such that he would lacerate his own limbs with wood, iron, nails and teeth, as much as he could'.

<sup>9</sup> BILL.Vit.Mach.: *quidam puer erat quem iniquus demon obsiderat* 'there was a certain boy whom the malignant devil obsessed'.



Conf 5 (Mone) 130 *gyf hwylc man on his geðohtum oððe of his gewitte feole* 'if a man should have fallen out of his wit or in his thoughts'.

Lch II (2) 64.1.10: *gif mon eac of his gewitte weorþe* 'if a man also goes out of his mind'.

In normal circumstances, therefore, the inwardness of mental activity was a guarantee of the sincerity of a sound mind:

HomS 1(ScraggVerc 5) 94 *þæt we mid inneweardre heortan & mid eaðmodre in God gelyfen* 'that we believe in God with inward heart and with humility'.

ÆCHom I, 36 495.284 *ac uton biddan mid inweardre heortan þone ælmihtigan wealdend* 'but let us pray with an inward heart to the almighty Ruler'.

LS 34 (SevenSleepers) 741 *we wuldriað þe inweardre heortan* 'we glorify thee with inward heart'.

The pervasiveness of this metaphor may be seen by how it underlies so many of the other metaphors examined in the rest of this chapter.

### Up and Down

The importance of this orientational metaphor in present day English has already been noted, with particular reference to how up-and-down provides a scale or gradient for so many other concepts, for instance quantity, happiness, morality, social status and health. In Old English, the range of concepts expressed in terms of up-down relations appears to be relatively smaller. The most important use of 'up' is in describing the position of God and heaven in relation to earthly existence.<sup>10</sup> The use of up-down relations in the expression of moral and emotional well-being in Old English is, as we shall see, slightly different in emphasis from that in present-day English.

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<sup>10</sup> Related to this are explanations of why man walks erect: see ÆLS (Christmas) 57-61 (cf. ISID.Etym. 11.1.5); Met 31.16-23 and Bo 41.147.9 (cf. BOETH.Cons.Phil.metr. 5.13-15).

This equation of 'unhappy' with 'down' in Old English is implicit in those expressions picturing unhappiness as a weight pulling downwards:

GuthB 1007 *fonde þa his mondryhten adlwerigne; him ðæt in gefeol hefig æt heortan* 'he found then his lord, disease-weary; it fell within him heavy at heart'.

GuthB 1060 *ongeat gæsta halig geomormodes drusendne hyge* 'the saintly spirit understood the drooping mind of the grieving one'.

Specific causes for unhappiness act as a drag on the mind, pulling it downwards:

GenA 979 *þæt wæs torn were hefig æt heortan* 'that was an affliction to the man, heavy at heart'.

Solil 1 26.11 *ac seo tweonung wyrcað þa hefinesse* 'but doubt produces heaviness'.

The adjective *hefigmod* appears to mean 'oppressive' or 'troublesome'. It glosses *molestus* in a number of psalter glosses (DEGHJ) with this meaning:

PsGlE (Harsley) 54.4 *in ira molesti erant michi on erra hefigmode hy weron me* 'in wrath they were troublesome to me'.

*Hefigmod* also means 'heavy-hearted' or 'sad':<sup>11</sup>

ÆHom 11 558 *ælc man mæg ðær geseon oðres mannes geðoht, ne him næfre ne hingrað, ne hefigmod ne bið* 'each man may there see the thought of another, he is never hungry, nor heavy-hearted'.

The simple equation between 'down' and 'unhappy' is thus clear in Old English. 'Up', however, does not generally correspond with 'happiness'. Frequently, the raising up of a mind denoted arrogance, in the sense we now express as *high and mighty*:

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<sup>11</sup> See A. S. Napier, "Contributions to Old English lexicography", Transactions of the philological society (1903-1906), 265-385; s.v. *hefigmod*.

GenA 2237 *hire mod astah þa heo wæs magotimbre be Abrahame eacen worden* 'her mind rose up when she was made pregnant with a son by Abraham'.

Dan 596 *ac his mod astah, heah fram heortan* 'but his mind rose up, high from his heart'.

And 1317 *hwæt is wuldor þin, þe ðu oferhigdum upp arærdest, þa ðu goda ussa gild gehnægdest?* 'what is your glory which you raise up with arrogant thoughts, when you humbled the worship of our gods?'

LS 34 (SevenSleepers) 24 *he ða his heortan hof swa upp ofer his mæðe, swilce he God wære* 'he then raised up his heart over his proper measure, as though he were God'.<sup>12</sup>

PPs 130.1 *nis min heorte wið þe ahafen, drihten, ne mine eagan wið þe on oferhygde* 'my heart is not raised up against you, Lord, nor my eyes in pride'.<sup>13</sup>

CP 38.271.24 *ðeah sio tunge eaðmodlice licge, ðæt mod bið suiðe upahafen* 'though the tongue lies humbly, the mind is most exalted'.

The use of up-and-down in the conceptualization of arrogance and humility is illustrated by the fact that the words for these two concepts are, respectively, *eaðmod* and *ofermod*. This relation corresponds to *humilitas* and *superbia* in Latin, but is less transparent to us in present-day English because the words in this semantic field tend to be morphologically opaque loanwords such as *humility*, *pride*, *arrogance*. Presumably, the cultural value placed on preserving a humble mien before God meant that a mind that was 'up' meant 'arrogant' before it meant 'happy'. Nevertheless, when transported by a seemingly spiritual ecstasy, the movement of the mind was upwards towards God:

Phoen 111 *sippan hine sylfne æfter sundplegan heahmod hefeð on heanne beam* 'then after splashing himself in the water, he flies up, exalted in mind, into a tall tree'.

ÆCHom I, 40 527.83 *we ahebbað ure heafda þonne ure mod arærað to gefean þæs heofonlican eðles* 'we lift our heads when we lift up our mind to the joy of the heavenly kingdom'.

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<sup>12</sup> Sept.dorm. 8 *exaltatum est cor eius* 'his heart was raised up'.

<sup>13</sup> Roman Ps *Domine non est exaltatum cor meum neque elati sunt oculi mei* 'Lord, my heart is not exalted: nor are my eyes lofty'.

ÆHomM 1(Bel 9) 1 a la, gebroðræ, aræreð eowre heorte to ðam heofenlice Gode mid soðe ileafe for ðisse halgæ dæge 'lo, brethren, lift up your hearts to the heavenly God with true faith for this holy day'.

Bo 36.104.29 ac ic sceal ærest ðin mod gefeðeran, ðæt hit mæge hit ðe yð up ahebban ær ðon hit fleogan onginne on ða heanesse 'but I shall first feather your mind, that it may easily lift you up before it begins to fly into that high place'.<sup>14</sup>

Hell, on the other hand, was downwards, and the following citation nicely illustrates how a mind raised up in pride is liable to fall all the way down:

Vain 52 se þe hine sylfne in þa sliþnan tid þurh oferhygða up ahlæneð, ahefeð heahmodne, se sceal hean wesan æfter neosiþum niþer gebiged, wunian witum fæst, wrymum beþrunge 'the one who sets himself up in that dire time through arrogance and exalts himself, high-minded, he shall be bent downwards after death, to dwell bound with torments, surrounded by serpents'.

A rather curious example of the 'up' metaphor is the following citation:

LS 34 (Seven Sleepers) 554 gewislice ic her ongyten hæbbe þæt me hæfð gelæht fæste mines modes oferstige 'certainly I have here perceived that the astonishment of my mind has seized me fast'.

BT, Clark Hall and the text's most recent editor, Hugh Magennis, all concur in offering the gloss 'astonishment' for *oferstige*, though the translation provided in Skeat's edition has 'over anxiety'. The Latin source has an 'out' metaphor in *excessus mentis* (Sept.dorm. 248).<sup>15</sup> Some light may be shed on the metaphor underlying *oferstige* 'astonishment' by referring to the use of the verb *oferstigan* in the following citation:

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<sup>14</sup> BOETH.Cons.phil.pr. 4.1.9 *pennas etiam tuae menti quibus se in altum tollere possit adfigam* 'and I will also fasten wings on your mind by which it will be able to lift itself on high'.

<sup>15</sup> See Hugh Magennis (ed.), The seven sleepers (Durham, 1994), glossary on pp. 92-128, s.v. *oferstige*. Magennis translates the *excessus mentis* of the Latin source as 'a trance of the mind' (p. 85). The translation in Skeat's edition was provided by the Misses Gunning and Wilkinson, of Cambridge and Dorking respectively (see Skeat's prefatory note, vii).

ÆLS (Christmas) 19 *gif hwylc gedwola oððe awoffod man wyle furðor smeagen and þæt anginn oferstigan mid dysilicere dyrstignesse þonne bið he þam men gelic þe arærð sume heage hlæddre and stihð be þære hlæddre stapum oðþæt he to ðæm ænde becume and wylle þonne git stigan ufor astihð þonne buton stapum oð þæt he stedeleas fylþ mid mycclum wyrstan fylla swa he furðor stah* 'if any heretic or arrogant man wishes to enquire further and to go beyond the beginning with foolish presumption, then he is like that man who erects a high ladder and climbs up by the steps of the ladder until he comes to the end, and he wishes then to climb yet further; he climbs then without steps until he falls without a standing place, with a much greater fall as he climbed further'.

Here, the presumption of overstepping one's bounds is explained graphically, and the image agrees with the equation of 'up' with 'arrogance' which we have found in the other citations examined in this section. But the shock of finding oneself without a leg to stand on (or a rung?) perhaps explains the meaning 'astonishment' conveyed by *oferstige* in LS 34 (Seven Sleepers).

#### Light and darkness

The diurnal rhythm is naturally the basis of the metaphorical opposition between light and darkness, which is also experientially correlated with the oppositions of warmth and cold, security and fear. The cultural importance of this metaphor cannot be overstated. In a Christian context, light and darkness symbolize salvation and damnation, and that God is light is shown by the hyperbole of Sol II 57: *his heorte is xii ðusendum siða beorhtre ðonne ealle ðas seofon heofonas* 'his heart is twelve thousand times brighter than all the seven heavens'. There is also an inextricable link with the metaphorical structuring of the concept 'knowledge'. The faculty of sight is the most important sense faculty for the gathering and verifying of concrete facts, and sight is a fundamental metaphor in the conceptualization of 'knowledge'.<sup>16</sup> Since seeing is dependent on the presence of light, the oppositions light-darkness and sight-blindness are linked.

In the expression of emotion, the darkening of the mind denoted unhappiness:

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<sup>16</sup> Sweetser, From etymology to pragmatics, p. 33.

Deor 28 *sited sorgcearig, sælum bidæled, on sefan sweorceð* 'he sits sorrowful, cut off from joys; it grows dark in his mind'.

GuthB 1052 *hreþer innan swearc, hyge hreowcearig* 'his breast darkened within, the troubled mind'.

Beo 2331 *breost innan weoll þeostrum geþoncum* 'his breast churned within with dark thoughts'.

Jud 267 *beornas stodon ymbe hyra þeodnes træf þearle gebylde sweorcendferhð* 'the men stood around their lord's tent, mightily roused, their mind darkening'.

These express the simple emotion of unhappiness, but the antonymic counterpart of the darkening mind almost always expresses a religious enlightenment. The symbolic importance of light in the Christian faith is reinforced by the fact that since salvation depends on the mind's reception of the Word and its teaching, the notion of spiritual light is never far removed from the notion of intellectual enlightenment.<sup>17</sup>

Prec 92 *ac beo leofwende, leoht on gehygdum ber breostcofan* 'but be kind, carry light in the thoughts of your heart'.

And 1251 *him wæs leoht sefa, halig heortan neh, hige untyddre* 'the saintly mind was light about his heart, his purpose firm'.

El 173 *him wæs leoht sefa, ferhð gefeonde, þeah hira fea wæron* 'though there were few of them their mind was light, their spirit glad'.<sup>18</sup>

Fates 52 *þær manegum wearð mod onlihted* 'there for many was the mind enlightened'.

ÆCHom I, 39 523.92 *seo soþe sib aflight ungebwærnyse & þæs modes digelnyse onliht* 'the true peace puts discord to flight and enlightens the obscurity of the mind'.

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<sup>17</sup> For instance, Rom 1:21 *sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum* 'but they became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened'; Eph 4:18 *tenebris obscuratum habentes intellectum alienati a vita Dei per ignorantiam quae est in illis propter caecitatem cordis ipsorum* 'having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts'.

<sup>18</sup> As in present day English, 'light' the antonym of 'dark' and 'light' the antonym of 'heavy' are indistinguishable in form, both being *leoht*. It is therefore ambiguous which is meant in citations such as these, but both *leoht* 'buoyant' and *leoht* 'bright' have the same positive value on scales of happiness and well-being.

ÆCHom I, 10 260.48 *nu hæbbe we þæt leoht on urum mode þæt is Cristes geleafa* 'now we have that light in our mind, that is Christ's faith'.

Spiritual illumination is often expressed in tandem with spiritual sight, which I discuss in more detail in the section on metaphors of sense perception, but the following examples are typical, showing that the darkness of the mind is a spiritual lack:

ÆCHom I, 35 482.182 *ða inran þeostra sind þære heortan blindnyss* 'the inner darkness is the blindness of the heart'.

ÆCHom II, 26 216.82 *þa sind blinde þe þæt leoht ðæs larlican andgites nabbað* 'they are blind, who do not have the light of doctrinal knowledge'.

I have outlined a few ways in which light was important as a metaphor by which the Anglo-Saxons lived, but ultimately, as I argued in Chapter Two, the force of a metaphor is irreducible and non-propositional, and this is nowhere more true than in relation to the metaphors of light and darkness.

### Contraction and expansion

The Anglo-Saxons pictured the mind expanding and contracting. This could be used to express simple emotion, with unhappiness as a contraction of the mind and joy as an expansion.<sup>19</sup> Apart from emotion, however, morality and intelligence were also portrayed using the opposition between space and confinement.

The spiritual ease which comes through faith in God is frequently portrayed as an expansion of the mind. At points of crisis or need, God works an expansion or relaxation of the mind:

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<sup>19</sup> Augustine wrote, "Our affections are motions of souls. Joy is the extending of the soul; sadness the contraction of the soul". (*Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV*, 46.8; quoted in Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's philosophy of mind* [London, 1987], p. 48).

GenB 758 *forþon is min mod gehæled, hyge ymb heortan gerume* 'therefore is my mind healed, the mind spacious about my heart'.

Iud 97 *þa wearð hyre rume on mode, haligre hyht geniwod* 'then hope was renewed in the holy one, it became in her spacious in mind'.

By contrast, a cramped mind is an unhappy one. The *nearusorg* of EI 1260 is a sorrow which constricts. The oppression of the mind in narrow straits is often depicted as a binding up with fetters of sorrow:

GenA 2196 *ne læt þu þin ferhð wesan sorgum asæled* 'do not allow your mind to be bound up with sorrows'.

GuthB 1011 *hu gewearð þe þus ... ferð gebysgad, nearwe genæged?* 'how has it come about that you are thus ... afflicted in spirit, narrowly oppressed?'

Deor 24 *sæt secg monig sorgum gebunden* 'many a man sat bound with sorrows'.

Met 5.38 *forðæm simle bið se modsefa miclum gebunden mid gedrefnesse* 'for always the mind is much bound with anxiety'.

Met 26.95 *hæfde anra gehwylc his agen mod, þæt wæs þeah swiðe sorgum gebunden for ðæm earfoðum þe him on sæton* 'each one had his own mind, which was however very much bound with sorrows on account of the torments which oppressed him'.

The adjective *angmod* meant 'anxious, uneasy, sad', and was derived from *enge* 'narrow, straitened' (see also *angsum*, *angsumlic* etc.):<sup>20</sup>

LS 34 (SevenSleepers) 220 *ða þa hi ealle ætgædre comon ... ða wurdon heora eagan afyllede mid tearum and angmode geomrodon ealle heora heortan* 'then when they all came together ... then their eyes were filled with tears and all their hearts mourned, anxious'.

HomU 32 (Nap 40) 110 *in toða gristbitum and in tintregum, in angmodnysse earmra sawla* 'in the gnashing of teeth and in torments, in the sadness of wretched souls'.

From a moral perspective, the mind's roominess denoted generosity or largesse:

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<sup>20</sup> Lat. *anxietas* from *angustus* 'narrow' is exactly analogous.



Alms 1 *wel biþ þam eorle þe him on innan hafað, reþehygdig wer, rume heortan* 'well it is for the one, a right-minded man, who has within him a roomy heart'.

HomU 9 (ScraggVerc 4) 106 *ða ðe her rumheortlice hyra ælmessan for hyra scyldum on Godes naman dælað, þam sylð God hyra synna forgifnesse* 'those who generously give here their alms for their sins in God's name, God gives them forgiveness of their sins'.

Max I 84 *ond wif geþeon leof mid hyre leodum, leohtmod wesan, rune healdan, rumheort beon mearum ond maþmum* 'and a woman should perform as one loved among her people, be light-hearted, preserve confidences, be generous with horses and treasure'.

The qualities of character opposite to generosity and largeness of spirit were denoted by words such as *nearþanc* and *nearþancnes*, which both glossed *nequitia* 'wickedness'.

The spaciousness of a mind could imply the intelligence of a far-sighted person:

Beo 277 *ic þæs Hroðgar mæg þurh rumne sefan ræd gelæran* 'in this matter I can give Hrothgar counsel through a spacious mind'.

By contrast, a mind that was narrow was not in full command. Drunkenness is twice described as a narrowing of the mind in GenA:

GenA 1570 *swiðe on slæpe sefa nearwode þæt he ne mihte on gemynd drepen hine handum self mid hrægle wryon* 'the mind narrowed so much in sleep that he could not in his stricken mind cover himself with a cloth using his hands'.

GenA 2604 *on ferhðcofan fæste gearwod mode and gemynde, þæt he mægða sið wine druncen gewitan ne meahte* 'he was so narrowed in his heart, mind and memory that, drunk with wine, he was not able to perceive the approach of the maidens'.

It is perhaps this relation between a *rumemod* and a wise one which is illustrated by the fact that Eve's temptation of Adam includes the promise that his heart will feel pleasantly spacious when he eats the fruit of the tree of knowledge:

GenB 519 *þe weorð on þinum breostum rum, wæstm þy wlitegra* 'it will become spacious within your breast, (there will be) a form the more beautiful'.<sup>21</sup>

The mind's roominess here perhaps denotes the wide-ranging power of knowledge.

Something of this link between expansion and mental prowess is also present in

Cynewulf's account of his salvation at the end of Elene, where the infusion of the divine gifts of poetic inspiration is imagined as a process of unbinding and unlocking:

gife unscynde  
mægencyning amæt ond on gemynd begeat,  
torht ontynde, tidum gerymde,  
bancofan onband, breostlocan onwand,  
leoðucræft onleac.

(E1 1246-50)

'The mighty King granted and infused into my mind flawless grace, and at times enlarged it, revealed his glory, unbound my body and unwound the stronghold of my breast, unlocked the craft of song'.

In his translation of GenB 519, Bradley glosses *rum* as 'untrammelled', which nicely evokes the sense of unimpededness which *rum* expresses with relation to the mind's power.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Doane suggests that *rum* in this line refers to "the intoxication Adam would feel were he to eat the fruit" (A. N. Doane [ed.], The Saxon Genesis [Madison, Wisconsin, 1991], glossary to Genesis B, pp. 359-397, s.v. *rum*).

<sup>22</sup> Robert E. Kaske has written of the *rume mod* in "Sapientia et fortitudo in the Old English Judith", in The wisdom of poetry: essays in early English literature in honor of Morton W. Bloomfield, ed. Larry D. Benson and Siegfried Wenzel (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1982), 13-29. Kaske points to the link between a spacious mind and wisdom made by Ambrose in his commentary on Ps 118.32 *viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum* 'I have run the way of your commandments, when you have widened my heart'. Ambrose comments (AMBR.Expos.psalms.cxxviii 4.27, 80): *non igitur in viis, sed in cordis latitudine sapientia decantatur. In hoc igitur campo interioris hominis, non in angustiis mentis currendum nobis est, ut comprehendamus* 'wisdom, then, is praised not in the narrow ways but in the breadth of the heart. Therefore, we are to run on this plain of the inner man, not in the narrow places of the mind, in order that we may understand'.

### Unity and divisibility

The notion of quantity, by which the mind is endowed with physical size, was one of the most simple mappings to take place from the physical domain to the mental. Size is correlated with power, and as we saw with up and down, the Anglo-Saxons felt strongly that the individual mind should remain at an appropriate size (and height), or become dangerously liable to the sin of pride. The notion of quantity as applied to the mind also meant that the mind was seen as a unit or a bounded object, capable of division into smaller parts.

The intensity of the mind in relation to action was expressed as a function of size:

Mald 313 *mod sceal þe mare* 'mind shall be the greater'.

The mind is a measurable thing, so that adjectives of dimension may be applied to it:

E1 375 *þæt me ondsware þurh sidne sefan secgan cunnen* 'that can tell me the answer through a broad mind'.

Yet, too large an increase in the quantity of *mod* was equated with arrogance:

Dan 490 *wearð him hyrra hyge and on heortan geðanc mara on modsefan þonne gemet wære* 'there grew in him a higher mind and the thought in his heart, in his mind, was greater than was fitting'.

The adjective *gemet* implies its homonym, the noun meaning 'measure, capacity' or 'limit, moderation'. This notion of an appropriate limit or size for the mind may be seen to underlie the form of the Old English words for arrogance or pride, *ofermod*, *oferhygd* and *ofermetto*.

Wholeness of heart or mind expressed sincerity and unwavering purpose. To act or think with *all* one's heart was a sign of earnestness:

ÆHom 2 143 *wurðige þone ælmihtigan Drihten mid ealre þinre heortan* 'worship the almighty Lord with all your heart'.

This wholeness of purpose was also expressed as unity:<sup>23</sup>

ÆCHom I, 7 240.255 *we sceolon þurh gehyrsumnysse & forhæfednysse & eadmodnysse anmodlice to urum eþele stæppan* 'we should through obedience and temperance and humility advance single-mindedly to our homeland'.

Beo 1529 *eft wæs anræd, nalas elnes læt* 'even then he was single-minded, and not at all slow of courage'.

GuthB 976 *ða wæs Guðlace on þa geocran tid mægen gemeðgad, mod swiþe heard, elnes anhydig* 'then in that bitter time was the strength diminished in Guthlac, his mind most firm, single-minded of courage'.

Sometimes, oneness of mind could suggest an intractability which could admit of no two ways of thinking:

Dan 224 *þa wearð yrre anmod cyning* 'then the stubborn king became angry'.

The unity of the mind thus expresses firmness of purpose. The opposite of this was a divided mind, as found in Alfred's translations of Gregory:

CP 4.37.13 *suiðe oft gedrefeð ða heortan sio manigfealde giemen ðæs underfangenan lareowdomes, & ðonne ðæt mod bið on monig todæled, hit bið on anes hwæm ðe unfæstre, & eac ðe unnyttre* 'very often the manifold care of teaching when undertaken disturbs the

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<sup>23</sup> Both BT and DOE distinguish between *anmod* 'resolute, steadfast' and *ánmod* 'of one mind, unanimous'. Clark Hall, however, includes both senses under *ánmod*. The DOE comments, under the entry for *anmod* that "except when spelled *on-*, this word is not distinguishable from *ánmod* 'of one mind'". Given that *ánræd* is defined with both senses, 'unanimous' and 'constant, resolute, steadfast', and that *ánhydig* 'resolute, steadfast' is also prefixed with *án* 'one', I am inclined to believe that *anmod* and *ánmod* were sometimes indistinguishable in both sense and form, that is, either they were not always regarded as separate words or *ánmod* was polysemous in the same manner as *ánræd*. I do not distinguish between the two forms here.

heart, and then the mind is divided into many parts, and it is on each one the less firm and also the less useful'.<sup>24</sup>

GD 1(C) 4.41.12 & þonne hit þæt mod byð todæled to manegum wisum, hit byð þy medmare to hwylcum synderlicum þingum 'and when the mind is divided in many ways, it is the smaller for each separate thing'.<sup>25</sup>

The Old English word for doubt was *tweo* or *tweonung*, which suggested a mind divided in two, and undecided as to which side was right.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, agreement among several individuals was expressed as unanimity:

ÆCHom I, 22 357.75 & wearð eall seo geleafulle meniu swa anmod swilce hi ealle hæfdon ane heortan & ane sawle ne heora nan næfde synderlice æhta 'and all the faithful company became so much of one mind, as though they all had one heart and one soul and no one had separate possessions'.

ÆCHom I, 37 504.204 þa geseah se cyning þæt hi anmode wæron & neadunga þone witegan him to handum asceaf 'then the king saw that they were all of one mind, and he forcibly expelled the prophet into their hands'.

On the other hand, discord and dissimilarity is depicted as a division of minds:

Vain 21 swa beoþ modsefan dalum gedæled, sindon dryhtguman ungelice 'thus are minds divided into parts; men are unlike'.

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<sup>24</sup> GREG.MAG.Reg.past. 1.4.5 *dum confusa mente dividitur ad multa* 'while with a confused mind it is divided among many things'.

<sup>25</sup> GREG.MAG.Dial. 1.4.19 *cumque animus diuiditur ad multa, fit minor ad singula* 'and when the mind is divided among many things, it is made the smaller for each one'.

<sup>26</sup> Holthausen glosses *tweo* as "Zweifel, Unsicherheit", related to Sanskrit *dvika-* which he glosses as "aus zwei bestehend" (F. Holthausen, Altenglisches etymologisches Wörterbuch [Heidelberg, 1963]). This notion of the divided mind may be seen also in Lat. *dubito* 'to doubt' and its derivatives.

### The mind as moveable object

The conceptualization of the mind as a bounded object against a background structured by such orientational concepts as up and down means that the mind is often metaphorized as moving in relation to fixed reference points (such as God). Changes in direction are especially significant, denoting fickleness or weakness of will. The 'path' metaphor, examined in the last chapter, underlies these figures, since travelling without pause in one direction is the way to reach one's destination.

The turning of the mind could express, neutrally, the natural meanderings of human thought:

*Wan* 70 *beorn sceal gebidan, þonne he beot spricedð, oþþæt collenferð cunne gearwe hwider hreþra gehygd hweorfan wille* 'the man must wait, whenever he makes a vow, until the strong-minded one knows precisely where the thoughts of his heart will turn'.

More frequently, the changeability of the mind's direction denoted a lack of resolution.

The mind, in turning, loses its way and is deflected from its original purpose:

*GenB* 715 *oþþæt Adame innan breostum his hyge hwyrfde and his heorte ongann wendan to hire willan* 'until Adam's mind turned within his breast and his heart began to wend to her will'.

*IuI* 362 *þus ic soðfæstum þurh mislic bleo mod oncyrrre* 'thus I, in a shifting shape, turn the mind of the one fast in truth'.

*HomM 11(ScraggVerc 14)* 96 *þe læs us sio idle blis bysse worlde ure mod beswice & acyrrre fram þam godcundan rihte* 'lest the vain pleasure of this world seduce our mind and turn it from the divine right'.

Often, in saints' lives especially, a strong resolve is expressed as an unwillingness to be deflected:

*IuI* 138 *þu næfre gedest þurh gedwolan þinne þæt þu mec acyrrre from Cristes lofe* 'you will never bring it about through your heresy that you turn me from the praise of Christ'.

JuI 225 *ða þam folctogan fracuðlic þuhte þæt he ne meahste mod oncyrran, fæmnan foreþonc* 'then it seemed shameful to the chieftain that he could not turn the mind, the deliberation of the woman'.

GuthA 365 *ne lete him ealdfeond eft oncyrran mod from his meotude* 'nor allows the ancient enemy to turn his mind from his Maker'.

In the following citation, Alfred's phrase *hwurfulu mod* denotes elusively fickle minds, but the turning motion implied by the adjective plays no other part in the image:

CP 35.245.7 *hwæt getacniað ðonne ða truman ceastra butan hwurfulu mod, getrymedu & ymbtrymedu mid lytelicre ladunge* 'what betokens then the fortified town but fickle minds, strengthened and protected with a deceitful excuse'.<sup>27</sup>

The tendency of the mind to move in directions other than the desired one meant that the notion of steering or controlling came into play:

Sea 109 *stieran mon sceal strongum mode, ond þæt on stapelum healdan* 'one should steer a strong mind and hold it to its foundations'.

Max I 50 *styræn sceal mon strongum mode* 'one should steer a strong mind'.<sup>28</sup>

The opposite of a fickle, wayward mind was an immoveable, steadfast mind. I examine the metaphor of a fixed mind more fully in the next chapter.

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<sup>27</sup> GREG.MAG.Reg.past. 3.12.89 *suspectae mentes* 'suspicious minds'.

<sup>28</sup> As T. A. Shippey notes, "there is a long-standing dispute as to whether [the half-line] means 'a strong mind is to be checked' or 'a man shall rule with a strong mind' " (T. A. Shippey [ed.], Poems of wisdom and learning in Old English [Cambridge, 1976], p. 131 note 6). Both constructions take the dative. As the sense of the nearly identical Sea 1109 is clearly the former, I take the former option.

## Texture

The texture of the mind, whether firm or yielding, expressed the mind's capacity to withstand the pressure of external events or influence. A mind that was resolute of purpose was not only immoveable, as in the section above, but also hard:

Mald 312 *hige sceal þe heardra* 'mind shall be the harder'.

And 232 *ah he wæs anræd ellenweorces, heard ond higerof* 'but he was single-minded in courageous deed, hard and vigorous of mind'.

GuthB 976 *ða wæs Guðlace on þa geocran tid mægen gemedgad, mod swiþe heard* 'then in that bitter time was the strength diminished in Guthlac, his mind very hard'.

Dream 39 *ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð, þæt wæs god Ælmihtig, strang ond stiðmod* 'the young hero undressed himself: that was God Almighty, strong and hard of mind'.

Beo 745 *forð near ætstop, nam þa mid handa higeþihtigne rinc on ræste* 'he stepped nearer, and took with his hands the hard-minded warrior on the bed'.

To depict the resolute mind as being firm in texture was a commonplace in Old English as it is in our idiom, but mental hardness can also signify stubbornness or anger:

GenB 745 *forþon unc waldend wearð wrað on mode, on hyge hearde, and us on helle bedraf* 'therefore the Ruler became angry in his mind at us, hard in mind, and drove us into Hell'.

GenA 2261 *ða wearð unbliðe Abrahames cwen ... wrað on mode, heard and hreðe* 'then Abraham's woman became unhappy ... angry in mind, hard and violent'.

E1 807 *nu ic þurh soð hafu seolf gecnawen on heardum hige þæt ðu hælend eart middangeardes* 'now I have truly recognized in my hard mind that you are the Saviour of the world'.<sup>29</sup>

In the following citation *heard* appears to signify the discomfort of sorrow, though other translations such as 'stern' or 'resolute' are equally likely:

Wife 42 *a scyle geong mon wesan geomormod, heard heortan gepoht* 'ever shall a young man be mournful in mind, and painful, the thought of his heart'.

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<sup>29</sup> Bradley translates *heard* here as 'obstinate' (p. 185).



In homiletic writings, *heard* tends to refer not so much to the solidity of one's resolve but rather to the impenetrability of the mind to external influence. This was good or bad depending on what the external influence was. Imperviousness to faith and charity was undesirable:

ÆLS (Thomas) 325 *dyslic bið to forseonne soðlice þæt ece life, and heardmod bið se man þe ne mage þysum gelyfan* 'it is truly foolish to neglect the eternal life, and the man is hard-minded who may not believe in these things'.<sup>30</sup>

ÆCHom I, 28 414.129 *eadig bið se man þe symle bið forhtiende; & soðlice se heardmoda befylð on yfele* 'blessed is the man who is always fearful, and truly, the hard-minded one falls into evil'.<sup>31</sup>

ÆCHom I, 18 322.138 *heardheort bið se man þe nele þurh lufe oðrum fremian þær þær he mæg* 'hard-hearted is the man who will not, through love, do for others whatever he may'.

Softening one's heart in order to be permeable to truth and conscience was therefore good:

LawludDei VII 23.3A *gyf þu scyldig si, þænne ahnexa þu þine heortan* 'if you are guilty, then soften your heart'.<sup>32</sup>

HomU 19 (BlHom 8) 30 *forðon þe Drihten næfre ne forsyhþ þa eapmodan heortan ne þa hnescestan* 'for the Lord never overlooks the humble hearts nor the softest ones'.

On the other hand, a soft mind could be a spiritually weak one:

ÆCHom II, 12.2 124.500 *se oðer heafodleahter is gecweden forliger oððe galnyss, þæt is þæt se man ungehealdsum sy on hæmede and hnesce on mode to flæsclicum lustum* 'the

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<sup>30</sup> Pass.Thom. 43 *stultum est enim aeternam vitam non appetere et tantis virtutibus non credentem durum animum permanere* 'it is indeed foolish not to desire eternal life, and that believing in such virtues does not penetrate the hard mind'.

<sup>31</sup> Prv 28:14 *beatus homo, qui semper est pavidus; qui vero indurat cor suum, corruet in malum* 'blessed is the man that is always fearful: but he that is hardened in mind, shall fall into evil'.

<sup>32</sup> This translates *si tu reus sis, emollias cor tuum* (ludicium dei, rituale: VII, 23, 3 in F. Liebermann (ed.), Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen [Halle, 1960 (1903-1916)], 413-414).

second deadly sin is called fornication or lust, that is that man unchaste in sexual practice and soft in the mind to fleshly lusts'.<sup>33</sup>

The following citation nicely illustrates the selective permeability of the mind:

*HomU 37 (Nap 46) 60 forðan þe se deofol hæfð his heortan on his handa, and heo bið swa heard swa stan oððe flint ongean Godes beboda, and heo bið swa liðig swa clað, and heo mylteð swa wex æt fyre ongean deofles lare and his gedwolan 'for the devil has his heart in his hands, and it is as hard as stone or flint against God's commands, and it is as yielding as cloth, and it melts like wax at a flame in the face of the devil's teaching and his heresies'.*

The status of 'soft' in the Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology is questionable, and it is possible that the structuring of the concept of mind with notions of texture was asymmetrical. 'Hardness' is a frequently occurring metaphor in both poetry and prose, though tending to signify different things in each, but the presence of softness may to a large extent be owing to Latin *mollitia*.<sup>34</sup> Some clue of this is given in *ÆLS (Auguries)*, where Ælfric explains this text (34):

Fratres, nolite errare. Neque fornicarii neque idolis seruietes neque adulteri neque molles neque fures neque auari neque ebriosi neque maledici neque rapaces regnum Dei non possidebunt.

'Brethren, do not err. Not fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor the soft, nor the irascible, nor the avaricious, nor the drunken, nor the libellous, nor the rapacious: they will not possess the kingdom of God'.

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<sup>33</sup> ALCUIN.Virt.vit. 29, 633D *fornicatio est omnis corporalis immunditia, quæ solet fieri ex incontinentia libidinis, et mollitia animæ, quæ consentit suæ carni peccare* 'fornication is every bodily uncleanness which customarily proceeds from the incontinence of desire and the softness of the soul, which consents to sin with respect to its flesh'.

<sup>34</sup> In certain contexts the word *mollis* could mean 'effeminate' or 'homosexual'. See I Cor 6:10 *neque molles neque masculorum concubitores ... regnum Dei possidebunt* 'nor the effeminate, nor liars with mankind ... shall possess the kingdom of God'. As Du Cange notes, Alcuin wrote that the *molles* 'soft ones' *sunt effeminati, qui vel barbas non habent, sive qui alterius fornicationem sustinent* 'they are effeminate, who either do not have beards or who sustain the fornication of another' (Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* [Graz, 1954 (1883-1887)], s.v. *molles*).

In his explication of the text in Old English, Ælfric renders *molles* as *ða hnescan* (40) and he elaborates the meaning of this in the next clause: *þæt synd þa ðe nane stiðnyssse nabbað ongean leahtras* 'that is those who have no rigidity against sins'.<sup>35</sup> Together with the relative paucity of the metaphors of softness as applied to the mind, this may perhaps be taken as evidence that although hard-mindedness was an easily understood and frequently used metaphor, its antonymic counterpart, soft-mindedness, was a little less deeply embedded in the common sense psychology of the Anglo-Saxons.

### Cleanness

As I noted earlier in this chapter, *clænnes* signified absolute purity in the Old English religious idiom. Sins, or spiritual tribulations, appeared as stains on the mind or soul:

*Res 64 min is nu þa sefa synnum fah* 'my mind is now stained with sins'.

*HomFr I 15 wea bið in mode, siofa synnum fah* 'misery is in the mind, the spirit stained with sins'.

The relieving of guilt or spiritual doubt through an acceptance of salvation and absolution was a cleansing process:

*ÆCHom I, 4 214.230 þonne bið min heorte geclænsod fram ælcere twynunge* 'then my heart will be cleansed of every doubt'.<sup>36</sup>

*ÆCHom II, 14.1 138.31 se hælend hi aðwoh mid þweale wiðutan fram fenlicere fulnyssse mid his fægerum handum and wiðinnan eac heora andgit aðwoh fram eallum horwum healicra leahtra* 'the Saviour washed them externally of their swampy foulness with a bath and his fair hands, and internally also he washed their mind from all the muck of their heinous sins'.

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<sup>35</sup> In the London British Museum Cotton Julius E. VII. text, the scribe has added *vel wacmod* above *ða hnescan* (fol. 81), illustrating that the expression was in need of some explication.

<sup>36</sup> *Vit.Iohan. 2.59.49 emundabitur ab omni dubietate mens mea* 'my mind will be cleansed from every doubt'.

A clean heart qualifies for grace:

Max I 43 *se him mæg wyrpe syllan, hælo of heofodgimme, gif he wat heortan clæne* 'He may give him relief, healing of the eyes, if he knows the heart to be clean'.

HomU 18 (BIHom 1) 187 *eadige beop þa clænan heortan, forþon þe hie God geseoð* 'blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God'.<sup>37</sup>

HomS 21 (BIHom 6) 127 *se ælmihtiga God secþ þa clænan heortan him on to eardienne* 'the almighty God seeks the pure of heart to dwell with him'.

Although a state of cleanness is attained through a washing-off of sins, the virtue of cleanness is not the mere absence of dirt, but a spiritual resource:

ÆCHom II, 12.2 125.552 *we sceolon oferwinnan woruldlice gytsunge mid cystignysse ures clænan modes* 'we must overcome worldly greed with the bounty of our clean mind'.

ÆCHom I, 36 489.92 *heora mod wæs hluttur & mid clænnysse afylled* 'their mind was bright and filled with purity'.

The primary function of this metaphor was to describe the state of an individual mind or soul from a spiritual perspective, and its presence in Old English probably derives entirely from the religious idiom. The closely related metaphor of sin as a stain, which I discussed in the last chapter, allowed for the envisioning of sins as washable substances. Together with this conception, the metaphor of cleanness projected the notion of an absolute state of purity onto the mind, attainable through the transfiguring power of faith.

#### Temperature, burning and liquid states

The metaphors of fire, water and the opposition of heat and cold are intertwined so that it is easiest to discuss them all in the same section. These were all important experiential

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<sup>37</sup> Mt 5:8 *beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt* 'blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God'.

bases for the metaphorical structuring of emotional concepts, and correlations between physiological processes involved in the experience of emotion and their linguistic expression were also relevant. I will discuss the relation between metaphor and physiology in the formation of emotional concepts in my final chapter, and confine myself here to sketching out the structure of the semantic field of these metaphors.

Heat is associated with intensity and strength of feeling, and expressions of ardent love for God thus rely on fire:

GuthB 963 *ac him dryhtnes lof born in breostum, brondhat lufu sigorfæst in sefan* 'but the praise of the Lord burned in his breast, a triumphant love, flame-hot in mind'.

ÆCHom I, 22 360.170 *þonne þæs eorðlican mannes heorte bið ontend to Godes lufe* 'when the heart of the earthly man is kindled to the love of God'.<sup>38</sup>

LS 10.1 (Guth) 2.87 *a seo godcunde lufu on hys heortan hat and byrnende* 'the divine love always hot and burning in his heart'.

The Anglo-Saxons appear to have distinguished dry from liquid heat, however, for negative emotion is characteristically expressed as a churning, boiling liquid:

GenA 353 *weoll him on innan hyge ymb his heortan, hat wæs him utan wraðlic wite* 'within him his mind churned about his heart, outside him the bitter torment was hot'.

Beo 1992 *ic ðæs modceare sorhwylmum seað* 'I have seethed over this with mental anxiety, with wellings of sorrow'.

Beo 2599 *hiora in anum weoll sefa wið sorgum* 'in one of them the mind welled with sorrows'.

And 1708 *þær manegum wæs hat æt heortan hyge weallende* 'there was a seething mind, hot at heart, in many of them'.

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<sup>38</sup> GREG.MAG.Hom.evang. 30, 1223A *et terra ardet cum cor carnale in suis pravis voluptatibus frigidum, relinquit concupiscentias præsantis sæculi, et incenditur ad amorem Dei* 'and the earth burns when the fleshly heart, cold in its wicked pleasures, relinquishes the desires of the present world and is kindled to the love of God' (commenting on Lc 12:49 *ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi ut ardeat* 'I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled?').

It would seem that positive intense emotion is frequently expressed as fire, and negative intense emotion as a boiling liquid,<sup>39</sup> but occasionally this neat division breaks down, as in the two following citations:

Phoen 477 *hige weallende dæges ond nihtes Dryhten lufiað* 'they love the Lord, their mind welling day and night'.

GenB 776 *forþam him higesorga burnon on breostum* 'for the sorrows of his mind burned in his breast'.<sup>40</sup>

If heat conveys an intensity of feeling, then cold appears to express a dissipation or a lack of positive feeling. *Freorig* and its compounds signified the coldness of misery and fear, used especially frequently by the poet of Guthlac B:<sup>41</sup>

GuthB 886 *þe hine unsofte, adle gebundne, sarge gesohtun of siðwegum, freorigmode* 'who sought him with difficulty from distant ways, bound with disease and sorrow, cold-minded'.

GuthB 1156 *ongon ða hygegeomor, freorig ond ferðwerig, fusne gretan* 'the sad-minded one, frozen and weary of spirit, began to greet the eager one'.

GuthB 1344 *cwom þa freorigferð þær seo fæmne wæs* 'then the cold-minded one came to where the woman was'.

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<sup>39</sup> Compare, for example, Job 30:27 *interiora mea efferbuerunt absque ulla requies; praeuenerunt me dies afflictionis* 'my inner parts have boiled without any rest, the days of affliction have prevented me'.

<sup>40</sup> Compare, for example, Ps 88:47 *usquequo Domine avertis in finem exardescet sicut ignis ira tua?* 'how long, O Lord, turnest thou away unto the end? shall thy anger burn like fire?'

<sup>41</sup> Frederick Biggs has suggested that the GuthB-poet meant Guthlac's thane to embody "the state of the body cut off from the understanding of the mind" and that the description of him as freezing "may anticipate the statement in the poem's final section that after Guthlac's soul has departed, his body grows cold on earth" ("Unities in the Old English Guthlac B", Journal of English and Germanic Philology 89 [1990], 155-165 at p. 161). I will discuss this interpretation further in my final chapter.

Wan 32 *warað hine wræclast, nales wundengold, ferðloca freorig, nalæs foldan blæd* 'the path of exile occupies him, not at all wound gold; the icy heart, not at all the splendour of the earth'.

The cold-mindedness of Guthlac's thane signified not merely emotional discomfort, but also the absence of a warming, fiery faith in God. As we saw above, the love of God was often portrayed as a burning fire, and the natural corollary of this was that as this love lessened, the heart became cool:<sup>42</sup>

ÆGram 3.2 *and ælc man, ðe wisdom lufað, byð gesælig, and, se ðe naðor nele ne leornian ne tæcan, gif he mæg, þonne acolap his andgyt fram þære halgan lare, and he gewit swa lytlum and lytlum fram Gode* 'and each man who loves wisdom is happy, but the one who will neither learn nor teach, even though he is able, his understanding cools from the divine teaching then, and he moves away little by little from God'.

ÆCHom I, 22 359.147 *fyrene tungan hi hæfdon þa ða hi mid lufe Godes mærþa bodedon þæt þæra hæðenra manna heortan þe cealde wæron þurh geleafleaste & flæsclicum gewilnungum mihton beon ontende to þam heofonlicum bebodum* 'they had fiery tongues, when they preached with love the glories of God, that the hearts of those heathen men which were cold through lack of faith and fleshly lusts might be kindled to the divine messages'.<sup>43</sup>

It appears that though the heat of the mind could have positive or negative value, depending on what passion was burning or boiling in it, the coldness which sometimes affected the heart was seldom a good thing, denoting fear or the absence of love. The notion, which we admire, of a cool rationality had yet to find currency, perhaps because emotion and intellection were still closely associated.

In my discussion of the metaphors of texture, I suggested that 'softness' was not a deeply embedded metaphor in Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology. But something of

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<sup>42</sup> Compare, for example, Mt 24:12 *et quoniam abundavit iniquitas refrigescet caritas multorum* 'and because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold'.

<sup>43</sup> GREG.MAG.Hom.evang. 30, 1223B *linguas igneas doctores habent, quia, dum Deum amandum prædicant, corda audientum inflammant* 'the teachers have fiery tongues because while they preach that God is to be loved, they inflame the hearts of the listening ones'.

the same idea can be detected in metaphors of melting and liquefying. The heart or soul was sometimes depicted as melting in fear or sorrow:

Beo 2628 *ne gemealt him se modsefa* 'the mind did not melt in him'.

PPs (prose) 21.12 *min heorte and min mod is gemolten, swa þæt weax on innan me* 'my heart and my mind are melted as wax within me'.<sup>44</sup>

PPs 70.8 *þonne me mægen and mod mylte on hreðre, ne forlæt þu me, lifende God* 'when strength and mind shall melt in my breast, do not abandon me, living God'.<sup>45</sup>

PPs 118.53 *me wearð gemolten mod on hreðre for fyrenfulra facendædum* 'the mind in me is molten in the breast because of the crimes of the wicked'.<sup>46</sup>

This figure is not a common one, but the last two occurrences from the Paris psalter introduce the notion of melting where the Vulgate's Latin has the simple words for failing, *defectio* or *deficio*. *Deficio* can be applied to describe the ebb of water, but nothing in the word itself would have prompted the Paris psalter's use of the notion of melting. These images of melting courage and melting conscience obviously share a kinship with those treated above of the mind softening in texture, but the underlying experiential basis seems to come from the behaviour of liquid.

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<sup>44</sup> Roman Ps 21:15 *et factum est cor meum tamquam cera liquefiens in medio uentris mei* 'my heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels'.

<sup>45</sup> Roman Ps 70:9 *dum defecerit uirtus mea ne derelinquas me* 'when my strength shall fail, do not thou forsake me'.

<sup>46</sup> Roman Ps 118:53 *defectio animi tenuit me* 'a fainting (of the spirit) hath taken hold of me'.



### Mind as a container

This metaphor obviously incorporates the notion of containment examined under the section on 'in and out', but the 'mind as a container' metaphor includes the notion of depth, and the resultant schema is three-dimensional.

The undergoing of certain mental experiences is portrayed as the mind being filled with an emotion or a quality:

GuthA 651 *eom ic soðlice leohte geleafan ond mid lufan dryhtnes fægre gefylled in minum feorhlocan* 'truly, I am fairly filled with the light of faith and with love of the Lord in my breast'.

HomFr I 15 *wea bið in mode, siofa synnum fah, sare geblonden, gefylled mid facne* 'misery is in the mind, the mind stained with sins, mingled with suffering, filled with sin'.

WHom 9 105 *bið eal heora ingebanc mid fracode afylled* 'all their mind was filled with wickedness'.

LS 27.1 (MildredFörst) 18 *wæs hit hyre eac eaðdæde, swa lange swa hyre ingehyd wæs eal mid Godes gaste afylled* 'it was also an easy deed for her, as long as her mind was all filled with God's spirit'.

ÆCHom I, 36 489.92 *heora mod wæs hluttur and mid clænnysse afylled* 'their mind was pure and filled with cleanness'.

The filling of the mind seems to signify a predominating mental or emotional experience, and in the case of saints, the transfiguring infusion of divine grace. The content of the mind could also be cognitive, and in some cases the limits of carrying capacity were reached:

GuthB 842 *gif hy halges word healdan woldun beorht in breostum* 'if they had wished to hold the holy one's words bright in their breasts'.

And 814 *ic wat manig nu gyt mycel mære spell ... ða ðu aræfnan ne miht, hreðre behabban* 'I know yet many great and glorious tales ... which you could not comprehend or hold in your breast'.

The function of the mind as a container was not merely to be filled up to a level with emotions, but also to provide a space in which mental processes could take place. The

three-dimensional quality of this space is clear from the fact that thoughts appear to revolve in the mind:

Dan 110 *com on sefan hwurfan swefnes woma* 'the portent of a dream came to turn in his mind'.

GenA 2338 *Abraham ða ofestum legde hleor on eorðan, and mid husce bewand þa hleoðorcwydas on hige sinum* 'Abraham then hastily laid his cheek on the earth, and with scorn turned the prophecies in his mind'.

Gifts 86 *sum her geornlice gæstes þearfe mode bewindeþ, ond him metudes est ofer eorðwelan ealne geceoseð* 'one eagerly revolves the needs of the spirit in his mind, and chooses for himself the grace of the Creator over all earthly wealth'.

This circular movement grinds to a halt with a baffling problem:

Dan 481 *cuð is þæt me Daniel dyglan swefnes soð gesæde, þæt ær swiðe oðstod manegum on mode minra leoda* 'it is evident that Daniel said the truth of the mysterious dream to me, which before utterly perplexed many of my people in mind.'

An insoluble mystery is something which will not budge in the mind. Only by turning complete revolutions can a matter be considered in all its aspects.

Just as things kept in containers could be looked for, so thoughts and qualities could be sought in the mind. The presence of something in the mind was not always immediately obvious to its owner:

EI 1147 *ongan þa geornlice gæstgerynum on sefan secean soðfæstnesse weg to wuldre* 'she began then eagerly with spiritual contemplations to seek in her mind the way to truth and glory'.

Met 22.13 *gesecge his mode þæt hit mæg findan eall on him innan þæt hit oftost nu ymbutan hit ealneg seceð, gooda æghwylc* 'that he say to his mind that it can find everything within itself, each of the good things, which it now always and frequently seeks without'.

There is a kind of wilfulness, as in the present day idiom, about *not* finding something in one's mind:

GenB 266 *ne meahte he æt his hige findan þæt he Gode wolde geongerdome, þeodne þeowian* 'he could not find it in his mind that he was willing to serve God, his Prince, in fealty'.

Sometimes, things may be hidden from sight in the mind, on purpose:

GuthB 1255 *a ic on mode mað monna gehwylcne þeodnes þrymcyme oð þisne dæg* 'I always hid in my mind from each man the prince's glorious coming until today'.

Wife 20 *mod miþendne, morþor hycgendne* 'a hiding mind, planning murder'.

The mind-as-container metaphor converted well into a number of rich images which were part of the idiom of Anglo-Saxon mental life. The compounds with *-cofa* 'closet or chamber', *-loca* 'stronghold', *-cleofa* 'cave or den', or *-scræf* 'cave' all appear to derive from an underlying container image. These images, though naming the specific type of container, yet have the generality of a schema in their usage, but it was easy for writers to articulate the metaphor more fully and in literary fashion, making the links between source and target domains explicit:

ÆCHom II, 30 239.116 *hwæt fremað þe þæt ðin cyst stande ful mid godum and ðin ingehyd beo æmtig æces godes?* 'what good does it do you that your chest stand full of goods and your mind be empty of any virtue?'

ÆCHom II, 4 31.53 *eornostlice wæter getacnað ingehyd haligra gewrita þæt aðweahð his hlysteras fram synna horewum; þa stænenan wæterfatu sind estfulle heortan haligra lareowa þa aheardiað on stanes gecynde on gean deofellicum costnungum* 'truly, water signifies the meaning of the holy writings which washes its listeners from the defilements of their sins; the stone water vessels are the devout hearts of the holy teachers which harden in the manner of stone against the devil's trials'.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> BEDA.Hom. 1.14.98 *aqua autem scripturae sacrae scientiam designat quae suos auditores et a peccatorum sorde abluere ... solet ...; uasa sex quibus continebatur corda sunt deuota sanctorum ... et bene lapidea sunt uasa quia fortia sunt praecordia iustorum* 'indeed, water signifies the knowledge of the sacred scripture which is accustomed to wash its listeners even from the filth of sins; the six vessels by which it was contained are the devoted hearts of the saints ... and well are the vessels made of stone, for they are the strong hearts of the just'.

Ælfric's explication of the symbolism of the water vessels at Cana highlights a normally unused part of the container metaphor, the material out of which the container is made. But his explanation of the qualities of this material is exactly what we would expect from the metaphors of hardness which we saw in the section on texture.

### The mind as body

This is probably the most complex metaphor by which the Anglo-Saxons shaped their concept of the mind, picturing mental life in terms of the multi-dimensional experience of being human. In this way, the mind-as-body metaphor can be distinguished from those we have examined up till now: the previous metaphors we have treated have pictured the mind inorganically, thereby simplifying mental and emotional experience into schemata which involve simply understood physical forces. By contrast, metaphorizing the mind as a body draws into play the complex nature of sense perception, physical well-being and behaviour such as laughing and weeping. If we revisit Johnson's definition of an image schema, that it is "a dynamic pattern that functions somewhat like the abstract structure of an image, and thereby connects up a vast range of different experiences that manifest this same recurring structure", we can see that the mind-as-body metaphor challenges certain aspects of this definition. Compared to the image schema involved in, say, the 'path' metaphor, the recurring patterns involved in bodily functions such as seeing or hearing are relatively much more complex, since they involve the mind as part of their very functioning. These 'schemata', moreover, do not form on the basis of a "vast range" of external experience, but on internal, intimately felt aspects of life. The non-propositional nature of this experience is without question, and I believe that Johnson's explanation of the process of conceptualization remains the best way we yet have of understanding the mind-as-body metaphor, but some difficulties of the analysis of this metaphor will emerge in what follows, and it is worth pointing at the outset to the features which set it apart from the rest of the metaphors we have examined in this chapter.

Sight and hearing were the senses most often assigned metaphorically to the mind. The relation of sight to knowledge was outlined in the earlier section on light and darkness; hearing was similarly related to the idea of understanding and obedience, since it is the primary sense with which we perceive the thoughts and desires, verbally expressed, of others.<sup>48</sup> *Oboedire* 'to obey' breaks down to *ob-audire*, just as *gehyrsum* 'obedient' is related to *gehyran* 'to hear'. Ælfric refers to this relation:

*ÆCHom II, 43 326.234 ða ðe þurh ungehyrsumnysse oððe geleafleaste deafe wæron þam he on ageat andgites hlyst þæt hi gehyrdon ða heofonlican beboda to halwendre gehyrsumnesse* 'those who were deaf through disobedience or faithlessness, he infused in them the sense of hearing of the mind, so that they heard the heavenly commands to sanctifying obedience'.<sup>49</sup>

All the examples I have found of these two metaphors are located in religious texts: this is not surprising if we consider that the spiritual imperative urgently requires the comprehension of certain revealed truths and the willingness to abide by them.<sup>50</sup> The presence of these two metaphors in Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology may well have largely derived from biblical models, in order to express the particular mental and personal focus demanded of practising Christians.

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<sup>48</sup> As Sweetser explains, "the function of hearing *par excellence* is, of course, linguistic communication; and since it is our major communicative pathway, it is also our major means of intellectual and emotional influence on each other ... Thus it is natural that physical auditory reception should be linked with heedfulness and internal 'receptivity' ... and hence also to obedience" (p. 41).

<sup>49</sup> PS.MAX.TAUR. Hom. 78, 420B *quantorum auribus surdis, et infidelitatis obturatione damnatis, ad percipiendam vocem coelestium mandatorum pretiosum infudit auditum, ut vocanti Deo misericordiam responderet per obedientiam?* 'in the deaf ears of how many, condemned by the blockage of faithlessness, has He infused the sense of hearing, for the purpose of perceiving the precious voice of heavenly commands, that He might return mercy for obedience to the summoning God?'

<sup>50</sup> For a treatment of metaphors in the mystical tradition, see Wolfgang Riehle, *The Middle English mystics*, transl. Bernard Standring (London, 1981), Ch. 8, "The experience of God as a spiritual sense perception".

The well-established relation between sight and knowledge is made explicit in this citation:

ÆCHom II, 26 214.46 *we geseoð þurh ure eagan and ealle ðing tocnawað* 'we see through our eyes and know all things'.

With the eyes of the mind, one can see the spiritual things which the physical eyes cannot see (ChristC 1327):

nu we sceolon georne gleawlice þurhseon  
 usse hreþercofan heortan eagam,  
 innan uncyste. We mid þam oðrum ne magun,  
 heafodgimmum, hygeþonces ferð  
 eagam þurhwitan ænge þinga,  
 hwæþer him yfel þe god under wunige.

'Now we should eagerly and wisely examine our minds and the wickednesses within with the eyes of the heart. We may not penetrate in any way the thought of the spirit with the other eyes, head-jewels, whether evil or good dwells beneath it'.

The eyes of the mind therefore have an important presence in religious and homiletic writings:

ÆLS (Apollinaris) 47 *geopenige God ælmihtig eowre heortena eagan, þæt ge on þone hælend gelyfan, þonne ge geseoð his wundra* 'may God Almighty open the eyes of your hearts, that you might believe in the Saviour, when you see his wonders'.

Met 20.267 *onliht nu þa eagan usses modes mid þinum leohte* 'light up now the eyes of our mind with your light'.

Bo 42.147.24 *gif þu witan wilt, ðu scealt habban ær þines modes eagan clæne & hlutor* 'if you wish to know, you should have beforehand the eyes of your mind clean and pure'.

As discussed under the section on light and darkness, the inability to see the spiritual truth was metaphorized as the blindness of the mind:

ÆCHom I, 35 482.182 *ða inran þeostra sind þære heortan blindnyss* 'the inner darknesses are the blindness of the heart'.

ÆCHom II, 26 216.82 *þa sind blinde þe þæt leoht ðæs larlican andgites nabbað* 'those are blind, who do not have the light of doctrinal understanding'.

As I observed earlier, the gap between physical sight and spiritual understanding is a biblical commonplace, expressed in Ps 134:16 as *oculos habent et non videbunt* 'they have eyes but do not see' and repeated in various forms throughout the Old and New Testaments.

The relation between hearing and understanding is expressed in this next citation:

OrW 37 *gehyr nu þis herespel ond þinne hyge gefæstna* 'hear now this glorious tale and fasten your mind'.

We may appreciate the importance of this connection between listening and obeying all the more when we remember that Christ spoke in parables, and the primary means by which his followers received his message was by hearing. The ears of the mind feature, again, in religious writings:

HomU 8 (ScraggVerc 2) 96 *la hwæt, we behofigaþ þæt we usse earan ontynen & usse heortan to þam godspellican larum* 'indeed, it behoves us that we open our ears and our hearts to the teachings of the gospel'.

HomS 35 (Tristr 4) 199 *ontyne þære heortan earan to manunge þyses godspelles* 'open the ears of the heart to the urging of this gospel'.

ÆLS (Agnes) 330 *geopena heora heortan earan to þære halwendan lare* 'open the ears of their hearts to the divine teaching'.

In a religious context, the metaphors of sense perception as applied to the mind have a particular importance, since the recognition of transcendent truths was the crucial step towards salvation. The function of these metaphors was to portray spiritual life as something one could experience as vividly and concretely as physical life.

Vision and hearing are related to the reception of knowledge, but the other senses which have some role to play in the expression of mental experience, touch and taste, seem

by contrast to be more closely connected with emotional states.<sup>51</sup> An exception to this is the use of physical manipulation to express mental comprehension, which is well-attested in Old English as in many other Indo-European languages.<sup>52</sup> *Ongytan*, for instance, is the OE cousin of our *get*, which is from the Norse.<sup>53</sup> *Get* in present-day English can mean both 'take' and 'understand', but *ongytan* meant primarily 'to perceive' in a mental sense. The metaphor is shown in greater relief in the next citation, since the main sense of *gegripan* continued to be that of physical seizing:

*OrW* 23 *ic þe lungre sceal meotudes mægensped maran gesecgan, þonne þu hyge cræftig in hreþre mæge mode gegripan* 'I shall soon tell you more of the power of the Creator than you, wise of mind, may grasp with your mind in the breast'.

Note that the use of grasping in this citation signifies capacity as much as it does the possession of knowledge.

With taste, the focus is not so much on the sense organ but on the sensation.

External events impress the mind in ways pleasant and unpleasant, and the emotional effects are respectively described as sweet and bitter. The sensations in substantive form could also signify quality of personality or of experience:

*JuI* 93 *ðu eart min dohtor seo dyreste and seo sweteste in sefan minum* 'you are, my daughter, the dearest and the sweetest in my mind'.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Sweetser, pp. 43–44.

<sup>52</sup> See Samuel Kroesch, "The semasiological development of words for 'perceive', etc., in the older Germanic dialects", *Modern philology*, 8 (1911), 461–510. A good number of words which mean 'to know' or 'to understand' descend from words for taking with the hands: *grasp*, *get* to *grips*, *apprehend*, *perceive*, *catch on* and *slow on the uptake*, to name a few examples from present-day English.

<sup>53</sup> Pokorny lists the IE root of *-gyt-* in *ongytan* and Eng. *get* as *\*ghed-* 'to take hold of, grasp' (p. 437).

<sup>54</sup> Of course, Juliana's father makes this speech with clenched teeth to his recalcitrant daughter, so there is a hint of irony here.



LS 10.1(Guth) 20.172 *a man mihte on his andwlitan lufe and sibbe ongytan, and a wæs swetnys on his mode and snyttro on his breostum* 'always one could perceive in his countenance love and peace, and there was always sweetness in his mind and wisdom in his breast'.

ÆCHom II, 12.2 125.516 *of ðam bið acenned yfelny and wacmodnys, heortan biternys and his sylfes orwennys* 'from that is born evilness and weak-mindedness, the bitterness of the heart and the despair of himself'.

Alc (Warn35) 304 *þæt is swyþe wilsumlic goldhord on mannes heorte, seo swetnysse þære onbryrdnysse þæs mannes sawle* 'that is a very desirable goldhoard in a man's heart, the sweetness of the inspiration of a man's soul'.

The tactile sensitivity of the mind was similarly passive:<sup>55</sup>

LS 23 (MaryofEgypt) 424 *þa onhran soðlice min mod and þa eagan minre heortan hælo andgit* 'then, truly, the understanding of salvation touched my mind and the eyes of my heart'.<sup>56</sup>

ÆCHom II, 22 196.222 *þæt his heorte mid ðære biternysse beo gehreþod* 'that his heart is touched with bitterness'.

With the metaphors of sense perception (and indeed, other types of metaphors), there is probably a distinction we can make between the implied metaphor and a fully realized one, with the former being perhaps the more deeply embedded. It may turn out to be generally true that the use of 'see' to mean 'understand' preceded the use of the related image 'eyes of the mind', so that in searching through languages for evidence of these expressions, the more typical manifestation of the metaphor resembles that in the following:

ChristC 1207 *on werigum sefan geseoð sorga mæste* 'they see the greatest of sorrows in their weary minds'.

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<sup>55</sup> Compare, for example, Gn 6:6 *et tactus dolore cordis intrinsecus* 'and being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart' and Jer 4:18 *ista malitia tua, quia amara, quia tetigit cor tuum* 'this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it hath touched my heart'.

<sup>56</sup> Vit.Mar.Egypt 16, 682A *tetigit enim mentem et cordis mei oculos intellectus salutis* 'the understanding of salvation touched my mind and the eyes of my heart'.

If I may be allowed to speculate further, figures such as *oculi cordis* or *modeseagan* may have originated as literary usages, extrapolated backwards from uses of 'see' which were recognized to be metaphorical.<sup>57</sup> The investment of the mind with eyes and ears may have been a response to the need in religious language to point the active, perceptive effort required of spiritual development. Since taste and touch were less closely related to the concepts of knowledge and cognition, their rhetorical importance may have been somewhat slighter. We might guess that for this reason they remained at the 'implied' level of metaphor, which is perhaps why expressions such as 'tongue of the mind' or 'skin of the mind' never became current.<sup>58</sup>

The sense perception aspect of the mind-as-body metaphor focused on the mind's reception and cognition of external events. But the notions of strength and health were also projected onto the concept of the mind. These metaphors are much simpler than those just examined, since the separation of source from target domain is a little clearer. The mind is understood in terms of the physical body and its ability to carry out its tasks.

As a body, the mind could be weak or strong, and function with corresponding effectiveness. Just as a weary body cannot stand up to much of an onslaught, so a weary mind is incapable of staying its ground:

Wan 15 *ne mæg werig mod wyrde wiðstondan* 'a weary mind cannot withstand fate'.

And 1157 *meðe stodon, hungre gehæfted* 'they stood weary, shackled with hunger'.

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<sup>57</sup> See E. R. Curtius, European literature and the Latin Middle Ages, transl. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1967 [1953]), pp. 134-136.

<sup>58</sup> However, Curtius's summary of 'baroque corporal metaphors' at pp. 136-138 includes expressions which "violate visual perception", such as 'hand of my tongue', 'neck of the mind', 'brow of the mind', 'knees of my heart' etc. These metaphors appear to have been confined to the mystical tradition.

Other examples of this are that Guthlac's grieving thane has a *meðnemodsefan* 'a weary mind' (GuthB 1337), and in Beowulf, Hæðcyn's accidental killing of his brother is *hygemedē* 'wearying to the mind' (2442).

The verb most often used to convey the strengthening of the mind was *trymman* which could be used of literal fortification, as in GenA 275 *þæt he trymede ... getimbro* 'that he fortified ... the building', and also of bodily nourishment, as in PPs 103.15 *hlaf trymeð heortan mannes* 'bread strengthens a man's heart'. The spiritual nourishment provided by God *trymede* the mind:

Dan 532 *him wæs gæst geseald, halig of heofonum, se his hyge trymede* 'a holy spirit from the heavens was given to him, which strengthened his mind'.

ChristC 1359 *ond hyra sefan trymedon forð on frofre* 'and strengthened their minds thenceforth in mercy'.

LS 20 (AssumptMor) 137 *& he trymede heora heortan mid Godes geleafan* 'and he strengthened their hearts with God's faith'.<sup>59</sup>

A strong energetic body can achieve its ends, and in some of the citations which follow, we can see how this metaphor occasionally intersects that of the path:

ChristA 370 *ara nu onbehtum ond usse yrmþa gepenc, hu we tealtrigað tydran mode, hwearfiað hearlice* 'have mercy now upon your servants and think of our miseries, how we stumble along with weak minds, and wander about abjectly'.

GuthA 339 *no him fore egsan earmra gæsta treow geteowde, ne he tid forsæt þæs þe for his dryhtne dreogan sceolde, þæt hine æreste elne binoman slæpa sluman opþe sæne mod* 'his faith did not falter before the terror of the wretched spirits, nor did he delay the time at which he had to serve his Lord, so that the oblivion of sleep or his sluggish mind robbed him of the zeal for rising up'.

CP 11.65.12 *se bið eallenga healt se ðe wat hwider he gaan sceal, & ne mæg for his modes untrymnesse, ðeah he geseo lifes weg, he ne mæg medomlice ongan* 'he is altogether lame,

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<sup>59</sup> Trans.Mar.[C]. 21.18 *haec omnia dicente beato Petro, omnis populus conroboratus est in fide* 'with the blessed Peter saying all these things, all the people were strengthened in the faith'.

the one who knows where he should go, but for the infirmity of his mind cannot; though he see the way of life, he cannot worthily begin'.<sup>60</sup>

Mental power is envisioned as physical fitness, and mental inactivity as bodily torpor.

Naturally, it was part of the mind-as-body metaphor to express well-being as health, and spiritual and emotional distress as illness:

GuthB 1077 *ne beo þu on sefan to seoc* 'do not be too sick in mind'.

Res 109 *ic eom mode seoc, bittre abolgen, is seo bot æt þe gelong æfter life* 'I am sick in mind, bitterly distressed; the remedy is with you, after this life'.

Fates 1 *ic þysne sang siðgeomor fand on seocum sefan* 'I composed this song in a sick mind, travel-weary'.

Beo 1602 *gistas setan modes seoce ond on mere staredon* 'the guests sat, sick of mind, and stared at the lake'.

The restoration of a state of well-being was, naturally, depicted as a healing process:

GenB 758 *forþon is min mod gehæled, hyge ymb heortan gerume* 'therefore my mind is healed, the mind about my heart made roomy'.

ChristA 173 *God eaþe mæg gehælan hygesorge heortan minre* 'God may easily heal the mind's sorrows of my heart'.

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<sup>60</sup> GREG.MAG.Reg.past. 1.11.18 *claudus uero est qui quidem qui pergere debeat aspicit, sed per infirmitatem mentis, uitae uiam perfecte non ualet tenere quam uidet* 'that one is truly lame who sees indeed where he ought to go, but for the infirmity of his mind he is unable to hold perfectly to the way of life which he sees'.

The name of Jesus means 'healer, saviour', whence OE *Hælend*, and it is not surprising therefore that God should be named the celestial physician in a full realization of the metaphor.<sup>61</sup>

LPr II 61 *ealra cyninga help and heafod, halig læce, reðe and rihtwis, rumheort hlaforð* 'the help and head of all kings, holy physician, zealous and righteous, generous lord'.

Pr 3 *ic wat mine saule synnum forwundod; gehæl þu hy, heofena drihten, and gelacna þu hy, lifes ealdor, forþan ðu eðest miht ealra læca ðæra þe gewurde side oððe wyde* 'I know my soul is wounded with sins; heal it, Lord of the heavens, and treat it, king of life, as you most easily might of all the physicians which there ever were, far or wide'.

lDayII 45 *þæt he wunda her wope gecyðe uplicum læce, se ana mæg aglidene mod gode gehælan* 'that here, with weeping, he makes his wounds known to the heavenly doctor, who alone may heal the mind which has slipped from good'.<sup>62</sup>

ÆCHom I, 31 448.267 *God is se soða læce þe ðurh mislicum swingelum his folces synna gehæld* 'God is the true physician who heals the sins of his people through various scourges'.

The metaphors of health and strength employ bodily states to convey mental and emotional well-being. As I have observed, they were in this way simpler in function than those mind-as-body metaphors whose function it was to express the mind's reception of knowledge. The metaphor of sense perception was the main avenue by which cognitive processes were made accessible, but apart from this, the body's intake and digestion of food was also occasionally utilized.

The mind's desire, either for spiritual sustenance or for worldly pleasures, was sometimes metaphorized as a bodily appetite:

Sea 11 *hungor innan slat merewerges mod* 'hunger tore within the sea-weary mind'.

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<sup>61</sup> Compare Ex 15:26 *ego enim Dominus sanator tuus* 'I am the Lord thy healer'. For an account of this metaphor in early Christian writings, see R. Arbesmann, "The concept of 'Christus medicus' in St. Augustine", *Traditio* 10 (1954), 1-28.

<sup>62</sup> BEDA.Die.iud. 23 *vulnera cum lacrymis medico reserare superno, qui solet allisos sanare* 'to disclose with tears wounds to the celestial doctor, who is accustomed to heal the injured'.

Hell 95 *we þurh gifre mod beswican us sylfe* 'we deceive ourselves through a greedy mind'.

The reception of God's word or of grace was consequently pictured as a feeding and watering of the mind or the soul:

ChrodR 1 48.19 *ne sceal ma sealmas an cyrcan ofstlice singan ... ac openlice & beorhte mid heortan anbryrdnyse, þæt þara singendra mod beo mid swetnyse fedd* 'one should not sing psalms hastily in church ... but clearly and brightly with the heart's inspiration, that the mind of the singers be fed with sweetness'.<sup>63</sup>

HomS 17 (BIHom 5) 41 *swa þonne seo saul, gif heo ne bið mid Godes worde feded gastlice hungre & þurste heo bið cwelmed* 'thus when the soul, if it is not fed spiritually with God's word, it is afflicted by hunger and thirst'.

ThCap 1 (Sauer) 32.363.25 *ac gif he þonne hyne sylfne mid þæm æsprýngum Godes worda gelecþ ond his mod mid þære swetnyse þæs gastlican gedrinces gefylleð he seleð þæs þonne dryncan his þyrstendum mode* 'but if he then slakes himself with the springs of God's words and fills his mind with the sweetness of this spiritual drink, then he gives drink from that to his thirsting mind'.<sup>64</sup>

This metaphor of eating and drinking is rather infrequent with regard to the mind, and occurs more often in relation to *sawol*, but even so I would be inclined to think of this as being a loan-metaphor.<sup>65</sup> I include it here, however, because there are a few instances in the poetry where the reception of words is metaphorized as swallowing:

Az 179 *ða þam wordum swealg brego Caldea* 'then the Chaldean king swallowed the words'.

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<sup>63</sup> I am taking *ma* as an error for *man* in order to make sense of the singular form *sceal*. CHRODEGANG.METT.Reg.can. 56.18 *ut et recitantium mens illorum dulcedine paschatur* 'so that the mind of those singing may be fed with sweetness'.

<sup>64</sup> THEODULF.Cap. 32.18 *sed si se fluentis uerbi dei inriget, et mentem suam spiritalis poculi dulcedine inebriet, iste se sitientem potauit* 'but if he quenches himself with the flowing word of God, and inebriates his mind with the sweetness of the spiritual drink, then he has slaked himself thirsting'.

<sup>65</sup> The image of the thirsting soul occurs with some frequency in the Bible. See, for example, Ps 41:3 *sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem: vivum* 'my soul hath thirsted after the strong living God', and Ps 62:2 *sitivit in te anima mea* 'for thee my soul hath thirsted'. See also Curtius's list of 'alimentary metaphors' at pp. 134-136.

Rid 47 5 *stælgīest ne wæs wihte þy gleawra, þe he þam wordum swealg* 'the thievish visitor was not a whit the wiser when he swallowed the words'.<sup>66</sup>

And 709 *haliges lare synnige ne swulgon, þeah he soðra swa feala tacna gecyðde* 'sinful men had not swallowed the holy one's teaching, though he had revealed many tokens of the truth'.

The loan-metaphor of belching which I discussed earlier in the chapter completes the complex of the mind as a body with an appetite. But the various parts of this metaphor obviously show a differentiated presence in the language. We may put the 'hunger' metaphor in Sea 11 together with the 'swallowing' metaphor of And 709 because they are both parts of the same physiological complex, but instinctively it does not seem as though they are altogether closely related, since the first metaphorizes the emotional distress of loneliness and hardship, and the second metaphorizes the mind's comprehension of doctrinal truth. My editorial collation of these metaphors of hunger and feeding may not ultimately reflect the fact of the matter, which might be that the body's digestive system served as the experiential basis twice over for only distantly related needs.

The last mind-and-body metaphors I examine in this group are those of laughter and weeping. Very occasionally, the mind is pictured as weeping:

Alc (Warn35) 303 *he awecceþ on ure heorta dædbote teares* 'he awakes in our hearts tears of repentance'.<sup>67</sup>

This metaphor is very simple in that the physical expression of grief is directly projected inwards. The only 'conceptual or conversational incongruity' that arises is that the physicality of crying is categorically separate from the abstractness of inward emotion.

<sup>66</sup> See my discussion of Fred Robinson's interpretation of this pun in Ch 4, pp. 139-140.

<sup>67</sup> ALCUIN.Virt.vit. 11, 621A *promissio indulgentiæ quam habemus a Deo, lacrymas pœnitentiæ excitat cordi nostro* 'the promise of indulgence which we have from God arouses tears of penitence in our heart'.

Likewise, the incongruity inherent in the laughing mind is that of picturing the inner principle performing the physical and vocal act of laughter. This metaphor exists as a poetic idiom:

Beo 730 *þa his mod ahlog; mynte þæt he gedælde ... anra gehwylces lif wið lice* 'then his mind laughed; he expected that he should separate the life from the body of each one of them'.

And 454 *ða ure mod ahloh syððan we gesegon under swegles gang windas ond wægas ond wæterbrogan forhte gewordne for frean egesan* 'then our mind laughed when we saw, under the expanse of the sky, winds and waves and terrible floods grow timid for fear of the Lord'.

E1 992 *wæs him frofra mæst geworden in worlde æt ðam willspelle, hlihende hyge* 'it was to them the greatest of consolations in the world, and a laughing mind, at the good news'.

PPs 85.11 *heorte min ahlyhheð, þonne ic ðinne halgan naman forhtige me on ferhðe* 'my heart laughs, when I fear in my mind your holy name'.<sup>68</sup>

MSol 177 *hwæðre wæs on sælum se ðe of siðe cwom feorran gefered; næfre ær his ferhð ahlog* 'yet he was joyful, the one who had come from afar; never before had his mind laughed'.

As with the metaphors of sense perception, there is a certain strangeness about dealing with these metaphors of the laughing or weeping mind, since the lines of projection are from the outwardness of the body directly in towards the mind. These metaphors are thereby both simple and complex: simple in that their function is self-evident, paradoxically complex in that the categorial boundaries which are supposed to have been crossed are not altogether distinct. In particular, the metaphor of the laughing mind poses certain problems. The complexity of laughter as social behaviour is, I think, evident in some of the instances cited above, where the laugh is expressive more of relief than pure joy (And 454, E1 992) or of a happiness tinged with awe (PPs 85.11). Compared to the clarifying projections of quantity and shape, these metaphors challenge the

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<sup>68</sup> Roman Ps 85:11 *laetetur cor meum ut timeam nomen tuum* 'let my heart rejoice that I may fear thy name'.



interpretation of inner processes, and the effect is to render the mind somewhat impenetrable.

#### Mind as garden plot

One last metaphor which may be worthy of inclusion is that which metaphorizes the mind as a garden plot, wherein qualities may be sown:

ChristA 486: *feondscype dwæscað, sibbe sawað on sefan manna þurh meahta sped* 'extinguish enmity, sow peace in the minds of men through the wealth of your powers'.

Or uprooted:

ÆCHom II, 30 238.107 *awyrtwala grædignyse of ðinre heortan, and aplanta þæron ða soðan lufe* 'weed out greediness from your heart, and plant therein the true love'.<sup>69</sup>

Met 12.25 *gif þu up atyhsð ærest sona and ðu awyrtwalast of gewitlocan leasa gesælða, swa swa londes ceorl of his æcere lycð yfel weod monig* 'if you at once pull out and uproot from your mind all the false pleasures, just as a tiller of land plucks out many evil weeds from his acre'.

Solil 1 39.14 *ac ic ongyte þeah þæt þa worldelustas ne sint eallunga awyrtwalode of ðinum mode, þeah se graf geryd si. forðam þa wyrtruman magon eft ðanon asprettan* 'but I understand however that the worldly lusts are not altogether weeded out of your mind, though the trench be sufficient; for the roots may afterwards sprout forth from there'.

Judging by its relative rarity, however, and the fact that its occurrence is largely limited to the Alfredian and Ælfrician corpus, this may well be a borderline instance of a loan-metaphor.

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<sup>69</sup> Ælfric continues, *seo grædignyis is swa swa se apostol Paulus cwæð wyrtruma ælces yfeles*, which is a reference to I Tim 6:10 *radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas* 'for the desire of money is the root of all evil'.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have given a very quick survey of the main metaphors of Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology. A great deal of my exposition will already have been instinctive to the reader of Old English, because many of these metaphors still exist in present-day English, serving the same expressive functions. It has been my aim to bring this instinctive understanding to the recognition of the cognitive reality of these metaphors, that they do not exist as mere figures of speech. In the brief sketch of each metaphor, glimmers of a culture which emphasized different values from ours have emerged, such as that 'up' to the Anglo-Saxons more often meant arrogance than it meant happiness. Again, the question of how far the voices which survive to us were representative of their age places constraints on the sorts of conclusions we can make about what I have blithely been calling Anglo-Saxon *common* sense psychology. As I observed near the end of the last chapter and in treating the metaphors of sense perception, there are a number of metaphors which were formed under the pressure of a need to express mystical experience, and in these writings, the mind-as-body metaphor made itself manifest in ever more extravagant forms. While some of these metaphors were current in ordinary language (e.g. those involving sight and hearing), many more remained restricted to the mystical tradition, and a refinement of the sense of genre is probably worth pursuing. Riehle, for instance, feels that mystical metaphors differ in kind from ordinary metaphors:

If the mystics now frequently use the language of earthly sense perceptions in a spiritual meaning when relating their personal experiences, then it would be wrong, as we have already indicated, to understand and assess this language simply as the use of metaphor in the normal sense of the term, for this is no mere makeshift language but rather one in which the mystical experience itself takes place ... In these [spiritual] acts it seems to the soul that it is experiencing a supernatural object which reveals itself as if it were present in some concrete manner. Hence this spiritual sense perception can certainly become

similar to that of the physical senses, and therefore the language which expresses such experiences is something rather different than mere metaphor.<sup>70</sup>

It is not altogether clear what Riehle means by metaphor "in the normal sense of the word" and as "makeshift language". Given our present understanding of how metaphor operates, it may be that the gap which Riehle perceives between mystical metaphors and those of ordinary language is not as wide as he supposes. But he may well be correct in divining a difference between those metaphors formed at the extremities of human experience, and those derived from everyday life.

The issue of which metaphors were embedded and indigenous remains. I have used frequency as a rough guide, together with the metaphors' differentiated occurrence in poetry and prose. A more rigorous assessment might attempt actually to count occurrences of a metaphor for a comparison of relative frequencies, but such a task would be fraught with problems of definition: for instance, should a metaphor which involves both vision and light be counted once in each category? and should literary elaborations of metaphors be counted as ordinary language? How, indeed, should we distinguish a metaphor as being literary? The boundaries that delimit 'ordinary language' are not easy to draw with precision. For these reasons, I have not thought it worth embarking on such statistical work at this point, though, if it came to the question of finding out the precise points at which the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind might emerge as distinct from, say, that found in Latin, some such study might be necessary.

A more profitable approach may be to investigate the metaphors singly, to arrive at some sense of how they ramify, mesh with others and how they are used by Anglo-Saxons to mean. In the next chapter I study the presence of the metaphors of fastening and foundation in Anglo-Saxon culture, and hope thereby to show how the study of the mind in the light of metaphor theory might be applied in the reading of Old English literature.

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<sup>70</sup> Riehle, p. 104.

## Chapter Four: Metaphors of fastening and foundation in Old English literature

The mind is fickle and flighty, it flies after fancies wherever it likes: it is difficult indeed to restrain. But it is a great good to control the mind; a mind self-controlled is a source of great joy.

- TheDhammapada<sup>1</sup>

At Sea 109, there is a piece of gnomic wisdom which bears a striking resemblance to the verse quoted above: *stieran mon sceal strongum mode ond þæt on stapelum healdan* 'one should steer a strong mind and hold it to its foundations'. The notion of steering one's mind may have had resonances in this nautical elegy, but the notion of holding it to fixed foundations was also, more generally, a frequently used Anglo-Saxon idiom for expressing the need to fasten down a wandering mind. This was an aspect of the 'mind as moveable object' metaphor, with the emphasis on control. The value of this figure in Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology was not only descriptive, in that it enabled writers to describe, for instance in saints' lives, processes of mental resolution and concentration; but it also possessed a normative, didactic value, in that fastening one's mind to a strong foundation could be recommended as a way to Christian living. As we shall see, the metaphor of the wandering or fluctuating mind was very much a feature of scriptural and ecclesiastical writings as well, and the notion of fastening to a foundation was at the heart of a symbol which had enormous influence on the expression of spiritual aspiration, not just in

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<sup>1</sup> The Dhammapada: the path of perfection, ed. and transl. Juan Mascará (London, 1973), p. 40. This is a collection of 423 Buddhist aphorisms, probably compiled in the third century B.C. The etymology of *dhamma* is rather *a propos*: it is the Pali form of Sanskrit *dharma* meaning 'the teachings of the Buddha, Truth, Law', and both derive from the Indo-European root \**dhr-*, meaning 'to uphold' or 'support'. *Dharma* is thus related to Gk. *thronos*, Lat. *firmus* and *fretus* 'supported by' (see Edward Conze, Buddhist thought in India [Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1962], p. 92 and Pokorny, Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, p. 252).

linguistic and literary terms, though that is what chiefly concerns us, but also in the practice of religious life.

The notion of fastening incorporates an image schema of three parts. As I observed in the previous chapter, the idea of movement is meaningless without reference to a fixed point, and two elements of the image schema are thus 1) a moving object, and 2) a base or plane of fixed position. A third element of the schema is the fastening action, which secures the moving object onto the fixed plane. It is this recurring, dynamic pattern which underlies the metaphors of fastening and foundation in the envisioning of mental life. The experiential bases of this dynamic pattern are many and diverse: tethering a domestic animal, simply staying in one place rather than travelling about, anchoring or mooring one's boat, building a house which withstands the onslaught of the elements, driving a stake into the ground so that it is rooted like a tree. I use the two words 'fastening' and 'foundation' in tandem, because together they highlight the means and the objective of the metaphor. The cultural value of fixedness was as an absolute good, since it was the opposite of impermanence, flux, dissolution, all things which medieval men decried in this life. Fastening on to this permanence and stability was something in which to place one's hope, a means of rising above insecurity and frailty.

I would like to examine the vocabulary of this metaphor rather closely at the beginning of this chapter, for as I hope to show in my analysis of the metaphor itself, a word-sensitive approach is able to reveal the extent of a metaphor's presence within a culture. My study of the vocabulary of the metaphors of fastening and foundation rest on two key aspects of lexical study, etymology and polysemy. In my first chapter, I had argued that the etymology of a mind-word is not always, if ever, a relevant factor in the determination of its synchronic meaning. But as I showed in Chapter Two, elusive or inaccessible concepts such as the mind or emotions are rendered accessible by the mapping-on of the structure of a concrete source domain. In Kittay's account of metaphor, the process is defined as an interplay or a meshing of semantic fields. A good

understanding of the use of a word in its source domain is thus crucial to an understanding of its behaviour in the target domain.

Now, the distinction between the literal and metaphorical uses of a word is a kind of polysemy which we can easily understand in the light of the metaphor theory which I outlined in Chapter Two. But even prior to being projected onto a source domain to help structure an elusive concept, a word often possesses multiple meanings within the bounds of its concrete, 'literal' usage. A word like *cover* possesses a multiplicity of usages which a lexicographer would label as 'literal' - the *cover* of a book or a saucepan, an album *cover*, forest *cover*, cloud *cover*, and, more recognizably figurative, insurance *cover* or *cover* story. In the view of some semanticists, this variety of use should be thought of as homonymy,<sup>2</sup> but from a cognitive semantic perspective, the recognition of the role of metaphor in human conceptualization leads us to see that the relationships between the different senses of a single word can be accounted for. Thus the application of the word *cover* in so many disparate realms of experience originates in the fact that the image schema or dynamic pattern underlying the meaning of *cover* is perceived to be repeated in all of these situations.

This perspective is important not just for synchronically related senses of words, but for an understanding of the relationships between historically earlier and later senses of words; that is, for etymologies. Reaching backwards for the original sense of a word can sometimes reveal aspects of a concept which earlier speakers felt compelled to highlight. In the first footnote of this chapter I make reference to the etymology of *dharma*, because its original sense of 'support' is clearly relevant to my study of the metaphors of foundation in Anglo-Saxon Christian culture. With a cognitive approach we have a theoretical basis on which to understand the relations not just between the various

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<sup>2</sup> See F. R. Palmer, *Semantics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 100-108, for an explanation of the thought behind this view; and Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, pp. 110-114, and Sweetser, *From etymology to pragmatics*, p. 3, for arguments against it.

synchronic senses of a word and its diachronic development, but also to have an insight into the cultural importance of certain ideas and images. The etymology of *dharma* affords us some access to a metaphor of the Axial Age,<sup>3</sup> and its conceptual relation to words of the Christian religion such as Lat. *fundamentum* might even be important for an understanding of the universals in religious thought.

As I demonstrated in the first chapter, it is important with regard to the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind to break free of a lexical approach narrowly focusing on words for the mind, but having established that the nature of the mind can be approached via the method of its conceptualization, that is by metaphor, it is now important to pay attention to the metaphors' linguistic expression.

The key terms in the Old English expression of this metaphor were the noun *stapol*, the adjective *fæst* and their derivatives. The word *stapol* meant 'foundation',<sup>4</sup> and it is part of the *\*sta-* group of words which also gave rise to Lat. *sto* 'to stand', and *stabilis* 'firm, stable'.<sup>5</sup> In its physical senses, *stapol* had a wide range. It could refer to the earth in sods, as in MCharm 1 9: *and do þonne haligwæter ðær on, and drype þonne þriwa on þone staðol þara turfa* 'and then put the holy water on and drip it three times on the ground of the sods'; or to local geomorphological features, as in ChristC 977: *beorgas gemeltað and heahcleofu, þa wið holme ær fæste wið flodum foldan sceldun, stið ond stæðfæst, stapelas wið wæge* 'mountains will melt and high cliffs, which once shielded the land fast against floods and against the sea, rigid and steadfast, foundations against the water'. It could refer to the 'foundations of the earth', as in PPs 81.5: *ne ongeatan hi ne*

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<sup>3</sup> This is the name given to that period of history (800-200 B. C.) which saw the formation of the world's major religions (see Karen Armstrong, The history of God [London, 1993], p. 36).

<sup>4</sup> BT, s.v. *stapol*, sense I.

<sup>5</sup> Pokorny, p. 1007. The closest cognates of *stapol* are Lat. *obstaculum* 'obstacle', OI *stōðull* 'milking shed', OHG *stadal*, NHG *stadel* and Old Frisian *stathal* (Holthausen, s.v. *stapol* and also *stæð*, *steall*). Lat. *stabilis* and related words belong to the group with a formative *\*-dhlo-*.

*geara wistan, ac hi on ðystrum þrage eodan; ealle abeofedan eorðan stapelas* 'they neither understood nor readily knew, but they went in darkness for a time; all the foundations of the earth trembled' (Ps: *nescierunt neque intellexerunt in tenebris ambulat movebuntur omnia fundamenta terrae* 'they have not known nor understood: they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth shall be moved'); or to the cosmological firmament, as in psalter glosses of Ps 18.2, 17.8 and so on.<sup>6</sup> It could refer to an architectural foundation, as in HomS 33 (Först) 176: *& seo ceastre wes ymbeseald mid Godes beorhtnesse; & hire stapol wes of eallum deorwyrpum stanum gefretewod* 'and the castle was endowed with God's brightness, and its foundation was adorned with all the precious gems'; and more generally, to the foundation of an institution, such as a monastery (Bede 3 17.230.24): *ond swa in þære stowe þa staðolas sette þæs mynstres* 'and so in that place he laid the foundations of the minster'. Trees were fixed to the ground by their roots, which stood fast in the ground, or *stapol* (Dan 580): *se wyrtruma stille wæs on staðole, swa seo stefn gecwæð* 'the root-stump stood still in the ground, just as the voice said'; in Dream 70, the crucifixes stand immobile but sentient: *hwæðere we þær greotende gode hwile stodon on staðole* 'yet we stood there in the ground for a good while, lamenting'. The verb was *stapolian* 'to found' or 'to establish', and its literal use may be exemplified by Chron (CaligA 15) 1073.1: *her Lanfranc arcebiscop staðolede Cristes cyrican* 'here Archbishop Lanfranc established Christ's church', and by PsGJK (Sisam) 103.8: *astigað muntas & nyperstigað feldas on stowe þa ðu staðuludest him* 'mountains rise up and plains sink down in the place where you established them' (glossing *fundasti*).

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<sup>6</sup> PsGIG (Rosier) 18.2: *heofenas bodiað vel cyðað wuldor godes & weorc handa his bodiaþ stapol vel trumne vel rador* glossing *caeli enarrant gloriam Dei et opera manuum eius adnuntiat firmamentum*. 'the heavens proclaim the glory of God and the work of his hands announce the firmament'.



The Indo-European root of *fæst* was *\*pasto-*. Sanskrit *pastyá-m* meant 'abode' or 'place of residence'.<sup>7</sup> To be *fæst* was to be 'fixed' and 'constant',<sup>8</sup> and its relation to *stapol* may be seen by *ByrM 1(Baker/Lapidge) 2.3.194: þa steorran synt gecweden þurh heora stede, forðon hig synd fæste on þære heofene* 'the stars are so called because of their stability, for they are motionless in heaven';<sup>9</sup> and *Bo 12.26.22: se þe wille fæst hus timbrian* 'the one who wishes to build a firm house'. The adverbial form *fæste* described, for instance, the immobilizing power of Beowulf's grip (*Beo 788: heold hine fæste se þe manna wæs mægene strengest on þæm dæge þysses lifes* 'he held him fast, the one who was the strongest in might of men at that time, in this life'; the immoveability of something tightly wedged in place (*ÆLS [Swithun] 71: he ða hit eft sette on þæt ylce þyrl, and þyde mid his fet, and hit swa fæste eft stod þæt nan man ne mihte hit þanon ateon* 'then he set it in that same hole and pressed with his feet, and from then on it stood there so fast that no one could pull it from there'. This word could also denote the security of possession (*ÆLS [Chrysanthus] 21: uton healdan fæste þone fægeran goldhord* 'let us hold fast the fair goldhoard'; or of incarceration (*ÆLS [Vincent] 182: belucað hine þonne fæste þæt he licge þær ana leohtes bedæled on þam laðum bedde* 'then they lock him up fast that he must lie there alone, deprived of light, in that loathsome cell'. The verb was *fæstan* or *fæstnian*, and described the process of fixing into place, immobilizing. Christ was fastened onto the cross (*LS 22 [InFestisSMarie] 123: his slege þurheode hire sawle, þa þa heo geseh hire swylcne Sune nymen, binden & swingan ... & on rode fæstnigen* 'his murder pierced her soul, when she saw her very Son taken, bound and scourged ... and fastened on the cross'.

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<sup>7</sup> Pokorny, p. 789. Cognates were OI *fastr*, OS *fast*, OHG *fasti* and NHG *fest*.

<sup>8</sup> *BT*, s.v. *fæst*, also defined as 'firm, stiff, solid, fortified', and noted as glossing *firmus*, *solidus*, *constans*, *munitus*.

<sup>9</sup> Compare ISID.Etym. 3.71.3 *stellae dictae a stando, quia fixae stant semper in caelo nec cadunt* 'stars are named from standing, because they always stand fixed in the sky and do not fall'.

The image schema of an immovable plane on which other things depended for support was clearly flexible and fecund enough that Anglo-Saxons saw a *stapol* in things ranging from a clod of earth to the fundamentals of the universe. The notion of being fixed in place that was conveyed by *stapol* and *fæst* was so compelling that the two words formed together the adjectival compound *stapolfæst* 'fixed fast as to a foundation'. In the following passage from Lch III(Foetus), we can see the pattern of conceptualization which led to the flesh being seen as a *stapol* for life, or perhaps *stapolfæst* in this context means that the limbs are securely fastened onto the torso (10): *on þæm feorþan monþe he bið on limum staðolfæst* 'in the fourth month he is fixed in the limbs'. This notion is used adverbially a few lines later (17): *on þam eahtopan monþe him beoð þa breost þing wexende & heorte & blod & he bið eall stapolfæstlice geseted* 'in the eighth month all the organs of the chest are growing in him, and the heart and blood, and he is all steadfastly established'. The abstract noun *stapolfæstnes* expressed 'the fixedness of a foundation'.

The versatility of *stapol* and the interplay of its literal and metaphorical senses has been observed by Fred Robinson with regard to the book-moth riddle (Rid 47):<sup>10</sup>

Moððe word fræt. Me þæt þuhte  
 wrætlicu wyrd, þa ic þæt wundor gefrægn,  
 þæt se wurm forswealg wera gied sumes,  
 þeof in þystro, þrymfæstne cwide  
 ond þæs strangar stapol. Stælgieost ne wæs  
 wihte þy gleawra, þe he þam wordum swealg.

'A moth ate words. It seemed to me a strange fate, when I heard of that wonder, that the worm, a thief in the darkness, swallowed the song of a man, an illustrious composition and the foundation of the strong one. The thievish stranger was not a whit the wiser when he swallowed the words'.

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<sup>10</sup> Fred C. Robinson, "Artful ambiguities in the Old English 'book-moth' riddle", in Anglo-Saxon poetry: essays in appreciation, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1975), 355-362.

As Robinson observes, most critics agree that on one level the *staþol* refers to the "foundation on which the words stand", that is, the manuscript page.<sup>11</sup> This furnishes a nice example of incipient polysemy as accounted for by the cognitive semantic perspective. But as Robinson also observes, the choice of the word *staþol* allowed the poet to pun on the 'mental' senses of the word: *staþol* as the foundation of thought, i.e. the mind. He glosses the phrase *þæs strangan staþol* as "the basic argument of the mighty one", on the basis of such usages as ThCap 1 (Sauer) 22.333.3: *on þissum twam cwydum is se staðol ealles cristenes geleafan* 'in these two sayings is the basis of all Christian faith'.<sup>12</sup> As much of the discussion in this chapter shows, however, the use of *staþol* in abstract, specifically mental (rather than discursive) senses was well-established, so that a gloss such as 'the intention or mind of the mighty one' is possible. This use is supported by these lines from Solomon and Saturn which Robinson also refers to, about the good influence of books (240): *gestrangað hie and gestaðeliað staðolfæstne geðoht, amyrgað modsefan manna gehwylces of ðreamedlan ðisses lifes* 'they strengthen and establish steadfast thought, they cheer the mind of each man from the afflictions of this life'.<sup>13</sup> The image is of the mind as the basis of thoughts fixed in place by reading.

The notion of *staþol* as a basis or foundation was sometimes applied to the concept of mind as if in order to render it concrete. At CP 11.67.14:

Ac ealne weg fundað to ðeosum eorðlecum, ond ðonne hie gehierað awuht be ðæm gode ðæs heofenlican rices, ðonne ahefegiað hira heortan ða byrðenna ðæs forhwirfdan gewunan ðætte hie ne magon hiera geðohtes staðol uparæran.

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<sup>11</sup> Robinson, "Artful ambiguities", p. 357.

<sup>12</sup> Robinson, "Artful ambiguities", p. 357-358.

<sup>13</sup> In the notes to the poem, Dobbie opines that "the existence of a noun *þreamedla* ... is at least uncertain" (ASPR 6, p. 165). *þreamedla* occurs twice in MSol and once in GuthA as the dat. instr. pl. *þreamedlum*, usually emended to *þreaniedlum*. C. W. M. Grein lists the word in MSol 241 under *þrea-nydla* (Sprachschatz der angelsächsischen Dichter, rev. J. J. Köhler and F. Holthausen [Heidelberg, 1912], p. 722).

'But always they tend towards these earthly things, and when they hear anything about the good of the heavenly kingdom, then the burdens of this perverse habit weigh their hearts down, so that they cannot raise the level of their thought'.<sup>14</sup>

The Latin original (GREG.MAG.Reg.past. 1.11.49): *cordis faciem non attollit, quia cogitationis statum erigere non ualet* 'he does not raise the countenance of his heart, for he is not able to elevate the state of his thought'. The best understanding of *status* (hence of *stapol*) may be as "condition and position with reference to rank, profession ... reputation and character".<sup>15</sup> This, together with the up-down scale of reference underlying the passage, would seem to justify my (pragmatic) translation of *stapol* as 'level', but the basic idea may be to project a notion of physicality or concreteness to the mind so that it can be spoken of in such spatial relations.

Another such use of *stapol*, also based on a Latin original, occurs in LS 23 (MaryofEgypt) 2.716: *þæs gyfe genihtsumode þe þære sawle staðol unwemme geheold* 'the grace of that sufficed which kept the foundation of the soul unblemished'.<sup>16</sup> The source (Vit.Mar.Egypt. 22, 687C): *sufficere dicens gratiam spiritus, ut custodiret animæ substantiam immaculatam* 'saying that the grace of the spirit suffices, that it should preserve the substance of the soul immaculate'. Again, in rendering *substantia*, "that of which a thing consists" (Lewis and Short), *stapol* appears to convey materiality. But the central metaphor of foundation in the Anglo-Saxon conception of mental life refers to a *stapol* outside of the mind.

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<sup>14</sup> Sweet's translation (p. 67): "and when they hear aught of the excellence of the kingdom of heaven, their hearts are oppressed by the burdens of their perverse habits, so that they cannot exalt the state of their mind".

<sup>15</sup> Lewis and Short, A Latin dictionary (Oxford, 1969 [1879]), s.v. *status* sense 2.

<sup>16</sup> Skeat's edition (see Ch. 3 note 15) has "such a gift sufficed for one who kept her soul steadfast in purity", but *þe* seems to require *þæs gyfe* as its antecedent (see BTS, s.v. *stapol*, where this citation is included under sense II 'fixed condition, state, position').

As seen from the epigraph of this chapter, the notion of the wandering, flighty mind was one widespread across cultures. Gregory the Great said it for all mankind in his *Regula pastoralis* (3.14.24): *nil quippe in nobis est corde fugacius, quod a nobis totiens recedit, quotiens per prauas cogitationes defluit* 'indeed there is nothing in us more fleeting than the mind, which so often departs from us whenever it flows away in wicked thoughts'. In translating, Alfred found the resources of his native language ready at hand (CP 38.273.10): *forþæm nan wuht nis on us unstillre & unstæððigre ðonne ðæt mod, forðæm hit gewitt sua oft fram us sua us unnytte geðohtas to cumað & æfter ælcum ðara toflewð* 'for nothing is more restless and unsteady in us than the mind, for it departs from us as often as unprofitable thoughts come to us, and it flows after each of them'. The mind tends to think of many things in quick succession rather than to focus on one thing for long; this inability to concentrate has an adverse effect on human endeavour. From a spiritual perspective, the lack of concentration in prayer and meditation is a serious setback: from moment to moment the restless, inattentive mind must be tamed and brought to heel. From day to day, and in the conduct of life, this mental discipline is also crucial, so that *unnytte* thoughts of sin can be guarded against, and the mind fixed in peaceful contemplation of the next world rather than scattered in the irascible, acquisitive or prurient thoughts of this one. The reward for these moments, days and ages of mental discipline is ultimately, for Christians, the hope of entering the kingdom of God and attaining, at last, eternal and effortless bliss. Clearly, being able to picture and talk about the endemic inattentiveness of the mind and ways out of this condition was crucial to the theory and practice of spiritual life. The epistemic access offered by the metaphor was therefore a golden key.

The metaphors of fastening and foundation as applied to the mind can thus be examined in contexts successively larger in scale: from the momentary to the mortal to the eschatological. Because the last forms the background to all other endeavour, and is

quietly present through so much Anglo-Saxon literature, I shall begin with the largest, last things before proceeding to the small.

The stability of the earth and the ground upon which we live is very likely the most important physical basis from which the notion of 'foundation' is projected onto the idea of God's 'kingdom'. But the kingdom of heaven transcends all physical foundations, and therefore faith should be put in the unseen *stapol* of the next world, rather than in the habitats of this life. In Rewards 58: *forþam þu sylf ongyte þæt þu alætan scealt læne stapelas, eard and eþel* 'for you yourself understand that you should abandon the transient foundations, dwelling place and native land'.<sup>17</sup> The very condition of our mortality renders faith in the physical misplaced, in a usage reminiscent though undermining of that which we saw in the Leechbook (ÆCHom I, 32 458.209): *nan stede nis ures lichaman ...witodlice ne stent ure yld on nanre stapolfæstnysse ac swa micclum swa se lichama wexst swa micclum beoð his dagas gewanode* 'there is no stability in our body ... certainly our age does not stand on any fastness of foundation, but so much as the body grows, by so much are its days diminished'. The fallen state of the world is a state of exile, so that, following Adam, man is a homeless creature (HomM 11 [ScraggVerc 14] 18):

And for Adames gewyrhtum we wæron of ðam eadilican setle neorxna wanges gefean ut ascofene & on þas wræc sende þysse worulde þe we nu on lyfiað; for ðan we nabbað her nanne fæstlicne staðol ne langsumne eðel, ac we gelomlice geseoð to hwan se eorðlica dæl & sio mennisce gecynd wiorðan seal.

'and for Adam's transgressions we were shoved out from that blessed dwelling and the joy of paradise and sent into the exile of this world which we now live in; therefore we have here neither fixed abode nor a lasting homeland, but we frequently see to what the earthly portion and the human race must come'.

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<sup>17</sup> The rewards of piety is the name given to the text previously thought to be two separate poems, An exhortation to Christian living and A summons to prayer. See Fred C. Robinson, The editing of Old English (Oxford, 1994), pp. 180-195. Robinson translates these lines as "perceive therefore yourself that you must give up transitory estates, [your] homeland and dwelling-place".

The unsettledness of the exiled state was alternatively viewed as being fluctuating and undependable like the sea, so that to enter God's kingdom is to reach the shore (ÆCHom II, 17 165.144): *seo sæ getacnað þas andwerdan woruld and þæt strand getacnode ða ecan staðolfæstnysse þæs towerdan lifes* 'the sea betokens this present world and the shore represented the eternal fixedness of the coming life'. Later in the same homily, this part of which is based on John 21, Ælfric equates the flux of this world with the distractions of mortal desires (166.180): *witodlice petrus tihð ða geleaffullan of yðigendre sæ þyssere worulde and fram flæsclicum lustum to ðære ecan staðolfæstnysse ðurh his lare* 'truly, Peter pulls the faithful from the churning sea of this world and from fleshly lusts to the eternal stability through his teaching'. Elsewhere, Ælfric repeats the contrast between the unsteadiness of this world and the absolute fixity of the next (ÆCHom II, 15 160.329): *we sceolon fyligan urum heafde and faran fram deofle to criste fram ðissere unstæððigan worulde to his staðelfæstan rice* 'we must follow our head and go from the devil to Christ, from this unsteady world to his steadfast kingdom'. And Alfred, translating Gregory, reminds us not to fix our minds on this unreliable world (CP 51.395.29): *on idelnisse ge fæstniað eower mod on him forðæmðe he eow flihð, ðeah ge hine lufigen swelce he wunigende sie* 'in vain you fix your mind on it, for it flies from you, though you love it as though it were lasting'.<sup>18</sup>

The *staþolfæstnes* of the next world was a commonplace of Old English. In the final lines of ChristB, for instance, we can see how it took its place among the other standard metaphors of Anglo-Saxon life (864): *utan us to þære hyðe hyht stapelian, ða us gerymde rodera waldend, halge on heahþu, þa he on heofonum astag* 'let us found our hope on that harbour, which the ruler of the heavens opened for us, holy in the heights, when he ascended into the heavens'. The effect is somewhat confused, but we know what the poet

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<sup>18</sup> Compare GREG.MAG.Reg.past. 3.2.40: *nolite constanter mundum diligere, quando et ipse non potest, quem diligitis, stare. Incassum cor quasi manentes figitis, dum fugit ipse quem amatis* 'do not love the world constantly, since what you love cannot remain. In vain you fix your hearts as though enduring, for the very thing which you love is fleeting'.

means. In Andreas 1336, *staþulfæst steorend* 'steadfast steersman' is one of God's epithets, and again we can see how the habitual use of these metaphors meant that it was fine to mix them, or perhaps it was the paradox of the notion of a landed steersman which made the image work, for the two notions were put together also in Bo 35.97.10: *& he is ana staðolfæst wealdend & stiora & steorroðer & helma, forðæm he riht & ræt eallum gesceaftum, swa swa good stiora anum scipe* 'and he alone is a steadfast ruler and steersman and steering-rudder and helm, for he guides and controls all creatures, just as a good helmsman does a ship'. In GuthA, the image is elaborated conventionally (65): *forþon hy nu hyrwað haligra mod, ða þe him to heofonum hyge stapeliað, witon þæt se eðel ece bideð ealra þære mengu þe geond middangeard dryhtne þeowiað ond þæs deoran ham wilniað bi gewyrhtum* 'therefore they now deride the intention of the holy ones, those who establish their mind in the heavens; they know that the eternal homeland awaits the multitude of all who serve the Lord throughout the world and who strive for the precious dwelling with their deeds'.

The way to salvation was to live life with one's mind constantly fixed on this goal. To be fast in one's mind was to be resolute and unwavering in one's spiritual conviction. This notion led to the formation of words such as *fæst-ræd*, *fæst-hygdig* and *fæst-mod*, all of which mean 'firm in purpose, constant/steadfast in mind' (BT). The best conduct was to be as the one described in HomU 9(ScraggVerc 4) 137: *he wæs strang & staðolfæst & fæstræd on þinum bebodum* 'he was strong and steadfast and fixed of counsel in your commandments'. In many places one was exhorted to have *fæstne geleafan* 'firm faith', and in ÆLS (Mark), Ælfric revitalizes this metaphor with a simile (123): *ac seo geleafulle gelaðung ðe is gelogod on Criste, and on him gefæstnod, swa swa on fæstum stane, ne underfehð þa gesetnyssa þe swilce gedwolan ðurh hi sylfe gesetton buton soðfæstnyssse* 'but the faithful congregation which is founded in Christ, and fastened on him, as though on a fixed stone, does not accept those decrees which such heretics have set down by themselves, without truth'. The reward for living with such mental concentration is



promised by Christ himself, in Creed 33: *cwæð þæt he nolde nænne forlætan þe him forð ofer þæt fylia wolde and mid fæstum sefan freode gelæstan* 'he said that he would abandon no one who would follow him ever after and practise his friendship with a fast mind'. Ælfric furnishes an apostolic example, pointing out again the rock-like quality of constancy (ÆCHom I, 26 390.60): *for þære strençþe his geleafan and for anrædnysse his andetnysse he underfeng þone naman for þan ðe ge geþeodde hine sylfne mid fæstum mode to criste se þe is stan gecweden fram ðam apostole paul* 'for the strength of his faith and for the resolution of his confession, he received the name, because he attached himself with a fast mind to Christ, the one who is called stone by the apostle Paul'.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, in daily life it is easy for one's good intentions to be scattered, and for the unbalancing flux of earthly preoccupations to regain the upper hand. In CP 47.359.5: *forðæm, ðonne mon ða fæstrædnesse his modes innan forlist, ðonne bið he hwilum swiðe unstæððiglice astyred utane on his limum* 'therefore, when a man loses the constancy of his mind within, then he is sometimes very unsteadily stirred up without in his limbs'. The unsteadiness of the limbs here is not the wobbliness of the physically uncoordinated person, but the metaphorical imbalance of a body not kept in check by a firm mind. Similarly, in WHom 10a 31: *forbugan hi a wifmanna neaweste swa hi æfre geornost magon, forðam þe galnes oft oferswiðeð strangra & wel staðelfæstra manna hordgeþanc* 'let them always avoid the company of women as earnestly as ever they may, for lust often overcomes the mind of strong and steadfast men'. A spiritual life requires constant vigilance and perseverance, so that the trope of fastening one's mind to the foundation of faith also has an occasional sense, of renewing one's commitment day by day, or as the circumstances required. As this homily advises, it is through a succession of

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<sup>19</sup> BEDA.Hom. 1.20.123 *ob fortitudinem fidei et confessionis suae constantiam a domino Petri nomen accepit quia uidelicet illi firma ac tenaci mente adhaesit de quo scriptum est: Petra autem erat Christus* 'on account of the fortitude of his faith and the constancy of his confession, he accepted the name of Peter from the Lord, for clearly he adhered with a firm and tenacious mind to Him, about whom it is written, "and the rock was Christ"' (I Cor 10:4).

days that the Last Day is approached, and so the method is to take them one at a time

(HomM 11[ScraggVerc 14] 171):

Staðelian we þa dryhtenlican beboda on urum mode & þa dæghwamlican mid dædum fullian on þam þe we fyrrest magon, to þan, þonne se micela dæg cume þæs toweardan domes & eallum menniscum cynne bið demed be hira sylfra gewyrhtum & geearnungum, þæt we þænne ne ðurfon mid dioflum & mid þam synfullum mannum bion, on ða ecan witu & on þa ecan forwyrd gescyrede.

'Let us establish the divine commandments in our mind and perfect them with daily deeds as much as we can, so that, when the great day of the approaching judgement arrives, and all mankind is judged by their own deeds and deserts, we then do not need to be condemned with the devils and the sinful men to the eternal punishments and to the eternal destruction'.

Later in this chapter I will examine instances in the saints' lives where this 'occasional' type of fastening takes place in the description of mental and spiritual resolution.

The importance of keeping one's mind steady of purpose not just from day to day but from moment to moment in the work of prayer is emphasized in this passage from GDPref 4(C) 61.349.6:20

Ac forþon us is to tilianne, þæt eac swylce swa swiðe swa we magon Gode syllendum we gehealdan him sylfum ure mod mid strængðe & mid staþolfæstnesse on þam tidum ures gebedes, þy læs þonne þæt unnytte geþohte & þæt toflowene tobrece ure bene, þy læs seo idle bliss undercreope on urum mode, & þonne seo sawl forleose þæt gestreon þære inbryrdnesse þurh þa gymeleste þæs togotenan geþohtes.

'But therefore it is for us to endeavour, that also in like manner, as much as we may, with God granting we hold our mind in itself with strength and with steadfastness at the times of our praying, lest that unprofitable and fluctuating thought scatter our prayer, lest

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<sup>20</sup> Compare GREG.MAG.Dial. 4.60.2:

Sed studendum nobis est ut etiam post orationis tempora, in quantum Deo largiente possumus, in ipso animum suo pondere et uigore seruemus, ne post cogitatio fluxa dissoluat, ne vana menti laetitia subrepat, et lucrum conpunctionis anima per incuriam fluxae cogitationis perdat.

'But it is to be pursued in us that even after times of prayer, as far as we are able, with God granting, we keep the mind in its same weight and vigour, lest the fluid thought dissolve afterwards, lest vain pleasure steal upon the mind, and the soul lose the profit of remorsefulness through the negligence of fluctuating thought'.

frivolous pleasure surreptitiously steal upon our mind, and the soul lose the treasure of remorse through the carelessness of the diffusing thought'.

The internal wavering and diffusing motion of the mind's attention is as much a part of the human condition as the external flux of life and death in this world, and the cultivation of mental discipline and concentration in the moments of prayer was a crucial step in the practice of a life of faith. The *stapolfæstnes* required at each step might differ in scale, but ultimately, the envisioning of the path towards God's kingdom and of the cultivation of the mind were closely related through the conceptualization of the process of fastening to a foundation of permanence and stability.

The clearest expression of this motif in the Bible is in the gospel of Matthew 7:24-27, where Christ contrasts the wise and foolish approaches to choosing a foundation for one's house. Christ's admonition is in the form of a simile (Mt 7:24): *omnis ergo qui audit verba mea haec et facit ea adsimilabitur viro sapienti qui aedificavit domum suam super petram* 'everyone therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock'. As familiar as this verse is, the terms of the simile are not immediately transparent. Performing good works in obedience to Christ's commandments is a temporal activity; building one's house on rock has a spatial focus. But of course, the projection taking place here is precisely the same as that which allows us today to say, for instance, that *I am making this argument on the basis of the cognitive theory of metaphor*. The experiential gestalts of building on a foundation have been projected from the physical realm to the intellectual, so that we perform mysterious activities such as thinking and theorizing in terms borrowed from construction.<sup>21</sup> Christ's command, that we should act on his words as a wise man builds on rock nicely reinforces the notion of *stapolfæstnes* in the Anglo-Saxon outlook.

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<sup>21</sup> For an elaboration of the 'theories are buildings' metaphor, see Lakoff and Johnson, pp. 52-53. For an account of the movement of metaphorical projections from the physical to the social and thence to the epistemic (with regard to modality), see Sweetser, Ch. 3.

This verse from Matthew is in effect the basic metaphor of fastening and foundation in the form of a rich image. The same image is repeated in what Christ says to Peter a few chapters on (16:18): *et ego dico tibi, quia tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam* 'and I say to thee: that thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build my church'.<sup>22</sup> Ælfric elaborates upon this verse in ÆCHom I, 26, clearly linking Mt 16:18 with 7:24 (390.64):

Eall godes gelaðung is ofer þam stane gebytlod þæt is ofer criste. for þan ðe he is se grundweal ealra þæra getimbrunga his agenre cyrcan; Ealle godes cyrcan sind getealde to anre gelaðunge; & seo is mid gecorenum mannum getimbrod. na mid deadum stanum. & eall seo bytlung þæra liflicra stana is ofer criste gelogod. for þan þe we beoð þurh ðone geleafan his lima getealde & he ure ealra heafod; Se þe bytlað of þam grundwealle his weorc hryst to micclum lyre.

'All God's congregation is built upon this stone, that is upon Christ, for he is the foundation of all the buildings of his own church. All God's churches are counted as one congregation; and it is built with chosen men, not at all with dead stones, but all the building of the living stones is founded upon Christ. For we are counted as his limbs through the faith, and he is the head of us all. The one who builds away from that foundation, his work falls to great perdition'.

A few centuries earlier than Ælfric, in extolling the consolations of philosophy, Boethius had made the following use of Mt 7:24 (BOETH.Cons.Phil.metr. 2.4.13): *fugiens periculosam sortem sedis amoenae humili domum memento certus figere saxo* 'fleeing the dangerous case of the pleasurable abode, remember, be determined to fix your house on the lowly rock'. In his translation of Boethius, Alfred elaborates on this theme, and clarifies the pedagogical value of the image by relating the house to the mind, in Bo 12.27.4: *se þe wille habban þa ecan gesælða he sceal fleon þone frencan wlite þises middangeardes & timbrian þæt hus his modes on þæm fæstan stane eaðmerta* 'the one who wishes to have those eternal pleasures should flee the dangerous beauty of this earth and build the house of his mind

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<sup>22</sup> Christ himself as the foundation of faith and the Church is a notion explained in ISID.Etym. 7.2.41: *fundamentum autem ideo vocatur, quia fides in eo firmissima est, vel quia super eum catholica Ecclesia constructa est* 'moreover, He is called *fundamentum* for this reason, because the faith is most firm in him, or because the catholic Church has been built upon him'.

on the fast stone of humility'. He repeats this motif in Met 7, making the notion of foundation more explicit (31): *wyrce him siððan his modes hus, þær he mæge findan eaðmetta stan unigmet fæstne, grundweal gearone* 'let him then build the house of his mind where he may find the very firm stone of humility, a ready foundation'.

In the prologue to the Benedictine Rule, Mt 7:24-25 is quoted in full (BENEDICT.Reg.prol. 33-34). The image of the wise man who builds his house upon a rock may have inspired the Benedictine vow of *stabilitas*,<sup>23</sup> which, as Butler remarks, "was St Benedict's most important and characteristic contribution to the course of Western monachism".<sup>24</sup> Butler insists that *stabilitas* be interpreted in its most literal sense, as *stabilitas loci* 'stability of place', observing that it is in this strict sense that Benedict's intention must be understood: "It must, I believe, be held that by stability St Benedict intended that his monks should 'persevere till death,' not merely in a monastery, but in the monastery of their profession".<sup>25</sup> This interpretation of monastic practice as Benedict intended it is no doubt correct, and Christopher A. Jones has observed that "by analogy, stability in the monastery of one's profession could be seen as an anticipation of celestial immutability, an escape from the transience of the world. The soul learns how to live in heaven before actually arriving there".<sup>26</sup> This reading of the Rule must include the notion that the stability of place was meant to instil a stability of mind, and that the vow to remain in the monastery of one's profession until death was the outward expression

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<sup>23</sup> Rüdiger Gollnick, Die Bedeutung des stabilitas-Begriffes für die pädagogische Konzeption der Regula Benedicti (St. Ottilien, 1993), p.40.

<sup>24</sup> Dom Cuthbert Butler, Benedictine monachism: studies in Benedictine life and rule (Cambridge, 1961 [1924]), p. 123.

<sup>25</sup> Butler, pp. 125-126.

<sup>26</sup> Christopher A. Jones, "Envisioning the cenobium in the Old English Guthlac A", Mediaeval studies 57 (1995), 259-291 at p. 286.

of an inward anchoring. Smaragdus, in his commentary on the Rule, made this clear (Ch. 4, 78):

Sunt enim operantium domicilia, et omnium monachorum ibidem habitantium claustra. In quibus qui vult habitare, firmitatem in mente et stabilitatem debet habere in congregatione, ne vagari incipiat per diversa terrarum spatia aut transmigrare de cella ad alteram et de propriis ad non propria loca, et dicatur de illo quod in Salomonis scriptum invenitur libro "sicut avis" inquit "transmigrans de nido suo sic vir relinquens locum suum". Quid enim per avem signatur quae relinquit nidum suum, nisi monachus qui relinquit locum et praepositum suum? Melius enim relinquat mentis vagacitatem et cordis firmiter locique teneat stabilitatem, et ad perfectum ducat bonum quod coepit agere, quia scriptum est: Non qui inchoaverit, sed "qui perseveravit, salvus erit."<sup>27</sup>

'They are indeed the dwelling places and the enclosures of all monks living and working there. Anyone who wishes to live in them ought to have firmness in mind and stability in congregation, lest he begin to wander through the diverse regions of countries or to migrate from one cell to another and from his own places to those not his own; and it is said of him what is written in the book of Solomon, that it is discovered "just like a bird", it says, "migrating from its nest, thus is a man leaving his place". What indeed is signified by the bird which leaves its nest, unless a monk who leaves his place and his duty? It is better indeed that he should leave the wandering of the mind and of the heart, and hold stability of place firmly, and that he should draw on towards the perfect good to the extent that he has begun to do this, for it is written: not the one who will have begun, but "the one who will have persevered, he shall be saved"'.

In Smaragdus's exposition, the stability of place is explicitly equated with the stability of mind, so that the practice of one leads to the other.

In Old English, the technical term *stabilitas* was rendered *stapolfæstnes*. This can be seen at various places,<sup>28</sup> but it probably suffices to illustrate with just one instance, at BenR 60.107.13:

Da þe clerichades synd and munuchades wilniað, syn hy underfangenne on medemum stydum, swa þeah, þæt hy behat don be hyra stapelfæstnesse and be ealre þæs halgan regoles gymene.

'Those who are of the clerical order and desire to be of the monastic order, let them be received into middle-ranking positions; nevertheless, let them make a vow with regard to their stability and to all the observance of the holy rule'.

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<sup>27</sup> Alfred Spannagel and Pius Engelbert OSB (eds.), Smaragdi abbatis expositio in regulam S. Benedicti, Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum vol. 8 (Siegburg, 1974), pp. 147-148.

<sup>28</sup> BenR 4.19.9; 58.97.20; 60.107.13 etc.

The Latin has *si promittunt ... propriam stabilitatem* 'if they promise ... personal stability' (BENEDICT.Reg. 60.9).

Following the quotation of Mt 7:24-25 in the prologue of the Rule, these words occur (BENEDICT.Reg.prol. 35): *haec complens dominus expectat nos cottidie is suis sanctis monitis factis nos respondere debere* 'saying these things, the Lord expects it of us daily that we ought to make ourselves conform with his holy admonitions'. Put into practice, the Benedictine vow of stability could be seen as a metaphorical projection 'doubled back'. The metaphor underlying the passage in Matthew expressed a spiritual imperative in language borrowed from the physical realm; this metaphor was so successful that the rule of monastic conduct required monks actually to live out the words physically, in order to express their spiritual fixedness on God.

The influence of the Benedictine practice of stability on Old English literature has recently been observed by Christopher A. Jones, in the article already cited, with respect to Guthlac A. As Jones demonstrates, Guthlac's dogged refusal to abandon his *beorg* in the poem should be seen in the light of the monk's vow of *stabilitas*:

"Local stability", strictly defined, explains Guthlac's relationship to the *beorg*; he can no more legitimately abandon the place than a monk in the Benedictine tradition can his monastery. It is in the light of this theme, then, that verbs like *gesittan*, *bugan/gebuan* (102, 305), *bidan* (217, 236, 289, 329), and *(ge)wunian* (81, 360, 545, 715) here convey their strong sense of resolve and finality, and that otherwise vague terms for "house" or "building" can communicate an almost tangible solidity and permanence.<sup>29</sup>

The portrayal of Guthlac as a monk bound by the monastic vow of *stabilitas* was inherently paradoxical, since Guthlac was of course, during this period of his life, an anchorite.

Jones's reading of Guthlac A was intended to show the manner in which the legend of the English hermit was accommodated to the sensibility of a monastic audience during the

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<sup>29</sup> Jones, p. 282.

century of the Benedictine Reform.<sup>30</sup> From this historical perspective, it is not surprising that Jones should view as inadequate readings of the poem which make the link to *stabilitas* only to note its psychological dimension. Thomas D. Hill, for instance, observes that "just as the poem concerns Guthlac's struggle to maintain *stabilitas* in a physical sense ..., it is also concerned with his struggle to maintain moral 'stability' as well, to avoid the extremes of either vainglory on the one hand or despair on the other".<sup>31</sup> Yet the two themes could not have existed apart. As I hope to have shown, and as Jones has recognized, the physical sense of *stabilitas* incorporates the moral sense; once we see the operation in Guthlac A of the monastic vow in its technical definition, we can better appreciate the spiritual context of Guthlac's local tenacity.

The spiritual *stabolfæstnes* of Guthlac, expressed in his physical *stabilitas*, lends him a personal unflusteredness. He weathers his trials dauntlessly, with the help of God:

þæs mundboran þe þæt mod geheold,  
 þæt him ne getweode treow in breostum,  
 ne him gnornunga gæste scodun,  
 ac se hearda hyge halig wunade,  
 oppæt he þa bysgu oferbiden hæfde.

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<sup>30</sup> The equivocal, not to say defensive, attitude towards the eremitical approach shown by writers within the monastic tradition is described by Jones (p. 290), and we may see something of this in the Rule itself, where anchorites are thus described (BenR 1.9.5): *oper cyn is ancrena, þæt is westensetlena, þe no on niwan wylme, ac on lancsumere mynsteres drohtnunge geleorniað, þæt hie anstandonde mid Godes fultume þurh broðra getrymnesse ongearn deofol and his flæsces and gepohta leahtras winnan magan* '(of monks) the second kind is of anchorites, that is hermits, who study not in a new fervour, but in long-lasting monastic conduct, so that they may battle against the devil and his sins of the flesh and of thoughts, standing alone with God's help through the strength of brothers' (see BENEDICT.Reg. 1.3-5).

<sup>31</sup> Thomas D. Hill, "The middle way: idel-wuldor and egesa in the Old English Guthlac A", The review of English studies 30 (1979), 182-187 at p. 186. See also Daniel G. Calder, "Guthlac A and Guthlac B: some discriminations", in Nicholson and Frese, 65-80, for a psychological reading of Guthlac's attachment to his *beorg* which misses the *stabilitas* motif.



(GuthA 542-46)<sup>32</sup>

'of the guardian who protected that mind, so that the faith in his breast caused him no doubt, nor discontents disturb him in his soul, but the resolute mind remained holy until he had outlasted those trials'.

The unflappable serenity of Guthlac's spiritual demeanour is characteristic of saints in general, and we may view his immutable peace of mind as resulting from a successful fixing on God's *stapol*.

Juliana was a saint imperturbable to an extreme degree,<sup>33</sup> and in Cynewulf's version of her life she undergoes the threat of marriage to the heathen Eleusius, her testing by the hapless devil and various physical tortures with a fixity of purpose most apposite to the point I am making here. Her manner of refusing Eleusius's suit is *fæste* ([lu] 42), and she vows to him that nothing he can do will budge her from her position: *næfre þu þæs swiðlic sar gegearwast ... þæt þu mec onwende worda þissa* 'you will never of this contrive suffering so severe ... that you turn me from these words'. Despite being surrounded by men of strong and violent temper, Juliana is cheerful, *glædmod* (91), and dauntless, *unforht* (147). Her love is fixed on God rather than on mortal man, in these terms (106): *hio to Gode hæfde freondrædenne fæste gestapelad* 'she had fixedly established her conjugal love on God'. Throughout the poem, her tormentors attempt to unseat her from this uncompromising position. Her father commands her (144): *onwend þec in gewitte, ond þa word oncyr þe þu unsnyttrum ær gespræce* 'turn in your mind, and change those words which you unwisely spoke before'; her demon reports that this is also his mission (325): *he usic sendeð þæt we soðfæstra þurh misgedwield mod oncyrren, ahwyrfen from halor* 'he sends us that we should pervert the minds of the faithful through

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<sup>32</sup> Krapp and Dobbie (ASPR 3) indicate that the line immediately prior to l. 542 is missing: see their notes on the matter at p. 265. The antecedent of *þe þæt mod geheold* is thus unknown.

<sup>33</sup> Admittedly, at l. 268 she is *egsan geaclad* 'frightened with terror'.

error, turn them from salvation'; Eleusius realizes to his chagrin that these efforts are in vain (225): *ða þam folctogan fracuðlic þuhte þæt he ne mehte mod oncyrran, fæmnan foreþonc* 'then it seemed shameful to the chieftain that he could not turn the mind, the deliberation of the woman'.

Juliana's steadfastness is, naturally, founded upon God, and she declares this using rhetoric which, as we shall see, is very characteristic of Anglo-Saxon saintly idiom and which is entirely congruent with the manner in which her enemies express their intentions with regard to her. She proclaims (221): *ic to dryhtne min mod stapelige, se ofer mæгна gehwylc waldeð wideferh* 'I shall found my mind on God, who rules forever over every virtue'. Her prayer to God for strength is prefaced by an internal founding of her mind (270): *ongan þa fæstlice ferð stapelian, geong grondorleas* 'then the guileless young woman began to found her mind firmly'; and her prayer is a plea to remain fixed (275): *þæt þu me ne læte of lofe hweorfan þinre eadgife* 'that you do not let me turn from the praise of your grace'. The devil, describing his strategies for the perversion of would-be saints, refers to this founding of the mind as the moment at which he must act:

þær ic hine finde    ferð stapelian  
to Godes willan,    ic beo gearo sona  
þæt ic him monigfealde    modes gælsan  
on gearum bere grimra geþonca,  
dyrnra gedwilda,    þurh gedwolena rim.  
(364-68)

'Where I find him establishing his mind to God's will, I am immediately ready to bring to him the manifold lusts of the heart, grim thoughts and secret aberrations, through a number of heresies'.

Juliana is proof against such attempts to deflect her from her purpose. It seems appropriate that in attempting to sum up his experience with Juliana, the devil should resort to a word used nowhere else in the extant corpus of Old English texts, *þweorhtimbre*, which **BT** glosses as "cross-grained (?), stubborn" and **BTAdd** as

"resolute".<sup>34</sup> If this is correct, then trying to budge Juliana is likened to trying to chop a piece of wood across its grain. The metaphor is different from that of fixing on a foundation, but the effect of immoveability is the same.

Juliana's final exhortations to the witnesses of her martyrdom pays tribute to Mt 7:24 as a rich image of *stapolfæstnes*:

Forþon ic, leof weorud, læran wille,  
 æfremmende, þæt ge eower hus  
 gefæstnige, þy læs hit ferblædum  
 windas toweorpan. Weal sceal þy trumra  
 strong wiþstandan storma scurum,  
 leahtra gehygdum. Ge mid lufan sibbe,  
 leohte geleafan, to þam lifgendan  
 stane stiðhydge stapol fæstniað,  
 soðe treowe ond sibbe mid eow  
 healdað æt heortan, halge rune  
 þurh modes myne.

([Jul] 647-657)

'Therefore, beloved people, I wish to teach, in performing the law, that you fasten your house, lest the winds destroy it with sudden blasts. A strong wall shall the more firmly withstand the showers of storms, thoughts of sins. With the peace of love, with bright faith, being strongminded, fasten a foundation to the living rock; hold at heart true faith and peace among you, and the holy mystery through the devotion of mind'.

The *æfremmende* is reminiscent of Christ's identification of those who will prosper in his word: *omnis ergo qui audit verba mea haec et facit ea* 'every one therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them', and we may also think of Benedict's admonition, in the prologue to the Rule, that *dominus expectat nos cottidie is suis sanctis monitis factis nos respondere debere* 'the Lord expects it of us daily that we ought to make ourselves correspond to his holy admonitions'. Again, the instructions for the performance of a life devoted to God are cast in terms of an image of stasis, the house secure against storms. Like Alfred, Cynewulf surrenders to the didactic impulse and explains the metaphor even as he paints it, identifying the *storma scuras* with *leahtra gehygdde*. Juliana's exposition

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<sup>34</sup> Grein lists *þweorhtimbre* under *þweorh-tyme*, *-tyme*, meaning 'perverse, truculent' (p. 733).

of the central biblical metaphor of fastening and foundation is a revelation of the secret of her success. After viewing her spectacular displays of saintly stoicism, we come to recognize that Mt 7:24 lies at the heart of the poem's pedagogical purpose, and that *þurh modes myne* the spiritual resolution of the martyr is attainable by the rest of us too.

These metaphors of fastening and foundation are an integral part of Anglo-Saxon hagiographic rhetoric. Prior to his death, as recounted in the B-poem, Guthlac finds his spirit against the physical pain of his illness, and finds the strength to preach to his thane:

Ongon þa his mod stapelian  
 leohte geleafan, lac onsægde  
 deophycgende dryhtne to willan  
 gæstgerynum in Godes temple,  
 ond his þegne ongon, swa þam þeodne geras  
 þurh gæstes giefe godspel bodian  
 (GuthB 1110-15)

'Then he began to establish his mind in the bright faith, and offered the sacrifice as a pleasure to the Lord in God's temple, deeply thinking about spiritual mysteries, and as befitted a master, began to preach the gospel to his thane through the grace of the Spirit.'

As Guthlac dies, the odour of sanctity issues from his mouth, and in the poet's lovely comparison of the saint's blessed fragrance to that of blossoms in a summer meadow, there is the hint of a pun in the word for the roots of a plant (1273): *swylce on sumeres tid stincað on stowum stapelum fæste wynnum æfter wongum wyrta geblowene, hunigflowende* 'just as in places in the summer season, plants which have blossomed, flowing with honey, fast by their roots, give off fragrance joyfully across the fields'. The fragrance of flowers is dependent on a good system of roots, just as the sanctity of a person is dependent on the rootedness of their foundation in God.

In the verse saints' lives particularly, the stabilizing action denoted by the verb *stapolian* is primarily occasional in its importance. At points of crisis or of special need, as when Juliana is faced with the devil in disguise, or when Guthlac is in the throes of



achieve the unchangeable state while still on earth because they already form part of Christ".<sup>35</sup> Reflecting God's nature, they are perfectly tranquil, for as Isidore observed, *nullis perturbationibus afficitur, quibus fragilitas humana subcumbit* 'He is affected by none of the passions, to which human frailty succumbs' (ISID.Etym. 7.1.24).<sup>36</sup> The unruffled *stapolfæstnes* of temper depicted in hagiography had specific theological underpinnings. In contrast to the transcendent saints, the men in Juliana's life are irascible and easily aroused in temper (Jul 58, 67, 90, 184) whilst the thane of Guthlac B is emotionally anxious and needy (GuthB 1009, 1052, 1156). This contrast would have been understood as the difference between having and not having a fixed foundation. Returning to Guthlac A, we can see that a similar contrast between the saint and the demons who test him is expressed in terms of Guthlac's attachment to his barrow and the devils' lack of a fixed address.<sup>37</sup> The plight of the devils is to be in permanent flux (220): *ne motun hi on eorþan eardes brucan, ne hy lyft swefeð in leoma ræstum, ac hy hleolease hama þoliað* 'they cannot enjoy a dwelling place on the ground, nor does the air lull them in the resting of limbs, but they, shelterless, lack homes'. They are exiles, *wræcmæcgas* (263), and rather touchingly, their harassment of Guthlac is said to proceed from his setting up in the place where they had formerly been able to enjoy brief respites from their endless wandering (209): *þær hy bidinge, earme ondsacan, æror mostun æfter*

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<sup>35</sup> Robert E. Bjork, The Old English verse saints' lives (Toronto, 1985), p. 20. Bjork refers to Gregory's exposition on the nature of saints in his comment on Job 15.15 (GREG.MAG.Moral.lob 12.33.38): *qui per naturam omnes in semetipsis propriam mutabilitatem habent, sed dum immutabili ueritati studiose semper inhaerere desiderant, inhaerendo agunt ut immutabiles fiant* 'who all have in themselves a proper mutability by nature, but while they desire zealously always to cleave to the immutable truth, by cleaving they bring it about that they are made immutable'.

<sup>36</sup> In fact, as Isidore goes on to explain, the emotions attributed to God merely reflect our usage (7.1.25): *sed cum dicitur Deum irasci aut zelare aut dolere, nostro usu dicitur. Apud Deum enim perturbatio nulla est, apud quem tranquillitas summa est* 'but when God is said to get angry or to be jealous or to grieve, that is said according to our usage. Indeed, there is no perturbation in God, in whom there is the highest tranquility'.

<sup>37</sup> See Jones, p. 283.

*tintergum tidum brucan, ðonne hy of waþum werge cwoman restan ryneþragum, rowe gefegon* 'where they, wretched adversaries, formerly at times were able to enjoy an abode after punishments, when they came to rest for short periods, weary from their journeys, and rejoiced in rest'.

The wanderings in exile of the devils of Guthlac A remind us of the point at which the metaphors of *stapolfæstnes* intersect with those of the *weg*. In a homily cited earlier, the *stapol* of heaven was equated with the everlasting *eþel* or 'homeland' (HomM11 [ScraggVerc 14] 20): *for ðan we nabbað her nanne fæstlicne staðol ne langsumne eðel* 'therefore we have here neither a fast foundation nor a longlasting homeland'. For those less accomplished than saints, life on earth is yet a *peregrinatio*, but insofar as the *stapol* of heaven can be seen as the destination at the end of life's journey, the foundation metaphor intersects with that of the path. It represents the stasis at the end of movement.

We have also seen how, in Gregory's idiom or in the exegetical homilies of Ælfric, the foundation metaphor is joined in contrast with metaphors of flux which particularly use bodies of water for conveying the changeable condition of the mind or of this world. I would like to pause over some related metaphors of fastening which made use of this contrast.

In Alfred's translations, these metaphors of flux were elaborated to a high degree, and it is worth examining his treatment of his sources to gain an idea of how one Anglo-Saxon at least understood the operation of these tropes. In the Regula pastoralis, Gregory likened the soul to a boat which must always fight the current (GREG.MAG.Reg.past.

3.34.79):

*In hoc quippe mundo humana anima quasi more navis est contra ictum fluminis conscendentis: uno in loco nequaquam stare permittitur, quia ad ima relabitur, nisi ad summa conetur.*

'In this world, indeed, the human soul is as though in the manner of a ship ascending against the current of a river: it is never permitted to stay in one place for it will float back to the lower parts, unless it strives towards the highest point'.

In Alfred's translation, the physics of boating is fully realized. As Janet Bately has observed, "Gregory's simile of a boat is expanded from twenty-eight words in four clauses to fifty-six words in nine clauses" (CP 58.445.9):<sup>38</sup>

Ac ælces mannes mod on ðys middangearde hæfð scipes ðeaw. Ðæt scip wile hwilum stigan ongean ðone stream, ac hit ne mæg, buton ða rowend hit teon, ac hit sceal fleotan mid ðy streame: ne mæg hit no stille gestondan, buton hit ancor gehæbbe, oððe mon mid roðrum ongean tio; elles hit gelent mid ðy streame.

'But every man's mind in this world has the nature of a ship. That ship sometimes wishes to ascend against the current, but it may not, unless rowers pull it, for it must float with the current: it may not stand still, unless it has an anchor, or one draws it against the stream with oars; otherwise it goes with the current'.

The natural condition of the mind is to go with the flow of the world around it. The mind's fluctuating concentration can only be brought under control with the hand of a helmsman. Gregory's observation that the mind *uno in loco nequaquam stare permittitur* is by now recognizable as a recurrent theme. Alfred obviously thought vividly of messing about in boats while translating these lines, for his addition of oars and an anchor lends technical detail to the conceit. The word *ancor*, especially, occurs a number of times in the Alfredian corpus, and in these texts forms the nucleus of another metaphor which expresses the fastening of the mind on God.

The fluctuating nature of this world was, as we have seen, commonly metaphorized as wind and water. In the Consolation, the abandoning of control over one's mind is likened to spreading one's sail to the wind.<sup>39</sup> Alfred translates this simply (Bo 7.16.28):  
*hwæt, þu wast gif þu þines scipes segl ongean þone wind tobrædest, þæt þu þonne lætæst eall eower færeld to ðæs windes dome* 'indeed, you know that if you spread your ship's

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<sup>38</sup> Janet Bately, "Old English prose before and during the reign of Alfred", Anglo-Saxon England 17 (1988), 93-138 at p. 127.

<sup>39</sup> BOETH.Cons.phil.pr. 2.1.18: *si uentis uela committeres, non quo uoluntas peteret sed quo flatus impellerent promoueres* 'if you commit your sails to the winds, you go not where your will aims but where the winds impel you'.



sail to the wind, that you then leave all your course to the power of the wind'. Boethius continues this metaphor a few chapters later by referring to his family as the *ancorae* of his life,<sup>40</sup> necessary to his survival (BOETH.Cons.phil.pr. 2.4.10): *illis namque manentibus, utcumque se res habeant, enatabimus* 'for indeed, while they remain, however things are, we shall escape drowning'. Alfred's translation of these sections is worth quoting in full (Bo 11.23.4):

Nis þe nu git nan unabereudlic broc getenge, forðon ðin ancer is giet on eorðan fæst; þæt sint ða ealdormen þe we ær ymb spræcon. Þa ðe ne lætað geortrewan be þys andweardan life; & eft þin agna treowa & seo godcunde lufu & se tohopa, þa ðreo þe ne lætað geortrewan be þam ecan life. Ða andsworode þæt unrote Mod & cwæð: Eala wæran þa ancras swa trume & swa ðurhwuniende, ge for Gode ge for worulde, swa swa þu segst; þonne mihte we micle þy eð geþolian swa hwæt earfoþnessa swa us on become. Eall us þyncað þy leohtran ða hwile þe þa ancras fæste bioð.

'There is yet no unbearable affliction touching you, for your anchor is still fast in the ground; that is those noblemen which we talked about earlier. Those will not allow you to despair of the present life; and then your own faith and the divine love and hope, those three will not allow you to despair about the eternal life. Then the unhappy Mod answered, and said: Alas! that those anchors were as strong and as lasting, both for God and for the world, just as you say; then might we the more easily endure whatever hardships fall on us. Everything seems to us lighter while the anchors are fast.'

Family and faith are the things on which one's happiness depends: because the mind is an open vessel on a storm-tossed ocean, its supports are as weights made fast which keep it from floating away onto the open sea.

Alfred's interest in anchors was probably inspired by his translation of the above passage from the Boethius. But the figure would have been reinforced by Hbr 6:19, where the possession of faith in God is compared to an anchor: *quam sicut anchoram habemus animae tutam ac firmam* 'which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm'. We can see in this image a variation on the theme of fastening; but rather than a house solidly built on rock, the mind is a floating object made fast to the ground of its spiritual resources. Note how this image accommodates the mutability of life and the mind, in that

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<sup>40</sup> BOETH.Cons.phil.pr. 2.4.9.

a ship at anchor still moves with the tide to a certain extent. The anchor restricts its range of movement, but does not render it immobile. The image schema underlying the anchor metaphor differs from that of the architectural foundation in that the moveable object, though fastened to a horizontal base, has an upward force acting on it which the downward movement of the anchoring action must counteract and exceed. In addition, the object is not fixed *onto* the base, but linked to it with a tether, which is subject to continual tension between the opposing vectors.

These nautical metaphors were developed to greatest complexity in Alfred's translation of Augustine's Soliloquies.<sup>41</sup> The images of anchoring found here all seem to be entirely original with Alfred.<sup>42</sup> The first instance appears to have been touched off by Augustine's remark about the relative usefulness of intellect and the senses in learning mathematics (AUG.Solil. 22.28):<sup>43</sup> *imo sensus in hoc negotio quasi navim sum expertus* 'rather, I have used the senses in this matter as a ship', where the ship in this instance figures a mode of learning. It seems that Alfred preferred the notion of a ship as representing the mind, for immediately he adds (Solil 1 22.18):

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<sup>41</sup> The chronology of Alfred's translations cannot be established with certainty, though as Frantzen has observed, one theory "arranges the Pastoral care, the Consolation, and the Soliloquies as stages in the development of Alfred's idea of knowledge, from simple book-learning, or *scientia*, to the more profound concept of wisdom, or *sapientia*" (Allen J. Frantzen, King Alfred [Boston, 1986], p. 107). This arrangement agrees with the pattern of increasing complexity, across the texts, of the metaphors I am examining.

<sup>42</sup> We do not know what 'editions' of his sources Alfred used. Allen Frantzen has suggested that Alfred knew the De consolatione philosophiae "through an augmented text which had acquired layers of commentary interpreting the classical elements of Boethius's world in a Christian context" and this could be true also of the Augustine (Frantzen, p. 47). Joseph S. Wittig has argued, on the other hand, that Alfred's translation probably drew on a range of books rather than relying on just one manuscript ("King Alfred's 'Boethius' and its Latin sources", Anglo-Saxon England 11 (1983), 157-198). It is possible therefore that some of the discrepancies between Alfred's versions and the texts which have come down to us reflect intermediate interpolations and other influences rather than the king's remarks; nevertheless, I am treating the discrepancies discussed here as Alfredian.

<sup>43</sup> The system of reference followed by the DOE cites quotations from this text without further reference, but I include page and line nos. following the edition.

for ðam þingum is ðearf þæt þu rihte hawie mid modes ægum to gode swa rihte swa swa scipes ancerstreng byð aþenæd on gerihte fram þam scype to þam ancra; and gefastna þa eagan þines modes on gode swa se ancer byð gefastnod on ðære eorðan. þeah þæt scyp si ute on ðære sæ on þam yðum, hyt byð gesund and untoslegen, gyf se streng aþolað; forðam hys byð se oðer ende fast on þære eorðan and se oðer on ðam scype.

'for these reasons it is needful that you look straight with the mind's eyes to God, as straight as a ship's anchor-cable is stretched directly from the ship to the anchor; and fasten the eyes of your mind on God just as the anchor is fastened in the earth. Though the ship is out on the sea in the waves, it is sound and not beaten to pieces, if the cable holds; for the one end of it is fast in the earth and the other is fast to the ship'.

The taut length of the anchor rope, in tension between the rolling, pitching ship and the firm ground, is a forceful image emphasizing the necessity for maintaining clear sightlines in one's spiritual life. However, the metaphor is faintly odd to us since it is not intuitive that our eyes should be connected with what we see in the same way as a ship is connected to its anchor by a cable, but this incongruity may not have occurred to the Anglo-Saxons if they, like other ancient and medieval peoples, subscribed to the 'extramission' theory of vision, where animal spirit or rays of light were supposed to emanate from the eyes and touch the object in view.<sup>44</sup> In this case, Alfred and his contemporaries would have believed that their eyes were literally connected with the objects they viewed, and thus should one's metaphorical eyes be linked to God. A little later, Alfred adds (23.4):

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<sup>44</sup> See Simon Kemp, *Medieval psychology* (New York, 1990), pp. 36-40. Isidore, whose *Etymologiae* was a standard textbook in Anglo-Saxon England, had this to say about eyes (11.1.36): *Oculi autem idem et lumina. Et dicta lumina, quod ex eis lumen manat, vel quod ex initio sui clausam teneant lucem, aut extrinsecus acceptam visui proponendo refundant* 'The eyes, indeed, are also called lamps. And they are called lamps, because light emanates from them, or because from the beginning they hold their light enclosed, or rather they pour out light received by putting it forth to the object seen'. If indeed the Anglo-Saxons thought of vision in this manner, then perhaps we must take as literal lines such as *Beo* 726: *him of eagum stod ligge gelicost leoht unfæger* 'a hideous light issued from his eyes, most like a flame'.

Wysdom, and eadmeto, and wærscype, and gemetgung, and rihtwisnes, and mildheortnes, and gesceadwisnes, and gestaðþines, and welwilnes, and clenness, and forheafdnes: myd þisum ancrum þu scealt gefastnian ðone streng on gode, þæt ðæt scyp healdan sceal þines modes.

'Wisdom and humility and prudence and moderation and righteousness and kindness and discrimination and steadiness and benevolence and purity and abstinence: with these anchors should you fasten the cable on God, that shall hold the ship of your mind'.

This is the simple form of the metaphor, uncompounded with that of sight, and considered apart from the others of the group behaves as a mere figure of speech, most resembling the biblical idiom found in Hbr 6:19. These virtues are the anchors by which the soul is tethered to God, and the cultivation of these qualities restrains the mind from excessive movement. In answer to Augustine's query about how he can come by these spiritual anchors, Gesceadwisnes answers (23.13):

Ac ic þe scolde erest acsian hu manige þu forleten hæbbe þisse worlde lusta for Gode. Syððan þu ðonne me þæt asæd heafst, þonne mæg ic þe secgan butan ælcum tweon þæt þu heafst swa feola ðara ancra begyten swa þu hæfst þara lusta on wurlde forlæten.

'But I should first ask you how many of the lusts of this world you have abandoned for God. After you have told me this, then I may tell you without any doubt that you have obtained as many of those anchors as you have abandoned of the lusts of this world'.

The forces of disruptive movement which dash the mind about are transformed one by one into anchoring weights as the soul forgoes each of its vices and settles into an appropriate *gravitas*. The immobility of the sea-ground, as of the architectural foundation, is pointed out to Augustine a little later in a passage which is also original with Alfred (25.7): *ðu wast þæt se æca þe naht fram ne gewyt, buton þu fram hym gewite* 'you know that the eternal will not at all go from you, except that you go from it'. In both metaphors of anchoring and foundation, eternity is the fixed base against which all movement is measured.

Alfred's last elaboration of this metaphor refers to the skipper's faith that calm weather will return after the storm. The relevant section of the Soliloquies is an

exposition of how the soul will be able to commune with God all the more purely once it has rid itself of the encumbrances of bodily experience (AUG.Solil. 30.27): *item quia in ista vita qanquam Deo intellecto anima jam beata sit; tamen, quia multas molestias corporis sustinet, sperandum est ei post mortem omnia ista incommoda non futura* 'indeed, for although in this life the soul is already blessed by knowing God, nevertheless because it sustains the many annoyances of the body, it is to be hoped for it that after death all these inconveniences will no longer be'. In the Old English, the soul cannot see God except *þurh geleafan and tohopan and þurh lufe* 'through faith, hope and love' (30.5) and the mention of these three virtues touches off another nautical image:

Dæt sint þa þreo anceras þe þæt scyp ðæs modes healdað on gemang ðam brogan þara yða. þæt mod þeah hæfð micle frofre on ðam þe hit gelyfð and geara wot þæt þa ungelimp and þa ungesælþa þisse wurlde ne beoð æce swa swa scypes hlaford, þonne þæt scyp ungetæslicost on ancre rit and seo sæ hreohost byð, ðonne wot he gewiss smelte wedere towæard.

'Those are the three anchors which hold the ship of the mind amidst the danger of the waves. The mind however has much comfort in that it believes and readily knows that the misfortunes and unhappinesses of this world are not eternal, just as a ship's captain: when the ship rides most turbulently at anchor and the sea is at its roughest, then he knows for sure that calm weather is approaching'.

Here, the anchors of the mind are already in place, but nevertheless, the continuing flux of the world and of mortal concerns makes for a rough ride. The tranquillity of calm weather will only be attained *post mortem*, when the stillness of the waters requires no more straining at anchor.

I have paused over Alfred's nautical conceits because their relation to the main metaphor of foundation which I have examined points the aspects of mind which were perceived most important to highlight. If the house on the rock represents the ultimate stasis towards which we all must strive, then Alfred's metaphors of the mind as a boat riding the waves at anchor depict an intermediate stage of mental focus, between absolute fixity and helpless wandering. Alfred's lively appreciation of the concrete physics of boating emerges in the lucid development of his imagery; but more than this, it was his

ever-present concern for portraying the life of the mind which drove his thinking. The process by which bodily experience is projected onto mental life is apparent in the detail of his writing, so that the king's mind comes down to us as a crucible of metaphor.

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, the twin functions of the metaphors of fastening and foundation were mimetic and didactic. This metaphor provided a means of viewing the mind against life itself, which acts with force upon the object and drives it hither and thither. The perspective could be large, in which case the mind is cast as a house or a boat, facing the elements; or it could be small, tracing the micro-movements of the inner principle, which spreads and diffuses in spite of itself. In each case the answer is to found the mind or anchor it fast. The fixed base represents the *langsum eþel* at the end of all things, or the sea-ground at the bottom of daily life, or the ground within of an individual mind.

I have tried to show in this chapter the cultural embeddedness of a metaphor, from its presence in ordinary language as a common sense psychological idiom and its utilitarian elaboration in homiletic and didactic writings to its expression in the practice of monastic life. At each of these levels, the metaphor reproduced and reinforced itself, reiterating the spiritual hope of a religious culture. The promise of an eternal foundation or homeland certainly promised more than the pagan view of the human predicament as explained in the famous image by Edwin's nobleman, that of the sparrow flying through the hall only to return to the oblivion of winter (Bede 2 10.134.24). Yet the necessary step towards faith in this enduring homeland is a turning away from the false homes and foundations of the world. A recognition of this necessity brings us back to The seafarer, in which the shallow securities of a landlubber's life are regarded with disdain (39) and where the transience of these false pleasures and of this world is tangibly expressed (81-102). In a sense, this poem can be read as a reaction to the mutability of things which took the opposite tack from Benedict's vow of *stabilitas*: rather than imitate the fixity of life in heaven, the seafarer imitates the flux of life on earth. Since life on the open sea is

a truer approximation of the human condition than life on land, by embracing this exposure the seafarer confronts his predicament head on, and learns to place his faith only in the unseen *stapelum* of God's promise (117):

Uton we hycgan hwær we ham agen,  
 ond þonne gebencan hu we þider cumen,  
 ond we þonne eac tilien, þæt we to moten  
 in þa ecan eadignesse,  
 þær is life gelong in lufan Dryhtnes,  
 hyht in heofonum.

'Let us think of where we have a home, and then consider how we can come there, and let us also strive, that we may pass into the eternal grace, where life is dependent on God's love, hope in the heavens'.

We may appreciate in these lines the idealism inherent in the metaphors of fastening and foundation by which the Anglo-Saxons lived. In the harsh asceticism of the seafarer's approach, the wandering mind is transformed into a positive thing, continually driving the spirit onwards in search of a more enduring truth (58).

This idealism in the portrayal of the mind in flight may also be seen in Alcuin's *De animae ratione liber*, where the movement of the mind is a thing of wonder and a gift from God.<sup>45</sup> In a broad sense, the appeal of fixity and stasis was in continual tension not only with the forces of secular flux, but also with the mind's pleasure in its own excellent mobility. Flying across centuries and leaving the Anglo-Saxons behind, we can see a similar tension between the impulse towards movement and the yearning for rest, in the dreamy Orlando of Virginia Woolf's creation: "for he felt the need of something which he could attach his floating heart to; the heart that tugged at his side ... To the oak tree he tied it and as he lay there, gradually the flutter in and about him stilled itself".

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<sup>45</sup> PL 101, cols. 639-650.

## Chapter Five: The cognitive approach and the study of the Anglo-Saxon mind

Unfortunately, because they have no clear theory of semantics, some scholars interested in historical change have indulged in vague statements ...

- F. R. Palmer, Semantics

In making my survey of the Old English mental metaphors in Chapter Three, I introduced a note of scepticism by questioning the extent to which we can say that a distinct Anglo-Saxon concept of mind existed. Implied in this is the question of the extent to which the linguistic evidence which survives will support anything we say about what this concept of mind was: what was the relation between psychological ideas and their linguistic expression? Much of my argument in Chapter One centred on the difficulties of taking a lexical approach to mental vocabulary. My main concern, as I expressed it there, was mostly that the words for the mind in Old English show a large degree of semantic overlap, so that distilling their individual qualities is a virtually impossible task. It was on these largely methodological grounds that I criticized Phillips's and Soland's respective treatments of the Old English mental vocabulary. But the assumption they share, which is that words such as *mod*, *sefa*, *ferhþ* and *hyge* may be distinguished with certainty, is sometimes taken a step further, so that these words, taken to be distinct in meaning, are also taken to be distinct in referent, that is, that there exists a variety of psychological entities corresponding to a variety of psychological terms. The matter then ceases to be methodological and becomes philosophical or anthropological. The type of scholarship generated by this sort of assumption is something I will examine in greater detail later in this chapter. For now, I will merely observe that the issue of the relation between



psychology and language can be seen as being partly subsumed by the issue of the relation between language and reality.

As I observed in Chapter Two, subscribing to the cognitive theory of metaphor necessitates an acceptance of a degree of relativism. But the limits on this relativism are set by the structure of the mind itself. Human cognition offers up a finite range of conceptual patterns, and the degree of divergence among cultures for the conceptualization of an item will be set within the limits of this finite range.<sup>1</sup> As Sweetser observes, "the strong lexicalization of one option could culturally influence thought patterns", but a wide divergence in ways of talking about something does not necessarily imply an equally wide divergence in ways of conceiving.<sup>2</sup> The 'realities' which we attempt to reconstruct from dead languages are thus to be constrained and informed by an understanding of the limits on human conceptualization.

It is against the background of questions such as these that I conclude this thesis with a summary of the importance of the cognitive approach to the emerging study of Anglo-Saxon psychology. As Eve Sweetser's book demonstrates, the cognitive approach to language possesses compelling explanatory power not just for the structuring of individual concepts, but also for aspects of language from polysemy to pragmatics. Although I have expressed cautiousness as to what we can say about the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind, I believe that an approach by metaphor, which I outlined in Chapters Three and Four, represents an advance on the work which has been done up until now. In

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<sup>1</sup> These statements are necessarily tentative, given how much we do *not* know about how languages differ, and how those differences reflect cultural conceptions. Moreover, the work that has been done to determine the existence and extent of linguistic relativity has naturally focused on concrete items such as the perception of colour and the conceptualization of space (see Foley, Anthropological linguistics, Chs. 7 and 11). I assume that what seems to hold true for these items, that relativity exists but is limited, is also true for the conceptualization of the mind: a common sense assumption, but an assumption nevertheless.

<sup>2</sup> Sweetser, From etymology to pragmatics, p. 7.

the rest of this chapter I shall discuss this advance in terms of the following aspects: literary criticism, historical physiology, historical psychology, and finally, philology.

### The cognitive approach and literary criticism

In Chapter Three, I noted that similarities of linguistic expression between Old English and Latin have hitherto been treated from a 'sources and analogues' perspective. The identification of similarities of linguistic expression, plot motif or thematic emphasis across texts is often interesting and satisfying in its own right, but the problem of such an approach is that the main methods of accounting for the simultaneous existence of an item in two cultures are 1) that one of them must have got it from the other, or 2) that the two must have been joined at some point in the past for both to have inherited it. For many linguistic and cultural artefacts, this probably works very well. But frequently, analogues may be enumerated without either 1) or 2) being satisfactory as explanations. A greater recognition of the role of metaphor in the conceptualization of an abstract entity such as the mind might offer a more sophisticated view (or at least a third option) of how the evolution of similar expressions across different languages may be accounted for.

We can examine this in relation to the long-standing puzzlement over the proper interpretation of these lines from The seafarer:

Forþon nu min hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan,  
 min modsefa mid mereflode,  
 ofer hwæles eþel hweorfeð wide,  
 eorþan sceatas, cymeð eft to me  
 gifre ond grædig; gielleð anfloga,  
 hweteð on hwælweg hreþer unwearnum  
 ofer holma gelagu.

(58-64)

'For now my mind roams beyond the confines of my breast; my mind roams widely with the ocean tide over the home of the whale, the regions of the earth, it comes back to me eager and greedy; the lone flier cries and irresistibly urges the heart onto the whale-path, over the waters of oceans'.

There has been much scholarly disagreement over two related matters: how is *min hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan* precisely to be envisaged? and to what does *anfloga* refer? The extremes of opinion reflect the degree of difficulty posed by the interpretation of this passage. With respect to the identity of *anfloga*, the controversy has mainly centred on whether or not to regard 'lone flier' as referring metaphorically to the mind or soul (the subject of the preceding clause *cymeð eft to me*), or to an actual bird. Ernst Sieper first suggested the identification of *anfloga* with the *geac* 'cuckoo' of l. 53, and this view is normally associated in recent scholarship with I. L. Gordon, who promoted it in her edition of the poem.<sup>3</sup> Gordon's 'cuckoo'-reading has never found much favour among critics - Pope said it should be "consigned to oblivion" - but P. R. Orton has more recently argued for its resurrection as a respectable reading.<sup>4</sup> Part of this controversy consists in the difficulty of establishing what features are appropriate to the metaphorical portrayal of the mind. Of the *anfloga*, Gordon wrote:

Some have understood it to be the spirit (*hyge*) sweeping over the sea like a bird; but the emphasis on the cries, which could have little or no metaphorical significance, would make such an image almost absurd.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ernst Sieper, *Die altenglische Elegie* (Strassbourg, 1915), p. 277; I. L. Gordon (ed.), *The seafarer* (London, 1960), p. 41 note 62b.

<sup>4</sup> J. C. Pope, "Second thoughts on the interpretation of *The seafarer*", *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1974), 75-86 at p. 84 note 3; P. R. Orton, "*The seafarer* 58-64a", *Neophilologus* 66 (1982), 450-459.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon, p. 41 note 62b.

Against this unwillingness to suspend disbelief, others have argued that the urgent calls of the lone flier are indeed appropriate to an avian metaphorization of the mind: Pope has even suggested that the poet may have had an eagle in mind in composing this conceit.<sup>6</sup>

The *anfloga*, if not a cuckoo, is a continuation of the image begun at l. 58. But again, the meaning of the *hyge* which *hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan* is far from clear. At the magico-supernatural end of the interpretive spectrum, Vivian Salmon read the movement implied by *hweorfan* literally, and, assembling analogues from Old Icelandic and Old Irish, suggested that these lines from The seafarer might be taken as proof that shamanistic practice survived in Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>7</sup> More recently in the same tradition, Richard North has argued that the confluence of birdlore together with the seafarer's mental apprehension of the future points to "the poet's antiquarian use of an image available to him from an old inheritance of augury from pagan Germanic times".<sup>8</sup> Quite apart from these attempts to find traces of paganism in Old English poetry, Peter Clemoes has suggested that the source of Sea 58-62 can be identified in Alcuin of York's De animae ratione liber,<sup>9</sup> and he has been followed in this vein by Diekstra, in the article already cited. That the search for sources and analogues has been pursued in pagan

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<sup>6</sup> Pope, "Second thoughts", p. 84; "Dramatic voices in The wanderer and The seafarer", Franciplegius: medieval and linguistic studies in honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr., ed. Jess B. Bessinger and Robert P. Creed (New York, 1965), 164-93 at p. 192 note 39; F. N. M. Diekstra, "The seafarer 58-66a: the flight of the exiled soul to its fatherland", Neophilologus 55 (1971), 433-446 at p. 443. At the risk of adding to Roberta Frank's wished-for "anthology of irrelevant birdlore in modern textual criticism", ("Ornithology and the interpretation of skaldic verse", Saga-book 23 [1990], 81-83 at p. 81), I might add that the *anfloga*, for precisely the same reasons that Pope identifies it as being like an eagle (that it *gilleð* and shows a voracious appetite), is unlike the cuckoo, which is characterized in the field guides as being given to perching quietly near the centre of trees.

<sup>7</sup> V. Salmon, "The wanderer and The seafarer, and the Old English conception of the soul", Modern language review (1960), 1-10.

<sup>8</sup> Richard North, Pagan words and Christian meanings, p. 121.

<sup>9</sup> Clemoes, "Mens absentia cogitans".

practices as well as in patristic sources illustrates how little we actually know about what the Anglo-Saxons thought or believed: the impressive assembly of parallels put together by each of these scholars in support of their respective interpretations are, ultimately, as shots fired in the dark.

I do not mean to suggest that the study of the Anglo-Saxon mind via the cognitive approach can offer a definitive solution to the crux posed by Sea 58-66, but an understanding of mental vocabulary and of the role of metaphor should serve to define some parameters. Firstly, the distinction which I noted at the beginning of this thesis between the mind-words and soul-words ought to be understood as ruling out interpretations which read *hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan* as referring to death.<sup>10</sup> G. V. Smithers, for example, took the MS reading of *wælweg* at l. 63 (usually emended to *hwælweg*) to mean that the departure of the *hyge* beyond the breast was a launching of the soul on the road taken by the dead.<sup>11</sup> Salmon's observation that *hweorfan* frequently collocates with words for the soul to describe the soul's departure from the body at death is a tentative acceptance of the validity of this view, though she ultimately prefers her theory about shamanism.<sup>12</sup> But the behaviour of *sawol* and *gast* is quite distinct from that of *mod* etc. on this point: if these lines actually described the death of the seafarer, then only *sawol* or *gast* would have been proper here.

In order to throw some light on the inadequacies of the 'sources and analogues' approach, I would like to examine Peter Clemoes's argument in some detail. Clemoes suggests that the poet of The seafarer drew directly from Alcuin's De animae ratione liber,

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<sup>10</sup> In Chapter Three I raised a doubt as to what this distinction between non-transcendent terms (*mod* etc.) and transcendent terms (*sawol* and *gast*) actually signifies. It suffices for my argument here that there is a clear distinction in usage, even if not in referent.

<sup>11</sup> G. V. Smithers, "The meaning of 'The seafarer' and 'The wanderer'", Medium ævum 26 (1957), 137-153 at pp. 137-8.

<sup>12</sup> Salmon, p. 2.

where the soul's ability to range over vast distances in an instant of the imagination is described thus in one of the poems appended to his psychological treatise:

Quæ mare, quæ terras, cœlum quæ pervolat altum,  
Quamvis sit carnis carcere clausa suæ.<sup>13</sup>

'Which flies across the sea, lands and the high sky, although it is enclosed in the prison of its flesh'.

As Clemoes comments:

The correspondence ... does not consist merely of sharing the same general view of mental activity; there are more definite likenesses than that; in both cases no particular object of thought is specified, distance is conceived of spatially, not temporally, and the means used to represent the mental process are the same. Closeness of this kind is likely to be due to some specific connection.<sup>14</sup>

Elsewhere in the article, Clemoes suggests that ll. 55-57 of The wanderer -

	Cearo bið geniwad
pam þe sendan sceal	swiþe geneahhe
ofer wæpema gebind	werigne sefan.

'Care is renewed for the one who has to send a weary mind repeatedly across the expanse of the waves'

- are similarly indebted to lines from Ambrose's Hexameron. These parallels between the Old English elegies and Latin texts are certainly intriguing, but given what we have learnt about the role of metaphor in the common sense conception of the mind, I would argue that the question of a "specific connection" based on the common motif of mental flight needs to be treated with caution. Examined singly, Clemoes's arguments in favour of this

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<sup>13</sup> PL 101, col. 647C.

<sup>14</sup> Clemoes, "Mens absentia cogitans", pp. 64-65.

borrowing are not very convincing. One of the similarities he notes is that in both passages "no particular object of thought is specified", but a particular object of thought need not be specified when the intention is to convey mental movement. For example, in Daniel 596 *ac his mod astah, heah fram heortan* 'but his mind arose, high from the heart', it is the upward movement which is significant, not any object of thought. Furthermore, that distance is conceived of spatially rather than temporally in both The seafarer and Alcuin does not appear to me to constitute a meaningful coincidence. Distance is conceived of temporally only when the means of transport has a known speed (*five minutes on foot, three hours' drive*), but since mental speed is difficult to quantify, the expression of distance is necessarily spatial. In any case, it is the range of the mind's movement, not its speed, which Alcuin wishes specifically to point in his verse, whereas seascapes are referred to in The seafarer because that is where the poem is set.

In reacting to Clemons's article, Diekstra correctly observes:

The fact is that, as with most elements of the poem, the idea is a traditional one, and it is thus extremely hazardous to assume direct borrowing, as if one were dealing with a unique statement.<sup>15</sup>

In support of this, Diekstra assembles more patristic analogues of mental or spiritual flight to show the "general currency" of this notion.<sup>16</sup> In doing this, he comes very close to my point of view regarding these cruces, but before I detail my approach, it should be noted that Pope also comes close to recognizing the common sense aspect of the image: "The idea that the mind or soul can fly out to distant regions, leaving the body behind, rests on simple observation available to any introspective person".<sup>17</sup> In making this statement,

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<sup>15</sup> Diekstra, p. 434.

<sup>16</sup> Diekstra, p. 443.

<sup>17</sup> Pope, "Second thoughts", p. 84.

Pope probably did not mean to suggest that the possibility of out-of-body experiences should be plausible to anyone by simple introspection: rather, as I believe he meant to say, the *metaphor* of mind travel should be clear and comprehensible to anyone who observes their own mental wanderings.

Pope's suggestion that the image is made clear by the twentieth-century reader's introspection, taken together with Diekstra's argument for its general currency in medieval writings, points directly to the role of metaphor in the conceptualization of the mind. The intuition of these scholars is that the trope is a natural development for which no explanation of particular indebtedness is necessary, and as the cognitive approach establishes, their intuition is well-founded. At least some of the puzzlement pertaining to these passages from the elegies could be removed if the role of metaphor in common sense psychology were better recognized.

The metaphorical nature of these passages from The Wanderer and The Seafarer has long been recognized by critics. But because these metaphors have been treated in isolation from the other metaphors governing the concept of mind, their common sense nature has rarely been recognized. Taken together with other metaphorizations of the mind as a moveable object, these passages can be made to appear less bizarre, and interpretive explanations can now be grounded in an understanding of how the conceptualization of mental processes is reflected in language. Naturally, the cognitive approach does not solve all the problems attending the critical interpretation of these passages. As a hapax legomenon, the exact signification of *anfloga* will always remain somewhat obscure; the precise meaning of Wan 55-57 is similarly difficult.<sup>18</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>18</sup> Are we, for instance, to understand that these lines metaphorically render the wanderer's interminable search for the truth? Or that the *werig sefa* is metonymic for the wanderer himself, and that it is the hardship of actual sailing which renews his sense of anxiety? The interpretation of these lines partly depends on that of ll. 50-55, which constitute a long-standing and many-sided crux. See R. F. Leslie (ed.), The wanderer (Manchester, 1966), pp. 76-79; T. P. Dunning and A. J. Bliss (ed.), The wanderer (London, 1969), pp. 114-115 notes 51-2, 53-7; Clemons, "Mens absentia cogitans", pp. 74-75.



the relative rarity of these metaphors of mind travel does render their status with respect to the Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology somewhat doubtful, and it may be that they are loan-metaphors to some extent, influenced by the analogues assembled by Clemons and Diekstra.

Nevertheless, the realization that language reflects both culture *and* cognition may lend some sophistication to the enumeration of analogues in textual criticism. For another example of the tendency to collect patristic references in the criticism of Old English poetry, we may examine more closely R. E. Kaske's reference to Ambrose and Psalm 118 in his discussion of the *rume mod* in Judith, to which I referred in Chapter Three. Kaske properly avoids overstating the link between mental spaciousness in Latin and in Old English, but then the relation between the two remains unclear, as is frequently the case in the collection of analogues. Are we to understand that the notion of mental spaciousness was 'in the air' at the time of the composition of Judith, because of its presence in patristic commentaries? That it was a literary metaphor which was popularized by its occurrence in the Bible? The point of assembling analogues is to imply resemblance but not necessarily relation, and so the precise light that the Ambrosian parallel is meant to throw on the Old English *rume mod* is left undefined: unlike Diekstra, Kaske does not propose a 'general currency' of the idea, but an "allusive development", though he does not go so far as to identify Ambrose as a source.<sup>19</sup> Again, the matter need not remain vague if we apply an understanding of the role of metaphor in ordinary language and in the conception of the mind. Certainly, the influence of Latin writings on the Old English poets needs to be appreciated, but the link between Ambrose and the poet of Judith can be understood not merely in terms of literary motif, but also in terms of the way in which the cognition of mental processes takes place.

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<sup>19</sup> Kaske, "Sapientia et fortitudo", p. 23.

Apart from the 'sources and analogues' approach, there are other ways in which literary criticism might benefit from an understanding of how figurative language may reflect cognition rather than the poet's self-conscious diction. In Chapter Three, in my discussion of hot and cold in the conception of emotion, I observed that misery was conceived of as cold, so that words such as *freorig* are established in Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology as signifying unhappiness. Frederick Biggs's interpretation of Guthlac B, however, enlists the evidence of *freorigmod* and *freorigferhþ* to support his theory that the thane in the poem is meant to embody "the state of the body cut off from the understanding of the mind", and that the description of the thane as 'freezing' anticipates "the statement in the poem's final section that after Guthlac's soul has departed, his body grows cold on earth".<sup>20</sup> The suggestion that the thane represents the body as separate from the mind seems to me implausible, for as I have argued in more detail elsewhere, the mental and emotional experiences of the thane are presented vividly and pointedly in the poem.<sup>21</sup> On the grounds both of my literary understanding of the poem, and of my understanding of the role of cold in the structuring of the concept 'unhappiness', I differ from the interpretation that Biggs offers. I do not mean to suggest that the metaphors by which the Anglo-Saxons lived are off-limits to literary criticism. As I indicated in Chapter Three, a significant proportion of the evidence for the role of *freorig* in the metaphorization of unhappiness occurs in Guthlac B, and I am much given to agree with Biggs that the poet's use of words was pointed and skilful. *Freorig* in GuthB was probably deliberately and emphatically used to point the contrast between the thane's state of mind and Guthlac's, but if we recognize that unhappiness was frequently metaphorized as cold, we need not read it as literally as Biggs does by relating it to the cooling of the body after death.

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<sup>20</sup> Biggs, "Unities", p. 161.

<sup>21</sup> "Mental cultivation in Guthlac B".

Because metaphor is now understood as constituting conceptual patterns, its place in language must be reassessed. Its occurrence does not always indicate conscious literary embellishment, and the distribution of any one metaphor should not always and exclusively be understood as proof of cultural contact and exchange.

### The cognitive approach and historical physiology

As we saw in Chapter Two, a metaphor can be defined as any unit of discourse in which some conceptual or conversational incongruity emerges. But in a number of the metaphors examined in Chapter Three, it could be argued that there is no emergent incongruity, and that the use of physical terms to describe mental or emotional processes proceeds not from a projection of terms across categorial boundaries, but from their association with the physiological or somatic expressions of emotion.<sup>22</sup> An example of this is the expression of intense emotion as hot and seething, for example in *And* 1708: *pær manegum wæs hat æt heortan hyge weallende* 'there was a seething mind, hot at heart, in many of them'. Since intense, negative emotion is often accompanied by blushing or sweating and an increase in heart rate, and since these physiological processes are often associated with a rise in skin temperature, why should we not take these Old English expressions as originating from descriptions of somatic reactions? The association of sadness with contraction and happiness with expansion might also be explained by referring to the physical postures and degree of muscular contraction associated with these respective emotions. Whether many of the 'mind as body' metaphors do indeed involve projections from an *unrelated* source domain is an arguable question. In my discussion of the weeping

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<sup>22</sup> Much of my discussion in Chapter Two involved establishing that meaning is 'embodied'. In order to distinguish between expressions derived from physiological processes and metaphors derived from the projection of terms from an unrelated domain, however, it is necessary in this section to suspend the notion of 'embodied meaning', although I remain convinced of its explanatory power.

mind, for instance, I noted that the only conceptual incongruity that appears to arise is that the physicality of crying could be said to be categorically separate from the abstractness of inward emotion. But this could justifiably be called theoretical hair-splitting, and it could be said that for the explanation of some of these sayings, metaphor theory is somewhat superfluous.

We can examine this question further by looking at the compound *bolgenmod*, defined by both BT and DOE as 'enraged'. *Bolgen* is the past participle of *belgan*, which DOE defines as 'to swell with anger, become angry'. The notion of swelling as denoted by *belgan* appears in Old English to have become firmly identified with the notion of anger, but *belg* means 'bag, pouch, sack' (hence *belly*, *bellows*). It appears that the root of this Old English expression for anger may have lain in the correlation of this emotion with actual physiological swelling-up or bulging. A clear instance of this phenomenon is to be found in Njáls saga, where Þórhallr Ásgrímsson's reaction to the news of Njál's death is reported thus:

Þórhalli Ásgrímssyni brá svá við, er honum var sagt, at Njáll, fóstri hans, var dauðr ok hann hafði inni brunnit, at hann þrútnaði allr ok blóðbogi stóð ór hvárritveggju hlustinni, ok varð eigi stöðvat, ok fell hann í óvit, ok þá stöðvaðisk.<sup>23</sup>

'Þórhallr Ásgrímsson was so startled when he was told that Njál, his foster-father, was dead and that he had burned in his house, that he swelled up all over and a stream of blood burst out of both his ears, and could not be staunched, and he fell into a swoon, and then it was staunched'.

It is not altogether clear that anger is the emotion being expressed here, especially as Þórhallr immediately gets up from his swoon and accuses himself of having acted in a cowardly manner, but I think we may assume that anger forms some part of his response,

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<sup>23</sup> Brennu-Njáls saga, Íslenzk Fornrit 12 (Rekjavík, 1954), p. 344. Incidentally, the verb *þrútna* could be used metaphorically to mean the growth of enmity, as in *þrútnaði þá með þeim* 'there was a swelling between them i.e. they became enemies' (see Cleasby-Vígfusson, An Icelandic-English dictionary, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1957), s.v. *þrútna*).

and in any case it is the physiological reaction which interests us here. This is obviously an extreme instance of the link between emotional and bodily response, but on a more normal level we may perhaps think of swelling veins and bulging eyes as manifesting the same tendency. Certain animals, such as the domestic cat, also tend to 'swell up' when angry or conveying aggression, and observations of such behaviour may have reinforced the connection of *bolgan* with anger.<sup>24</sup>

(*Ge*)*bolgen* thus signified anger, as in Ju 58 *ða se æþeling wearð yrre gebolgen* 'then the noble one became swollen with anger'. It is probable that there was not always actual swelling whenever this word was used, and that in many instances of its use, the physical reaction thus described is to be taken figuratively.<sup>25</sup> The formation *bolgenmod* can be viewed as being like the sort of direct projection characterizing, say, *werigmod*: a projection which crosses a categorial boundary from body to mind, but one which need not be taken as incongruous, depending on one's view of the mind-body relationship. The arguable lack of incongruity, then, raises the question of whether these expressions could not be more accurately classed as something other than metaphors.

The experience of emotions is inseparable from the experience of their concomitant physiological changes, and that words and expressions for emotions may originate in this connection is something which was postulated by Hans Kurath in his doctoral dissertation.<sup>26</sup> If some of these words appear obscure to us now, that may be because they reflect earlier notions of physiology. This in effect is the approach of

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<sup>24</sup> Certainly, the poet of The owl and the nightingale imagined that his feathered protagonists puffed up when they got angry (145): *þos hule ... sat tosvolle & ibolve, also ho hadde one frogge isuolze* (ed. E. G. Stanley [Manchester, 1981(1972)]).

<sup>25</sup> God, after all, is several times described as becoming *bolgen* with anger: GenA 54, 1253; Res 78.

<sup>26</sup> Hans Kurath, The semantic sources of the words for the emotions in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and the Germanic languages (Menasha, 1921).

Onians in his work on ancient European beliefs about the mind and its relation to early physiology, especially that of the Homeric Greeks. For example, the *phrenes* 'lungs' are the seat of the *thumos* 'breath', which was the stuff of consciousness.<sup>27</sup> This *thumos* was moist vapour, related to the blood, hence the notion of the intelligence as a kind of native juice, as I discussed in Chapter One in relation to *sefa*. The reconstruction of early European ideas about the body is a way of interpreting some of the expressions which occur in relation to the portrayal of mental and emotional experience. Much of Onians's discussion is specifically focused on Homer, and his references to the Anglo-Saxons are only occasional, but at points his remarks seem rather pertinent, as when for instance he writes that "in grief or yearning the relevant parts of the body 'melt' ... and as they 'diminish' ... there issues liquid. This thought must have been inspired in part by the tears and wasting of grief".<sup>28</sup> As I discussed in Chapter Three, the Anglo-Saxons did have expressions for grief and fear that included this notion of melting. Wiglaf's courage, for instance, is impressive in this respect:

Beo 2628 *ne gemealt him se modsefa* 'the mind did not melt in him'.

In Chapter Three, I considered these images of melting minds and hearts as being simply part of a 'mind as liquid' metaphor. But it is worth considering the alternative that Onians offers us, which would explain these images as proceeding from early notions of how the body worked. We perceive these expressions as being metaphorical, but as I observed in Chapter Two, the perception of metaphor is relative to culture, since cultures

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<sup>27</sup> Onians, Origins of European thought, Chs. 2 and 3.

<sup>28</sup> Onians, p. 33.

vary with respect to the organization of the world into categories.<sup>29</sup> As I argued, the study of specific metaphors cannot be divorced from their social and cultural context, because people must share cultural assumptions about categories in order to recognize and understand metaphors. In fact, it was this very consideration which led me, in Chapter Four, to suggest that we interpret Alfred's anchor-cable metaphor as having been understood, by him, as deriving from a literal connection between the eyes and their object of view, from the perspective of the 'extramission' theory of vision, which appears to have been that held by the Anglo-Saxons. It is just possible that Old English sentences which portray light as coming from the eyes (e.g. *Beo* 726) were literal statements as far as the Anglo-Saxons were concerned, rather than metaphorical ones as we perceive them. As I also discussed in Chapter Two, this same question of cultural relativity attends our understanding of Old English *heorte* and *breost* as the loci for the mind: in present-day usage, statements such as *she thought in her heart* seem clearly figurative to us as compared to *we think in our brains*, but the Anglo-Saxons really appear to have *literally* thought in their hearts.

So it may be a mistake to think of Old English melting minds as being metaphorical, because they may reflect actual belief about physiological processes. This is a real problem in using metaphor theory for the investigation of cross-cultural concepts, because we may wrongly perceive conceptual incongruities where none actually exist, or vice versa. It is clearly not, however, a problem with the cognitive approach as a whole, since one of the main objectives of George Lakoff's work *has* been to demonstrate cultural relativity in categorizations of reality.<sup>30</sup> Our problem is one of insufficient data, not one of inadequate methodology. We simply do not know enough about the Anglo-

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<sup>29</sup> See Chapter Two, p. 70.

<sup>30</sup> See *Women, fire and dangerous things*.

Saxon worldview to make watertight judgements about what they would have perceived as metaphor, what physiology. But knowing that we do not know seems to me useful in itself.

It is probably possible to arrange our 'metaphors' in some sort of gradient of likeliness (i.e. *unlikely* to be a metaphor, *likely* or *very likely*). From my brief investigations of *bolgenmod*, it seems to me unlikely that this was a metaphor in the strictest sense we have defined, a projection of terms from an unrelated source domain (on the whole, I do not wish to consider the body as a source domain entirely unrelated to that of the mind). In *bolgenmod*, the physical swelling associated with anger was simply and directly projected onto the mind. In that the mind itself did not actually swell, this use is figurative, but the physiological origin of this expression must be considered apart from, say, the projection which mapped the properties of a garden plot onto the mind. This latter type of metaphor is of the type to be placed at the other end of the scale, since it is very likely that expressions of sowing and weeding *do* come from the unrelated source domain of gardening or agriculture. But metaphors such as that of the melting mind remain somewhat indeterminate in status, because our information about them is insufficient.

in reconstructing the physiological notions of the early Greeks, Onians relies solely on literary texts, for the good reason that there is nothing else. His is a process of inference, based on the same sort of material that I use for my survey of metaphors of the mind. Where he draws conclusions about early notions of physiology, there is no real way of telling how likely he is to have been correct. When he imputes to the early Greeks the belief that "in grief or yearning the relevant parts of the body 'melt'", it is a matter of interpretation. Onians *interprets* the Greeks to have believed these things; for all we know, they have meant the melting metaphorically. It is impossible to say what the truth in each instance may have been, but as I have discussed above this question of physiology



is one which must be taken seriously. It may be that a close study of, say, the Old English medical texts may offer up clues to specific problems.

Once we identify specific expressions as being problematic, however, the fact remains that the cognitive approach offers a richer means of interpreting the linguistic evidence than a narrowly physiological one, since it renders a wider range of expressions explicable. As we consider each metaphor more carefully, we may also come to understand how expressions which originated in some direct correlation between emotional and physical experience developed into wider metaphorizations along the same lines. We may be able to identify where, in Sweetser's words, "the existing correlation in the prototypical cases has *motivated* a more general metaphorical mapping".<sup>31</sup> For instance, we may consider the portrayal of faith and knowledge in terms of temperature in the following citation, already quoted:

*ÆGram 3.2 and ælc man, ðe wisdom lufað, byð gesælig, and, se ðe naðor nele ne leornian ne tæcan, gif he mæg, þonne acolap his andgyt fram þære halgan lare 'and each man who loves wisdom is happy, but the one who will neither learn nor teach, even though he is able, his understanding cools from the divine teaching then'.*

It is unlikely that the equation of faith and learning with warmth here could have originated in a direct physiological correlation. It is plausible, however, that the initial or prototypical case of 'desire or love as heat' did originate from such a correlation, and that this correlation then led to or motivated the sort of general metaphorical mapping to be seen in this citation.

The advantage of the cognitive approach is that it allows us to reach beyond physiological explanations for mental or emotional metaphors. In Chapter Two, for example, I dismissed Solomon Asch's 'vibes' explanation of the use of physical terms such as 'sweet' to describe personality and opted in favour of the cognitive approach which sees

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<sup>31</sup> Sweetser, p. 29.

these projections as crossings of categorial boundaries, rooted in experience but in experience removed from, not directly related to, the concept being shaped. It is an important advance to be able to read the use of physical terms in the portrayal of non-physical events as being a metaphorical mapping for the purpose of epistemic access, rather than to propose physiological explanations for each and every instance. But indeed, as we see in the case of *bolgenmod*, the association of a physiological reaction with a particular emotion is sometimes the best and simplest explanation for the form of an expression. Moreover, in examining metaphors we must beware of assuming that the Anglo-Saxons shared our cultural categories. Because their notions of physiology must have differed considerably from ours, some statements which we perceive as being clearly metaphorical may have been meant by them as literal. We may never gather enough information about how they saw the body to be able to judge how close to the mark we are, but as I remarked above, it is at least useful to know where the areas of uncertainty lie.

### The cognitive approach and historical psychology

At the beginning of this chapter I noted that attempts to reconstruct a past culture's worldview from its linguistic remains must be undertaken with a cautious awareness of the limits to which language *does* reflect a people's 'reality'. The cognitive approach, as I have already observed, permits only a limited linguistic relativism, occupying an intermediate position between the sort of linguistic determinism often referred to as the 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis' on the one hand, and classic objectivism on the other.<sup>32</sup> Our approach to the linguistic evidence, therefore, must be circumspect in this regard.

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<sup>32</sup> The main proponents of the cognitive approach, Lakoff, Johnson and Sweetser, all focus on arguing the case against the objectivist tradition in Western philosophy and linguistics, which assumes an objective reality about which we can make statements that are absolutely and unconditionally true and false (see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, Chs. 26 and 27, and Sweetser, p. 13). In this section, it will become apparent that

Apart from this theoretical concern, I would also like to observe that in trying to distil the inner life of the Anglo-Saxons from the small corpus of texts still extant, we must accept that there are great gaps between what we can know and what we would like to know; often without being aware we tend to supply those gaps with our preconceptions of what these people were like, and how we like to think they thought. This is an ideological concern: what sort of psychology are we inventing for the Anglo-Saxons, and what does this reflect about how we like to see them?

The little work that has been done on the Anglo-Saxon mind has tended to look towards that done on Homeric psychology;<sup>33</sup> this field has had a long enough history for a certain amount of revisionism to set in, and it is well to heed the recent words of the classicist Hayden Pelliccia:

The language used to characterize these [inner] events is the only evidence that we have for reconstructing the conceptualization of them, but investigation of that language, especially by non-speakers peering across a span of more than twenty-five centuries, is constantly bedevilled by various types of potentially fatal misunderstanding.<sup>34</sup>

As Anglo-Saxonists we peer across a span of only ten centuries, but I think we should appreciate that similar perils beset us.

I would like to re-examine some of the statements made by past scholars about the nature of the Anglo-Saxon mind, in order to see what sorts of "potentially fatal misunderstanding" may have taken place. Let us return to Sea 58-62, of which G. V. Smithers wrote: "It is surely a singular thing in Old English poetry that the *hyge* ...

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the traditional philologist is more liable to the fallacies of linguistic determinism, which is why I focus on the *limits* of language in the shaping of thought, even though I accept the notion of linguistic relativity. For a brief account of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, see Carol M. Eastman, Aspects of language and culture (San Francisco, 1975), pp. 74-79.

<sup>33</sup> See Godden's and North's use of J. Bremmer's The early Greek concept of the soul (Princeton, New Jersey, 1983); and Godden's and my own use of Onians.

<sup>34</sup> Hayden Pelliccia, Mind, body and speech in Homer and Pindar (Göttingen, 1995), p. 31.

should be represented as ranging abroad far from the human being in whom it is normally lodged".<sup>35</sup> In reply to this, I. L. Gordon noted:

But it is not unusual in OE poetry for *hyge*, *modsefa* or their poetic equivalents to be imagined as separable entities (*hyge wæs him hinfus*, *Beow.* 755), and even as being sent over the sea (cf. *Wand.* 55-7). Here the poet elaborates the concept: the Seafarer's spirit passes beyond the confines of his breast and returns to him again, eager and hungering (to be gone in reality).<sup>36</sup>

This notion that *hyge* denoted a separable entity was echoed uncritically by Leslie in his edition of The wanderer:

The concept of a man's spirit or imagination as a separable entity is to be found in the following lines (55-7) and is elaborated in The seafarer 58-62, concerning which see notes to these lines in Mrs. Gordon's edition of the poem.<sup>37</sup>

A little later in the same note, he adds:

The detachment of mind from body is also envisaged and developed at some length in The metres of Boethius XXIV.<sup>38</sup>

Both Gordon and Leslie appear to have casually accepted that the Anglo-Saxons were a psychically unstable people, whose minds could be sent at will out of their bodies. We can see how this stemmed from an excessive literalism in reading the poetry, and perhaps an unconscious willingness to think of the Anglo-Saxons in this peculiar manner. In support of her notion that *hyge* is a separable entity, Gordon's citation of Beo 755 *hyge*

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<sup>35</sup> Smithers, p. 137.

<sup>36</sup> Gordon, p. 41 note 58-62a.

<sup>37</sup> Leslie, p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> Leslie, pp. 78-79.

*wæs him hinfus* 'the mind in him was eager to be gone' completely misses the possibility that here *hyge* might be functioning metonymically for poor Grendel. It was in fact possible in Old English to say 'that mind' to refer to a person, in much the same way that we say 'that poor soul'.<sup>39</sup>

This excessive literalism in reading statements about the mind is one of the complaints that Pelliccia also makes about certain approaches to the study of the Homeric 'organs', such as *thumos*, *phrenes* and so on. The methodology associated with this literalism has been christened 'the laundry list approach',

whereby the investigator lists all the uses of the organs – the verbs of which they are the subjects, the objects, their physical and "social" relations (as revealed, e.g., in prepositional phrases) etc. – and then, usually without making much effort to consult the larger contexts in which these uses occur, attempts to imagine a real entity that might possess all these uncritically assembled attributes and capabilities, as if the mere list itself presented a systematic, comprehensive and "realistic" account of the organ's nature and capabilities.<sup>40</sup>

The study done by Phillips comes close to a 'laundry list' of the nature described here, by virtue of its faith that semantic distinctions in mental vocabulary may be distilled by syntactical analysis alone. Phillips, however, at least recognizes that the various terms he examines are "different names for the same thing", thus resisting the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and he stops short of making extrapolations of the type made by Gordon and Leslie.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For example, *[u] 209 him þæt æþele mod unforht oncwæð* 'that noble mind answered him, unafraid'.

<sup>40</sup> Pelliccia, p. 30 note 42. Future philologists of this persuasion may conclude from our texts that the heart is an organ which we sometimes carry about on our sleeves, but which is liable to attack suddenly, causing death.

<sup>41</sup> Phillips, *Heart, mind and soul*, p. 7.

A recent and somewhat extreme example of the literalist approach is Richard North's study of Old English mental vocabulary in his book, Pagan words and Christian meanings. North's chapter on 'The Physical Mind' is illustrative of the sort of construction of Anglo-Saxon psychology that can result when an excessively literal and linguistically deterministic approach is combined with an unrestrained romanticism about Germanic paganism. The chapter opens thus:

As far as most Old English poetry was concerned, concepts of mind were probably still as epic and unsystematised as they had been the day the first Germanic settlers reached the shores of Britain.<sup>42</sup>

It remains unclear just what North means by an 'epic and unsystematised' concept of mind, but to illustrate his method with just one example, let us examine his reading of Wan 15-16: *ne mæg werig mod wyrde wiðstandan, ne se hreo hyge helpe gefremman* 'the weary mind may not withstand fate, nor the troubled mind extend help':

However we read line 15, *mod* is not chosen for alliteration and it seems that *hyge* is left to make any advance (*gefremman*) possible against adversity in aid of the *mod*, or man of a weary *mod*, holding a position against it (*wiðstandan*). Alone, this literally translated sententia would ably define an active-passive dichotomy between *hyge* and *mod*.<sup>43</sup>

North's insistence on viewing *hyge* and *mod* as being semantically *and* referentially distinct means that the mental life of the Anglo-Saxon is accepted as having been split among multiple agents. Indeed, as he suggests, the incoherence of such a primitive psychology may better reflect human nature than our own complacent, mono-lexical concept:

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<sup>42</sup> North, p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> North, p. 72.

To the extent that our sense of security in the term 'mind' is probably illusory, the diffuse pagan expressions above, with their meanings physically grounded, may be truer to physiological reality. Within larger cacophonies of dissonant terms for mind, a male *hyge* and a female *modsefa* could be used in the same proportions of harmony or variance as in any marriage between two complementary beings.<sup>44</sup>

This last sentence is another indication of his attempt to read primitive categories (male-female, active-passive) into the Old English words for the mind.

I have dwelt upon the shortcomings of North's work because, in my mind, it represents the results of the tendencies, carried to extremes, towards linguistic determinism and a rather peculiar romanticism which are also present in other attempts to reconstruct the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind. As Pelliccia notes, these tendencies are not academically peripheral, but characterize scholarly works of as great influence and long-standing respectability as Bruno Snell's The discovery of the mind: Snell's well-known argument that the Homeric Greeks "did not, either in their language or in the visual arts, grasp the body as a unit" was based on the fact that they had no word for such a concept.<sup>45</sup> The willingness to see a culture under study as being bizarrely unlike our own, especially if it is one which can be labelled primitive, is also widespread.<sup>46</sup> Fortunately, Anglo-Saxon studies has only intermittently been prone to such lapses, but the instances I have noted from the editions of Gordon and Leslie serve to show where unsophisticated readings of the poetry may lead.

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<sup>44</sup> North, p. 98.

<sup>45</sup> Pelliccia, p.17; Bruno Snell, The discovery of the mind: the Greek origins of European thought, transl. T. G. Rosenmeyer (New York, 1982 [1953]), p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> See Pelliccia's account of this attitude in studies of the early Greeks, pp. 20-21, esp. notes 19 and 20. Also see E. E. Evans-Pritchard's discussion of this tendency in the early history of social and cultural anthropology, in Theories of primitive religion (Oxford, 1965), and for a study which focuses on the cultural constructions of non-Western civilizations, see Edward Said, Orientalism (New York, 1978).

Given that the language used to characterize the inner life of the Anglo-Saxons *is* the only evidence we have to work with, it seems clear that the way forward lies in sophisticating our approach to that language. The linguistic tools that philologists have traditionally relied upon - morphological and syntactical study - are no longer enough if we want to build a fuller, more realistic picture of what a past culture might have been like. By substituting metaphors for words in this thesis, I have tried to apply a theory of language which takes account of how people think and how they say what they think. As we have seen, ordinary language is not often as literal as philologists have sometimes believed, and its use is complex and multi-faceted. In this way, statements such as *hyge wæs him hinfus* may be read not as literal expressions of the mind as a separable entity, but as a complex idiom employing metonymy (and perhaps a certain amount of ironic understatement) to characterize Grendel's desperation to be free of Beowulf's crushing grip.<sup>47</sup> In focusing on the use of language in context, I suggest that certain insights developed in the linguistic subdiscipline of pragmatics may be useful in teaching us to read Old English more subtly, but I will have more to say about pragmatics in the next section.

The usefulness of the distinction to which I appealed in Chapter One, between common sense psychology and scientific or philosophical psychology, may now be reassessed. In preferring the term 'common sense' to 'folk' psychology, I followed the lead of Kathleen Wilkes, whose dislike of the term 'folk' was based on its sounding "twee, a bit primitive".<sup>48</sup> Her fastidiousness may be appreciated in the light of the frequently condescending attitudes to other cultures which I have just discussed. Within the discipline of psychology, the status of common sense psychology relative to scientific

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<sup>47</sup> The place of metonymy in the cognitive approach is discussed in Lakoff and Johnson, Ch. 7.

<sup>48</sup> Wilkes, "Scientific psychology and common sense psychology", p. 168.



psychology is hotly disputed, but here I merely wish to discuss some of the advantages that this distinction, once made, offers us. The main one lies in understanding that the use of common sense psychology is by definition casual and popular: to this extent it cannot be regarded in the same light as philosophical psychology. The necessity of this recognition can once again be illustrated by appealing to North, who writes:

There is now an extraordinary gap between concepts of mind today and those of the early Middle Ages. Popular and learned concepts of mind in England have changed in intervening centuries, and in the modern period alone philosophical debates on the problem of mind have multiplied profusely.<sup>49</sup>

But the problem of mind as debated in philosophical circles is hardly present in the average present-day person's outlook (certainly not in mine!). It is surely a little unfair to the Anglo-Saxons that we read their poetry for evidence of their psychology, while referring to Daniel Dennett for evidence of ours.<sup>50</sup> Something of the same problem attends Godden's consideration of the "vernacular tradition" of thought about the mind side by side with that of the "classical tradition" represented by Alcuin, Ælfric and Alfred. As I observed in Chapter One, a writer such as Ælfric might produce a self-consciously learned piece of philosophical psychology as in *ÆLS (Christmas)*, but in writing narrative he relied on a notion of *mod* which was not unlike that found in vernacular poetry. To speak of 'traditions' makes the gap between Ælfric and Cynewulf too wide: the two were not in competition. It is rather a matter of genre and of register, of levels and modes of expression.

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<sup>49</sup> North, p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> North, p. 63 note 1. Evans-Pritchard writes of the same problem in the social anthropology of, among others, Lévy-Bruhl, who, he charges, "made the contrast more glaring between their [i.e. primitive peoples'] mentality and ours by presenting us as more positivistic than most of us are". He further comments, "It is not so much a question of primitive versus civilized mentality as the relation of two types of thought to each other in any society, whether primitive or civilized, a problem of levels of thought and experience" (p. 91).

The notion of common sense psychology is very much intertwined with that of ordinary language: common sense psychology may be defined as the expression of mental and emotional experience *in* ordinary language. To that extent, as I observed in Chapter One, it is not a coherent body of thought, and cannot really be considered as a theory commensurable with, say, Augustine's philosophy of mind: that is, the two cannot be compared as like with like. This does not mean that common sense psychology cannot be taken seriously, but it does mean that it must be approached subtly, again with an awareness of the pragmatics involved in understanding ordinary language. In studying the common sense psychology of a past culture, however, we face the problem that very few, if any, of the texts surviving to us may properly reflect the ordinary language of that people. Some of the problems attending my survey in Chapter Three were problems of this nature: how can we distinguish between a literary metaphor and an ordinary language one? In what way does it make sense to speak of pragmatics in relation to historical texts?

We do not have ideal access to the common sense psychology of the Anglo-Saxons, but we are users of our own. We ourselves express mental and emotional experience in ordinary language, and are in a good position to observe the pragmatics involved in the expression of at least our own common sense psychology. One method of understanding the linguistic expressions of Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology may be to compare it rigorously with our own. For example, with regard to the apparent interchangeability of the OE mental terms, it may be well to ask whether we use the terms *brain*, *heart* and *mind* with the precision of philosophers when conversing casually, or indeed when writing poetry. But once again, the contrasts should not be exaggerated, as they sometimes have been. In writing of the derivations of *mod*, for instance, Godden remarks:

In Anglo-Saxon generally, however, *mod* also carries the meaning 'courage' and 'pride', and its derivatives all point in the direction of these latter meanings: *modig* 'brave', 'proud', *modignes* and *ofermod* 'pride', 'arrogance', *modigian* 'to be arrogant', *ormod* 'devoid of

spirit', 'hopeless'. These are quite different from the derivatives of the Latin and Modern English terms for the mind such as 'mental', 'magnanimous', 'mindful', 'high-minded'.<sup>51</sup>

It is on the basis of comparisons such as these that Godden arrives at the notion that *mod* denoted "an inner passion or wilfulness, an intensification of the self which can be dangerous".<sup>52</sup> But present-day *mental* can be synonymous with *crazy*, and the derivation *selfish* does not necessarily mean that the self is a dangerous entity. Indeed, by this analysis, an expression such as the useful British *bloody-minded* could tell us a great deal about twentieth-century English notions of 'blood' and 'mind'.

Another expression of which Godden makes a great deal, but which could be compared to our own relatively innocuous usage, is that found in *Wan* 58-60:

Forþon ic geþencan ne mæg geond þas woruld  
for hwan modsefa min ne gesweorce,  
þonne ic eorla lif eal geondþence

'Therefore I cannot think why in the world my mind does not grow dark, when I thoroughly contemplate the life of men'.

Of these lines, Godden writes:

The lines sharply distinguish between the mind or *modsefa* as agent of emotion and 'I' as subject or agent of thinking. Further than that, they suggest an astonishing dislocation between the self and the mind. Ever since Descartes the mind has been the one thing that has been an open book to the self.<sup>53</sup>

But we do say things like *I don't know my own mind* or *I don't know why I thought of that*.

If living in a post-Cartesian age really meant that the mind was always an open book to the

<sup>51</sup> Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the mind", p. 287.

<sup>52</sup> Godden, p. 287.

<sup>53</sup> Godden, p. 292.

self, life would be a lot easier.<sup>54</sup> Again, the mistake that Godden makes is to assume that The wanderer represents a worked-out theory of the mind commensurable with that of the great philosophers. I am perfectly convinced that there is no sharp distinction between *ic* and *modsefa* in The wanderer, nor any "astonishing dislocation" of one from the other: ll. 58-60 merely represent the Anglo-Saxon way of saying that, like us, they did not always know why they felt as they did.

I have tried to show in this section how dangerous it can be to investigate 'the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind' without devising a methodology appropriate to the subtlety of the task. All that remains to us is language, but our love of that language need not blind us to its limitations as evidence for what we seek. The degree to which a language reflects the worldview of its speakers is by no means clearly established: it seems plausible to assume that we can find out about how Anglo-Saxons viewed the world by examining Old English, but an acceptance of linguistic relativity does not and should not lead to Whorfian determinism. Moreover, the use of language to express mental and emotional experience is pragmatically complex, and our approach to that language needs to take account of usage and context. Perhaps most importantly, our interpretation of the evidence must as far as possible be undistorted by preconceptions about what a Dark Ages mentality was like. The Anglo-Saxons were probably different enough from us, but we need not be bent on finding out that they were completely alien, especially as we continue to enjoy their poetry. If we find out, after all, that the Anglo-Saxons expressed their thoughts and feelings much as we do, there is no reason to think of that as a disappointing result.

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<sup>54</sup> Or perhaps life got harder again after Freud?

### The cognitive approach and philology

The beauty of the cognitive approach to linguistics is that, for a 'mentalist' theory of language, it lends itself admirably to a justification of diachronic study. Within the modern discipline of linguistics, the historical and cognitive aspects of language have tended to be regarded as more or less exclusive areas of study, a situation stemming from Saussure's distinction between synchronic and diachronic linguistics. This distinction between synchrony and diachrony was put forward partly in reaction to nineteenth-century comparative philology, which focused narrowly on written historical records. As a corrective to this bias, modern linguistics has given precedence to speech over writing and to the description of structure over historical change. Moreover, via the Saussurean concept of *la langue* and through the influence of Chomsky, synchronic structure has come to be very closely identified with notions about the human capacity for language. Language *per se*, as a product and function of the human mind, is thus the proper object of scientific study; on the other hand, language as a culturally and historically situated phenomenon has not always been accorded similar prestige.<sup>55</sup>

By contrast, cognitive linguistics provides the means by which the study of historical change can refer to patterns of conceptualization whose cognitive reality can be experimentally verified by cognitive scientists.<sup>56</sup> To illustrate the intersection between cognitive linguistics and philology, I can do no better than to juxtapose the following paragraphs, by C. S. Lewis and Eve Sweetser respectively:

We find in the history, say, of *phusis*, *natura*, and *kind*, or again in that of *eleutherios*, *liberalis*, *free* and *frank*, similar or even identical semantic operations being performed quite independently. The speakers who achieved them belonged to different stocks and

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<sup>55</sup> For example, see Chomsky's comparison of sociolinguistics to butterfly-collecting in Language and responsibility (New York, 1979), p. 57.

<sup>56</sup> See the account in Johnson, Body in the mind, pp. 109-112, of the Gentners' experiments to determine the role of metaphor in subjects' understanding of electricity flow.

lived in different countries at different periods, and they started with different linguistic tools ... There is something, either in the structure of the mind or in the things it thinks about, which can produce the same results under very different conditions.<sup>57</sup>

Certain semantic changes occur over and over again throughout the course of Indo-European and independently in different branches across an area of thousands of miles and a time depth of thousands of years. I will show that a cognitive semantics that allows for metaphorical mapping within a conceptual system can explain such facts straightforwardly ... <sup>58</sup>

The observations made by Lewis and Sweetser, respectively, are nearly identical, with the difference that Sweetser is able to go further than Lewis's guess that there is 'something' in the structure of the mind.

To the extent that the same patterns of metaphorical thought are reflected not just in etymology but also in polysemy and pragmatics,<sup>59</sup> the distinction between diachrony and synchrony need no longer be perceived as being altogether fundamental to language study, since both equally reflect the mind. Indeed, the collapse of this distinction has already been for some time the dearest wish of certain linguists in intellectual distress at the severe polarization of their discipline. Roy Harris, for instance, astutely recognized the link between synchrony-diachrony and notions about the link between language and cognition:

The point is that once Saussure is allowed his distinction between synchronic and diachronic - however innocuous that concession may seem - then it will be found at the end of the day that the only trump card there was to play against Saussure's game has already been thrown away. It is no good then to take issue on psychological questions. For such questions are already involved in - and presupposed by - the distinction between synchronic and diachronic.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> C. S. Lewis, Studies in words, pp. 5-6.

<sup>58</sup> Sweetser, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Sweetser, Ch. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Harris, "Redefining linguistics", p. 25.

The ideal approach to language, as Harris argues, is neither synchronic nor diachronic, but panchronic.

The implications of this realization for a study such as this one may be examined in relation to the main concern of Chapter One, which was to characterize the behaviour of mental vocabulary. As I observed there, the mental terms of Old English are polysemous in a manner which makes it difficult to draw hard and fast distinctions among them. It was partly because of this difficulty that I opted to examine Old English mental metaphors instead, but a more complete account of the words involved remains a necessary part of a comprehensive treatment of the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind. The nature of polysemy is therefore key to future work of this nature.

In synchronic linguistics, polysemy is often paired with homonymy, and the central problem in addressing both phenomena has been to define the boundary between them. To diachronic linguists, the puzzlement which attends these attempts to distinguish between polysemy and homonymy often appears inexplicable, sometimes downright naive.<sup>61</sup> Surely, the distinction is plain: homonymy is the convergence of forms, and polysemy is the divergence of meanings. A knowledge of the histories of words makes everything clear. But the apparent obtuseness of synchronic linguists concerning this point can be mitigated somewhat when we remember that, for them, the focus is not on the development of words through history, but on the nature of a speaker's knowledge about

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<sup>61</sup> See for instance Palmer's discussion of the matter, which concludes that "history [i.e. etymology] can be misleading" (pp. 100-108), or George A. Miller's pronouncement that "French, for example, is more polysemous than English, and (spoken) Chinese is far more polysemous than either French or English" ("Semantic relations among words", in Linguistic theory and psychological reality, ed. Morris Halle, Joan Bresnan and George A. Miller [Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978], 60-118 at p. 98). Miller's statement about Chinese strikes me as an egregious error, but the underlying misapprehension proceeds not from a misunderstanding of the nature of the Chinese language, but from a misuse of the term *polysemous*. Yes, a lot of Chinese words sound the same, but because they are *homonymous*.

his native language. Perceiving contrasts in linguistic form, according to Saussure, is the means by which speakers understand utterances, and thus the existence in any language of identical forms representing distinct meanings is seen as a perplexing aberration. From such a psycholinguistic perspective, and when we remember that for most speakers the history of their language is opaque, it is easier to appreciate the reasons why to some linguists the distinction between homonymy and polysemy appears difficult.

A consequence of viewing language from the speaker's perspective is that one's view of language becomes functionalist, and it is at this point that pragmatics again becomes important. E. M. Uhlenbeck has recently offered a pragmatic account of polysemy which I believe throws some light on the problem as I examined it in Chapter One, and I would like to pause for a moment over his explanation.<sup>62</sup> Uhlenbeck argues that the principle described above, that languages should not tolerate the existence of identical forms, is one which need not be absolute: "This is because the wordform has to function only syntagmatically, in relation to the other words with which it occurs in the sentence".<sup>63</sup> Since many homophonous pairs belong to different parts of speech (e.g. *rose* the flower vs. *rose* the past tense of *rise*, though not *steak* vs. *stake*), they have different syntactical functions, and thus speakers rarely encounter cases of real ambiguity. From a psycholinguistic point of view therefore, homophony turns out not to require particular explanation, because it is functionally not often problematic.

This explanation of why homophonous words do not pose as large a problem in language as is commonly thought entails certain hypotheses about how lexical meaning resides in speakers' minds, and this is where the matter has bearing for my discussion of mental vocabulary. First of all, Uhlenbeck correctly dismisses homonymy as a "marginal

<sup>62</sup> E. M. Uhlenbeck, "Some remarks on homonymy and polysemy", in Discourse and meaning: papers in honor of Eva Hajičová, ed. Barbara H. Partee and Petr Sgall (Amsterdam, 1996), 119-126.

<sup>63</sup> Uhlenbeck, p. 120.



and accidental phenomenon",<sup>64</sup> but then argues that, in order to understand the role of polysemy in language, which he says is "central", we must think of words in a new way:

In order to appreciate this role, it is first of all necessary to give up the traditional view of polysemy as multiple meaning, and to replace it by the notion that word meaning is *knowledge* relative to linguistic forms which speakers use in the act of speech in various ways.<sup>65</sup>

Words, therefore, do not exist in speakers' minds as they exist in dictionary entries, with their multiple senses enumerated and defined. Rather, according to Uhlenbeck, the meaning of a word should be understood as "cognitive potential at the disposal of the speaker"; the semantics of any one word thus has "an open dynamic structure":

In this structure one may observe the existence of an initial core-meaning ... which should be taken neither in a historical sense, nor as a meaning present in all instances of its use, but as a possible point of departure for further elaboration in different directions. This may lead and in many cases has already led to new secondary core-meanings, which in turn may develop (synchronically) in still other directions.<sup>66</sup>

The fleeting, shape-shifting *behaviour* of mental vocabulary, as I tried to describe it in Chapter One, is by this explanation suddenly clearer. The tendency of a word such as *ingebonc* to mean now 'mind', now 'intention' and now 'wisdom' is a reflection of the various ways in which its cognitive potential was actualized in usage by Anglo-Saxon writers.

By this pragmatic understanding, we are now in a position to see exactly why the traditional philological approach to mind-words in Old English has sometimes resulted in such disastrous reconstructions of the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind. The mistake of

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<sup>64</sup> Uhlenbeck, p. 120.

<sup>65</sup> Uhlenbeck, p. 121.

<sup>66</sup> Uhlenbeck, p. 121.

literary philologists has been to see the various occurrences of a word as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle which must be fitted together in order to reveal the word's true meaning. But the reconstruction of a word's meaning from its extant occurrences is not analogous to the reconstruction of pottery from shards. We should rather take the written records of Old English as being a collection of utterances, each shaped by its original function in the speaker's discourse: to this extent we must therefore view the occurrences of words not as parts of a whole but as wholes in themselves. A further realization which this entails is that the utterances we possess were produced by different speakers, who very probably did *not* share identical ways of organizing and using their shared vocabulary. As Uhlenbeck observes, there is no basis for the view that all native speakers of a language possess the same semantic knowledge, organized in exactly the same way. Rather,

For successful communicative use of an appellative [i.e. nouns, verbs and adjectives] it is in most cases already sufficient if speaker and hearer share the initial core-meaning. There is also no reason to assume that the semantic knowledge which native speakers possess about a word is stable. To the contrary: this knowledge is subject to change, being dependent on the mental development of its users and their position in society.<sup>67</sup>

We can see how, joined with the cognitive approach, this pragmatic understanding of lexical meaning has considerable explanatory power for the linguistic evidence left to us. My description in Chapter Four of the polysemousness of *stapol*, for instance, can now be seen as exemplifying the process by which the speakers of a language extend the core-meaning of a word for the particular purposes of their utterance. Of course, as much of Chapter Two was devoted to explaining, one of the most characteristic motives for the extension of a word's core-meaning is metaphor.

The consequence of the semantic theory which I have been outlining, that occurrences of words are to be taken as individual manifestations of one or several core-

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<sup>67</sup> Uhlenbeck, p. 122.

meanings and not as pieces of an overall semantic picture, is worth reiterating with some force, because it is so much at odds with the traditional philological approach. As Uhlenbeck explains,

Not every individual instance of semantic extension has lasting consequences. Most of them will disappear without leaving in the language any trace of their former ephemeral existence, but integration in the existing semantic network ... always remains a possibility.<sup>68</sup>

A serious consequence, for philologists, of accepting these statements is that henceforth the individual attestations of a word are necessarily somewhat less secure as evidence for the meaning of that word. Another consequence, with bearing on my argument in the previous section, is that by this account of lexical meaning, the viability of linguistic determinism as a theoretical position diminishes sharply. If words possess cognitive potential, actualized by speakers in producing utterances, and if the process of actualization often involves some sort of 'nonce' semantic extension by metaphor or some other trope, then the relationship between word and referent is a lot more complex and ephemeral than normally supposed, and it is probably incorrect to think that language could determine thought to the great degree envisaged by Whorf.

On a simpler level, Uhlenbeck's explanation of how extension can often lead to the development of secondary core-meanings (see above) enables us to see that attempting to reconstruct the meaning of a word by its morphological derivatives is tricky and misleading. It is for this reason that a word such as *modigian* with the meaning 'to be or become proud, to glory, exult' (BT) cannot be taken as evidence for the meaning of *mod*. In my discussion of the polysemousness of mental vocabulary in Chapter One, I omitted to discuss the particular senses of 'anger' and 'pride' that *mod* possesses, since these did not fit into the scheme I was developing of the various senses which the mind-words share.

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<sup>68</sup> Uhlenbeck, p. 122.

That *mod* also means 'anger', 'courage' or 'pride' besides 'mind' has often been noted, and, as we saw above, some have attempted to include these meanings in reconstructing the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind. But we can now see that the existence of these meanings does not necessarily imply anything about the concept of *mod* as it meant 'mind', but it merely indicates that these senses were secondary core-meanings which developed by extension in the repeated, pragmatically conditioned use of Anglo-Saxons. Something of the same process can be seen in Modern English where the derivatives of *self* such as *selfish*, *self-absorbed* or *self-regarding* all possess negative meaning, even though the concept of self is, I would argue, in most contexts more or less neutral. That these secondary meanings of 'anger' and 'pride' should have become attached to *mod* rather than, say, to *hyge* probably reflects less on inherent differences of meaning between these two words than on their differences in frequency of use. The derivatives *modig* meaning 'proud', and *modigian* meaning 'to exult' are thus at several semantic as well as morphological removes from the core-meaning 'mind' of *mod*, and attempts to reconstruct the Anglo-Saxons as a wilful, passionate people on the basis of these words are therefore, in my view, ineffective.

The point of the above excursus into the nature of polysemy was to illustrate what a 'panchronic' approach to Old English texts might be like. As I argued at the beginning of this section, the cognitive approach to language enables us to collapse the distinction between diachrony and synchrony which for many decades has acted as a tall fence dividing language specialists. As Sweetser has argued, the abandonment of this distinction means that, for synchronic linguists, a concession must be made that the history of languages matters. Thus, for example, "historical evidence can be a metric for

choosing between different synchronic semantic theories".<sup>69</sup> On the part of diachronic linguists, most particularly those interested in distilling past cultures, more attention must be paid to the factors conditioning speakers' use of words. On the whole, the lack of adequate data prevents us from undertaking studies of a sociolinguistic nature, but the advances made in pragmatics by Searle, Grice and others may paradoxically be of more use to Anglo-Saxonists because of their ahistorical, though definitively context-aware, approach. As I have indicated above, accepting the collapse of the diachrony-synchrony distinction may occasionally entail the abandonment of certain time-honoured ways of thinking about the historical evidence, but if better justice can be done to the subject of how the Anglo-Saxons thought, such a concession seems to me worthwhile.

#### Further considerations

The aim of this chapter has been to show some ways in which I see the cognitive approach as benefitting the study of the Anglo-Saxon mind. I believe more generally that it offers a richer, more sophisticated and intuitively more satisfying approach to language and culture than was previously available. Because the cognitive approach deals with the point at which the mind engages with the world, it is a program which supports and accommodates contribution from disciplines as diverse as pragmatics and anthropology. Because language is recognized to be inextricably linked with human cognition and human behaviour, its role in shaping and expressing experience can be taken as a proper object of study.

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<sup>69</sup> Sweetser, p. 145. As she observes, a theory of meaning such as the componential feature analysis associated with Katz and Fodor has almost no explanatory power for historical semantic change, and this is a factor which should be included in evaluations of its usefulness.

As I hope to have demonstrated in this thesis, the cognitive approach is a useful tool in re-evaluating the linguistic evidence for the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind. As I observed in the opening section of Chapter Three, however, there are considerable difficulties to be faced in the sorting of the metaphors themselves, and judging the status of each in the Anglo-Saxon worldview. As I noted, this is partly a statistical problem: if some method of assessing the relative frequencies of the metaphors could be devised, we might then possess a rough index to their importance. But as I also observed, the matter is more crucially one of delimiting the notion of 'ordinary language', which I have necessarily left vague throughout. A sensitivity to genre and register must somehow be built in to any more ambitious survey of the mental metaphors than the one I undertook in Chapter Three. This concern with genre and register would most appropriately be combined with the pragmatic, speaker-centred view of word-meaning which I outlined above.

There are a number of issues relating to the cognitive approach which have yet to be resolved or even identified. I have thought none of them a serious obstacle to the study I have done in this thesis, but in future projects these problems may grow to be of more significance. As I observed in Chapter Two, although Lakoff and Johnson valuably point out the importance of metaphor in everyday life, they do not actually define what metaphor is from their perspective, and while Kittay's account of metaphor fills this gap sufficiently for my purposes, there are still many questions about the precise nature of metaphor which remain unanswered. To what extent, for instance, do metaphors create the similarities they highlight? Do they reveal how things are or do they make the nature of things? These are questions to be considered by other people than Anglo-Saxonists, but if metaphors are used by philologists as words have been to gain access to specific cultures, then the relation between metaphors and the concepts they structure, like the relation between words and their referents, must somehow be addressed.

The relation between words and their referents raises again the notion of linguistic relativity. An informed approach to the question of how language reflects worldview seems to me crucial for studying the Anglo-Saxon mind. As I have indicated, the most sensible position to assume on this point seems to be one intermediate between objectivism and linguistic determinism. This position recommends itself not merely by the principle of the happy medium or of 'moderation in all things', but because the results of cognitive science experiments seem to verify that this is the nature of things. This link to the experimental sciences is surely one of the most appealing aspects of the cognitive approach. It should be noted, however, that the results of these experiments cannot always be taken at face value. I have referred for instance to Berlin and Kay's work in establishing that universal biological constraints on colour perception exist. Their study, Basic color terms (1969) continues to be widely and uncontroversially quoted, but as Geoffrey Sampson has very recently pointed out the data in this study is in many places poorly assembled and erroneously interpreted.<sup>70</sup> Since the reconstruction of the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind as I have proposed it depends on an informed approach to the language-worldview problem, the dependability of the research in this area needs to be critically assessed.

Although I argue for their relevance, the nature of metaphor and of linguistic relativity are two issues which bear a comparatively remote relation to the study of the Anglo-Saxon mind. More pertinent are questions which specifically relate to the diachronic development of words, for, as I have insisted, the nature of polysemy is key to understanding the nature of mental vocabulary. In outlining the evidence for

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<sup>70</sup> Geoffrey Sampson, Educating Eve: the 'language instinct' debate (London, 1997), pp. 60-64. Sampson charges, for instance, that much of Berlin and Kay's data originated in their students' term papers, and that there are serious errors in their treatments even of major languages such as Greek and Chinese. Sampson's book is a reply to Steven Pinker's bestselling book on linguistic nativism, The language instinct (New York, 1994), and in this context I should note that the place of the cognitive approach in this nativist vs. empiricist debate is unclear. To my knowledge, no one has treated the matter.

metaphorical extension in the semantic development of words, Eve Sweetser repeatedly argues for the 'unidirectionality' of projection, that words move from concrete to abstract but not vice versa.<sup>71</sup> As she asserts, the recognition of this movement may force those working on Indo-European roots, for instance, to reconsider the plausibility of some of the definitions they have posited for certain items, which, as Sweetser complains, tend to be overly abstract.<sup>72</sup> If the movement of semantic change is recognized as broadly following the pattern concrete-to-abstract, then it is likely that concrete meanings tend to be prior to abstract ones, and attempts to reconstruct the Indo-European vocabulary should take account of this. As Hayden Pelliccia observes, however, things are not as simple as all that:

The long term effect of metaphorical usage may be to render concretes abstract, but its immediate function is usually the opposite; a lexical Gresham's Law goes to work: the invigoration of the abstract generality ultimately drains the life out of the initially vigorous particular.<sup>73</sup>

Metaphorical extension really combines two stages rather than one. It is not simply that the concrete word (vehicle) is rendered abstract, but that initially, an abstract word (topic) is rendered momentarily concrete. It is only subsequently, by the association of concrete vehicle with abstract topic, that eventually the concrete word loses its particularity and becomes abstract in nature. As Pelliccia goes on to say:

We could predict that any such conjunction of a pair made up of abstract and concrete will have the long term effect of making the concrete become abstract, but not the abstract become more concrete, because it is in the nature of abstracts that they take on further

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<sup>71</sup> Sweetser, p. 30.

<sup>72</sup> Sweetser, pp. 24-25.

<sup>73</sup> Pelliccia, p. 109.



and further applications, while concretes do so only at the price of changing their nature, from concrete to abstract and general.<sup>74</sup>

It is in the nature of abstract words to comprehend concrete usage: they possess this flexibility, but concrete words do not. The relation between abstract and concrete must thus be seen as set and subset rather than as two equal and discrete sets. Sweetser's failure to recognize this has led to her overemphasizing the unidirectionality of change, for in Pelliccia's explanation, it is in the nature of these terms that there could only be the one direction of change observable. We cannot say with any confidence therefore that concrete usages are prior to abstract ones, and to speak of a movement from one to the other is probably not altogether accurate, especially when we remember that metaphor is defined by Kittay as an *interplay* of semantic fields.

I have tried in this thesis to unite the study of the Anglo-Saxon concept of mind with the cognitive approach to metaphor. As both of these fields are rather new, my study has necessarily been introductory, experimental and incomplete. I have chosen to end with a number of theoretical difficulties because I see these as crucial to a future, more developed study. A recognition of these issues will also, I hope, reduce the potential for banality in studies utilizing the cognitive approach ('metaphors of this', 'metaphors of that'). Anglo-Saxon common sense psychology will remain by its nature an elusive subject of study, but I hope what I have presented here serves as a beginning.

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<sup>74</sup> Pelliccia, pp. 109-110.

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