2005

'ÞÆT Is Yrre': The Construction and Use of Anger in Anglo-Saxon Literature

Hilary E. Fox
Western Michigan University

'ÞÆT IS YRRE': THE CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF ANGER
IN ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

by

Hilary E. Fox

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master's of Arts
Medieval Institute

Western Michigan University

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

'ÞÆT IS YRRE': THE CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF ANGER IN ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

Hilary E. Fox, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 2005

An examination of the linguistic background and literary conceptions of anger in Old English. The first point of analysis will be the vocabulary of used to discuss anger and its manifestations in Old English prose didactic texts, particularly homilies and translations from Latin materials. Subsequent chapters will discuss anger as a literary phenomenon, first with respect to its use in the Old English hagiographic poem *The Passion of St. Juliana* and then *Beowulf*. The goal of these two chapters collectively is to outline the social use (or misuse) of anger, and Christian understandings of how anger must be controlled or avoided.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents—Continued

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABR	*American Benedictine Review*
ÆAdmon	Henry W. Norman, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Hexameron of St. Basil ... and the Anglo-Saxon Remains of St. Basil's Admonitio ad filium spiritualem*, 2nd ed. (London: J.R. Smith, 1849).
ÆCHomI	Peter Clemoes, ed., *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Text*, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
ÆCHomII	Malcolm Godden, ed., *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, EETS s.s. 5 (London: Oxford University Press, 1979).
ÆHom	John C. Pope, ed., *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, 2 vols., EETS o.s. 259-60 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).
ÆLS	Walter Skeat, ed. *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, EETS o.s. 76, 82, 94, 114 (rpt. in 2 vols., London: Oxford University, 1966).
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
ASPR	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records
BazCr	Joyce Bazire and and James E. Cross, eds., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).
BlHom	Richard Morris, ed., *The Blickling Homilies* 3 vols., EETS o.s 58, 63, 74 (London: 1874-80; rpt. Millwood: Kraus, 1967).
Bosworth-Toller	*An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth. Edited and Enlarged by T. Northcote Toller*. 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898; *Supplement* by T.N. Toller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921).
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
Cons	Walter J. Sedgefield, ed., *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius' De consolatione philosophiae* (Oxford, 1899; rpt. Darmstadt 1968).
CP	Henry Sweet, ed., *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, 2 vols., EETS o.s 45, 50 (London 1871, rpt. Millwood: Kraus Reprint, 1988).
DOE	*The Dictionary of Old English*
EETS	Early English Text Society
ELN	*English Language Notes*

GD	Hans Hecht, ed., *Dialoge Gregors des Grossen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965).
JEGP	*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
Lewis & Short	Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879).
MÆ	*Medium Ævum*
MGHAA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, auctores antiquissimi (1877-1919)
MLN	*Modern Language Notes*
MLQ	*Modern Language Queries*
MRTS	*Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*
N&Q	*Notes & Queries*
Neo	*Neophilologus*
NM	*Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*
OEN	*Old English Newsletter*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne (1844-1855).
PMLA	*Publications of* the *Modern Language Association*
PsGlKm	Andrew Kimmens, ed., *The Stowe Psalter,* Toronto Old English Series 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).
SASLC	Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture
SN	*Studia Neophilologica*
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*
VercScragg	Donald Scragg, ed., *The Vercelli Homilies*, EETS o.s. 300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
WulfNap	Arthur S. Napier, ed. *Wulfstan*, Sammlung Englischer Denkmäler 4 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883).

Notes:

1. Unless noted otherwise, the Old English editions are those used by the *DOE Online Corpus*, listed by Antonette diPaolo Healey and Richard L. Venezky, *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English: The List of Texts and Index of Editions* (The Dictionary of Old English Project [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1985]).

2. Unless otherwise noted, all homilies are cited by number and lineation according to their respective editors.

3. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

CHAPTER I

'QUID EST IRA?': ANGER AND MEDIEVAL SOURCES

Introduction

Amans.   "Mi goode fader, tell me this:
What thing is Ire?"

(John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* 3.19-20)[1]

This project grows out of a personal fascination with the phenomenology of

human emotion and cognition—how we think about thinking and how we feel about

feeling, how we describe emotion, thought, and memory. It is with this interest in

mind that I sought to formulate a thesis that would address the phenomenon of anger

in Old English literature. Developments in research tools for scholars, most especially

the *Dictionary of Old English Online Corpus*, with its searchable database, and other

collections or source analyses such as the *Patrologia Latina*, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*

and SASLC have made possible the evaluation of a wide range of Old English and

Latin texts of all types—prose, poetic, patristic, homiletic, secular, and so on. These

tools have allowed me to engage in a threefold approach to anger in Anglo-Saxon

texts, through an analysis of the relationship between the Old English and Latin, the

development and transmission of doctrine, and the influence of ecclesiastical and

---

[1] *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G.C. Macaulay, 2 vols., EETS e.s. 81-82 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1900; rpt. 1979).

secular attitudes toward anger on literary texts. This thesis has three main goals: first, to illuminate nuances in Anglo-Saxon vocabulary with reference to "anger" words and metaphors; second, to analyze how the vocabulary of Cynewulf's *Juliana*, a hagiographic text, demonstrates knowledge of the received classical and patristic tradition of anger's deleterious effects on human reason; and lastly, to account for the interaction of anger, violence, and revenge in *Beowulf*, a secular text overlaid with Christian references.

The Problem of Anger and Medieval Literature

In her introduction to *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, Barbara Rosenwein discusses the difficulties inherent in analyzing the historical development of emotion. The historian's analysis of anger, Rosenwein argues, falls prey to a fundamental ignorance of anger's nature, as well as disagreement on the part of sociologists and psychologists over its value in the individual and society. Both of these difficulties arise from scholars' ambivalence regarding the topic itself.[2] Anger's nature remains nebulous, and this uncertainty informs all discussion that attempts to address it as a phenomenon in history and literature, and renders it problematic.[3]

---

[2] Barbara Rosenwein, ed., *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998), pp. 1-2. There is also an inherent hesitancy that makes for difficulty in even *wanting* to address the topic, as Rosenwein further asserts: "The reasons not to write about emotions are neither thin nor brittle; they have to do with our unwillingness to touch what we cannot see or know clearly and to deal with what is (or seems) irrational." The lack of desire alone makes discussing the topic difficult, and this difficulty may cloud evaluation of the meaning and significance of anger in a given text.
[3] For example, social psychologists continue to debate the nature and expression of emotion in general; is emotion biologically driven, or socially constructed--that is, a phenomenon that is "context-bound, historically-developed, and culture-specific?" The argument is from R.C. Solomon, "Getting Angry:

Temporal distance only compounds the problem of addressing anger in medieval literature. Modern conceptions of "anger" come freighted with psychological burdens, social expectations, and contexts which would have been unfamiliar to the writers and readers of medieval texts. Inevitably, modern views of emotion (as either a psychological phenomenon or social construct) color interpretation of other cultures' understanding and experience of emotion, and it is dangerous to assume that even contextual support for any given interpretation does not have modern-day "psychological schemas" applied to it.[4] Temporal distance only further clouds the issue; social conceptions and controls placed on anger today may not have been possessed or deemed necessary by medieval writers, for whom anger could represent a sin, an illness (or an aggregate of the two), or conversely a productive, driving force when, for example, used to defend the Church or amend the behavior of the sinful.[5]

The Jamesian Theory of Emotion in Anthropology," in *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, ed. R.A. Schweder and R.A. Levine (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 490. For a discussion of the social construction argument in a linguistic and literary context, see William V. Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 36-40.

[4] Antonina Harbus, *The Life of the Mind in Old English Poetry* (New York: Rodopoi, 2002), p. 2. Harbus's argument is made with reference to her discussion of the "psychology of reading," as advanced by critics seeking to explore Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward reading and the reception of texts.

[5] Augustine (*De civitate dei* 9.5), asserts that anger felt toward a sinner, so long as the anger is directed towards the sinner's correction, is acceptable. Gregory the Great (*Moralia in Iob* 5.45.82) distinguishes between anger aroused by impatience and anger aroused by zeal or a desire to do God's will, arguing that the former arises from vice, the latter from virtue. All subsequent references to the *Moralia* will be to the edition by Mark Andria, CCSL 143 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1979). Martin of Braga (*De ira* 9.1) does not allow the distinction: "Qui irascitur iniurianti se, vitium vitio opponit" (Whoever becomes angry at an affront or injury opposes sin with sin). All further references to *De ira* will be taken from *Opera Omnia*, ed. Claud W. Barlow (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950).

Anger's Place in Doctrine: The Capital Sins

Anglo-Saxon clerics inherited several systems by which they understood anger's relationship to the other sins that imperiled spiritual health. Anger was one of the capital sins—that is, one of the most important sins—outlined by writers such as John Cassian (d. 435) and Gregory the Great (d. 604), both of whom exercised considerable doctrinal influence over Anglo-Saxon writers, whether directly or mediated through writers such as Bede, Aldhelm, and Alcuin.[6]

Cassian spent years touring the monasteries of Eastern Christendom; upon his return to Marseilles in Gaul, he wrote the two major works that would establish the practices and philosophy of monastic life in the West, *De institutis coenobiorum* (c. 420) and the *Collationes* (c. 425). In the *Institutes*, Cassian outlines eight capital sins: *gula* (or *gastrimargia*; 'gluttony'), *fornicatio* (or *luxuria*; 'lust'), *filargyria* (or *avaritia*; 'avarice'), *ira* (anger), *tristitia* (inordinate grief), *acedia* (sloth), *cenodoxia* (or *inanis gloria*; 'vainglory'), and *superbia* (pride). In Cassian's scheme, each sin grows out of the previous one in an ascending order of severity; *gula* and *fornicatio*, the so-called "fleshly sins," were not as grave according to Cassian's estimation, as satisfying hunger and sexual urges were related to the compulsion to preserve the human race. However, anger ranked among the latter six "spiritual" sins, growing out of avarice and eventually becoming *tristitia*; moreover, like avarice, it was spurred by

---

[6] Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (Lansing: Michigan State College, 1952). There is a difference between the capital (or cardinal) sins and the deadly sins. The former are the sources of sinful action, but are not necessarily damning in any way. The latter, however, lead inevitably to damnation and the death of the soul.

an external impulse or catalyst that led to evil action.[7] This ordering was adopted in Ireland and England, and was at first the exclusive possession of monastic communities,[8] though it remained popular despite the competing system introduced by Gregory, though both systems were in use in the same period.[9] For example, Ælfric employs Cassian's order in one of his homilies on the dangers of the capital sins:

> Se forma heafodleahter is. Gyfernyss. Se oðer is. Galnyss. ðridda. Gytsung. Feorða. Weamet. Fifta. Unrotnys. Sixta. Asolcennyss. Oððe æmelnys. Seofoða. Ydel gylp. Eahteoðe. Modignys. (ÆCHom II 12.483-86)

> [The first capital sin is gluttony. The second is greed, the third avarice, the fourth anger, grief the fifth, sloth (or slowness to do good works) is the sixth, the seventh is vainglory, the eighth is pride.]

What is significant here is that in their respective schemas, both Cassian and Gregory understood anger primarily as a sin, not as an "emotion" or a biological response (though, as we will see, there were recognized physical changes in an angry person). Their understanding of anger in this sense is related to Augustine's argument in *De civitate dei* 9.4-5 on the nature of emotion and its relationship to human reason, which must struggle to overcome the influence of the passions that assail it.[10]

---

[7] Richard Newhauser, *The Treatise on Virtues and Vices in Latin and the Vernacular* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), p. 183.

[8] Id., p. 185. Aldhelm relies on Cassian for his *De octo principalibus vitiis*.

[9] Bloomfield, *Seven Deadly Sins*, pp. 69-71. Gregory's order was a modification of Cassian's, based on his exegesis of Job 34.25 (*Moralia* 31.45.87-90). Gregory reversed the order, so that each sin became less severe according to its place in the list, replaced *cenodoxia* with *invidia* (envy) and combined *tristitia* with *acedia*; the resulting order is *superbia, ira, invidia, avaritia, acedia, gula, luxuria.*

[10] R.W. Dyson, ed. *The City of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Augustine's discussion is drawn from the debate between the Stoics and Peripatetics on the difference between the passions as advantages or disadvantages (the Stoics) and evil and good (the Peripatetics). He reconciles the two by pointing out the difference is only in the terminology; both philosophies, and Augustine himself, subscribe to the belief that, while emotions (such as fear and anger) assail the soul, the mind must master them and turn them to virtue by exercising reason.

The words and images Anglo-Saxons employed to discuss anger are in part derived from those used by earlier Latin theologians, notably John Cassian, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, and Alcuin of York. Alcuin was influential in the formulation of Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward the nature of the mind and the role of anger; Alfred and Aelfric of Eynsham were deeply indebted to him for their understanding of the place of anger in the human spiritual and mental landscape. Both inherited from Alcuin the concept of the tripartite soul, the constituent parts of which were concupiscent, irascible, and rational.[11] Though he grants reason priority, Alcuin insists that it is bound to concupiscence and anger in a relationship that emphasizes human responsibility to control baser impulses by moderating them; when it fails to do so, the result is perversion in the hierarchy of an orderly mind and the emergence of sin.[12] According "natural" anger a place in the soul allows for distinction between anger as an innate human property and anger as sin. That is, "natural" anger it is not itself sinful, merely a base impulse needing the control of reason; however, it can *become* evil or wrong if unrestrained.[13]

---

[11] The substance of ÆLS 1.96-100, the nature of the soul and man's responsibility to live by reason, is borrowed almost entirely from Alcuin's treatise. For a discussion of the vocabulary involved in distinguishing the faculties of the soul, see Harbus, *The Life of the Mind*, pp. 35-36.

[12] "Si enim vel concupiscentia, vel ira rationem vincit, et dominatur quaelibet illorum in anima; ordo perversus praecipitabit consentientem in pejus; et tenebit solium rationis ira, si immoderata erit, vel concupiscentia effrenata" (For if concupiscence or anger conquer reason, then either one of those rule within the mind; the order, turned askew, will cast down what is harmonious into [something] worse, and anger will control the throne of reason, if it becomes immoderate, or concupiscence unrestrained."

[13] Gregory makes the same inference in *Cura pastoralis* 40; there are some people, he says, who are more passionate and irascible than others, and their irascibility becomes problematic if it leads to behavior harmful to others and oneself.

Definitions

Modern interpretation of images of anger and the analysis of their relationships with doctrine encounters the temporal and cultural barrier spoken of above; thus, before proceeding further, it is necessary to define, insofar as is possible, what anger is. As the writings of psychologists and anthropologists indicate, this task is not as easy as it initially appears—but, as they all acknowledge, such a definition is necessary. Carol and Peter Stearns offer a tentative definition of anger, saying "it is an emotion, biologically related to a 'fight' response, and usually aroused in a situation judged as antagonistic."[14] Building on Seneca's distinction between animals and humans,[15] Ethel Spector Persons suggests that "anger in humans enters consciousness as a specific response to a specific provocation and that it has an intellectually elaborated (and, I would add, symbolic) valence."[16] Both Persons and the Stearns argue for definitions of anger that are flexible with respect to context; the Stearns insist that, in order to examine its variations across culture and history, anger should not be reified "as a fixed entity," while Persons points to the fact that a myriad of circumstances can give rise to anger, and anger can be expressed in just as many

---

[14] Carol Zisowitz Stearns and Peter N. Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 15.

[15] Seneca (*De ira* 1.3.3-7) argues that, because anger is the foe of reason, animals (who do not possess reason) cannot be angry. We may describe them as being so, but "anger" is strictly a human idiom. Christian theologians attempting to work out the nature of divine wrath encountered a similar problem and found a similar solution: God cannot be angry because his nature is not subject to fluctuation; instead, we understand his actions (plagues, earthquakes, brimstone, etc.) through our human idiom of anger. All subsequent references to Seneca's *De ira* will be taken from *Moral Essays*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. John W. Basore, Loeb Classics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958). The argument is also outlined in Lactantius' *De ira Dei*.

[16] "Introduction," in *Rage, Power, and Aggression*, ed. Robert A. Glick and Steven P. Roose (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 3.

ways.[17] The use of anger in Old English texts demands the flexibility of approach indicated by the authors above, and so a definition with minimal restrictions placed upon it is indicated. Persons' definition comes the closest to Anglo-Saxons' understanding of anger as reaction to provocation, and allows also for the various ways they wrote about the expression of anger to be interpreted as culturally understood (and to some extent, culturally dictated) phenomena.

---

[17] Stearns and Stearns, *Anger*, pp. 15-16; Persons, "Introduction," pp. 2-3.

CHAPTER II

'ÞÆT IS YRRE': THE VOCABULARY OF ANGER

Introduction

Both *yrre* and *wraþ*—as is true for the vast majority of anger words in Old

English—do not contain any value judgment on the emotion being described, as

indicated by their application to a wide variety of individuals in differing contexts.

God is angry with backsliding sinners; the Devil is furious at his expulsion from

heaven. Beowulf and Grendel are united in their ferocity and their anger alike.

Heathens vent their frustration on obstinate saints. A common man must make

reparation if his anger leads him to misdeeds against another, but not if his anger

leads him to avoid sin. In all cases, Anglo-Saxon writers draw on a common

vocabulary of anger words to describe emotions both divine and infernal, righteous

and unjust. As Małgorzata Fabiszak posits, this type of common application across a

variety of texts and situations "suggests that the emotion did not have an inherent

axiological value,"[18] and an examination of the corpus upholds this statement; an

overview of the *Old English Online Corpus* shows that anger words are used in a

wide variety of contexts and an equally wide variety of ways. As I will discuss further,

a detailed analysis of the prose corpus of Old English demonstrates that anger words

did not possess, in and of themselves, some quality of immorality, vice, or other types

of "wrongness"; with only a very few exceptions, no anger word includes a

9

component that demands negative interpretation of anger or the one experiencing it.[19]

Rather, the impermissible—or permissible—quality of anger is determined, in the

majority of cases, by either a word or phrase providing further description, or the

entirety of the context (the person experiencing anger, the target of that anger, and the

consequences of anger) in which the emotion is experienced.

This lack of specificity poses a number of problems in the analysis of anger

words. If words cannot be analyzed by their connotations, how else may they be

studied? Due to the difficulties in dating works much earlier than the ninth century,

and the fact that the majority of those texts which can be dated belong to the ninth

through eleventh centuries (e.g. the Alfredian translations, the corpus of Ælfric), a

diachronic discussion does not seem to be appropriate.[20] Fabiszak and Gevaert have

both engaged in studies that examine anger words using semantic fields, Fabiszak

from a cognitive-semantics approach derived from Maria Wierzbicka's and George

Lakoff's and Zoltan Kövecses's theories[21] and Gevaert from a lexical and conceptual

---

[18] Małgorzata Fabiszak, "Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF, and ANGER in OE," in *A Changing World of Words: Studies in English Historical Lexicology and Semantics*, ed. Javier E. Díaz Vera (New York: Rodopi, 2002), p. 267.

[19] Caroline Gevaert, "The Evolution of the Lexical and Conceptual Field of ANGER," in *A Changing World of Words*, pp. 275-99. Gevaert classifies *yrre* under the semantic field of "wrong emotion." Whether she means "wrong emotion" in the sense of something innately wrong or an emotion that produces an undesirable result regardless of its nature is unclear. That the Anglo-Saxons used *yrre* to cover a wide range of individuals and responses to situations (as discussed above) seems to indicate that it is *not* wrong, unless the circumstances of its arousal and the consequences stemming from acting upon it make it so.

[20] Gevaert approaches her study of anger lexicography in Old English using a diachronic method, measuring word frequency across three periods of time (pre-850, 850-950, and 950-1050). In recent years, however, the date of some earlier works has come under debate. The Cynewulf corpus is a good example; see Patrick Conner, "On Dating Cynewulf," in *The Cynewulf Reader*, ed. Robert Bjork (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 23-56 for his proposition of a 10th-11th century date for Cynewulf, significantly later than the 8th-9th century range adopted by earlier scholars.

[21] Fabiszak, "Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF, and ANGER in OE," p. 256.

approach involving diachronic methodology.[22] I have chosen to approach my analysis

synchronically, and, by expanding on the work of Fabiszak and Gevaert, to assemble

anger words into semantic domains based on commonality of discussion and

metaphor. That is, the words, phrases, and images used to describe the experience and

expression of anger will be classed according to shared features in order to examine

how descriptions of anger, and the words associated with its inculcation, effects, and

display were conceptualized by those who wrote about it. The order of discussion is

as follows:

> Anger as Innate Quality and External Manifestation
> Anger as Darkness
> Anger as Sadness
> Anger as Oppression/Exerted Force
> Anger as Weapon
> Anger as Heat
> Anger as Liquid/Intoxicant
> Anger as Madness
> Anger as Nature and Display
> The Products of Anger
> Anger as Sin[23]

In ordering the above categories, I have attempted to convey some sense of continuum

between each group, either in terms of association (e.g. effects upon the body or

mind) or in terms of progression; on occasion, one stage of anger may develop into

another (e.g. initial incitement or provocation may develop into anger, and then into

madness), or else the internal experience of a quality of anger (i.e. being angry

---

[22] Gevaert, "Evolution of the Lexical and Conceptual Field of ANGER," p. 276.

[23] Fabiszak's analysis includes the domains of anger as OPPRESSOR, DESTRUCTIVE FORCE, FIRE, and OPPONENT ("Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF, and ANGER in OE," p. 270); Gevaert outlines several more, including STRONG EMOTION, WRONG EMOTION, PRIDE, INSANITY, UNKINDNESS, FIERCENESS, AFFLICTION, SADNESS, DARK, HEAVY, BITTER, HEAT,

oneself) may use the same metaphors as external experience (i.e. having anger inflicted on one) to different effect. This chapter will concentrate on the discussion of anger words as they appear in didactic prose texts, specifically homilies, penitentials, exhortatory works, and rules such as the *Cura pastoralis*, *Regula Benedicti*, and *Regula canonicorum*, in addition to the Scriptures and various glossed works. This approach is taken for two reasons: first, in order to establish Anglo-Saxon discourses of anger within their doctrinal contexts, and second, to allow for a closer discussion of the Latin tradition that Anglo-Saxon writers inherited. For instance, Ælfric's Gregorian, Cassianic, and Alcuinian leanings are clearly demonstrated in his writings, and the homilists' debts to Gregorian conceptions of anger and John Cassian's outlines of the eight capital sins, and anger's placement within it, are particularly clear-cut.

Inevitably, any methodology selected will have its disadvantages and must be provided with a *caveat lector* of some sort. Here, the danger seems to be that some might interpret my classification of anger words and expression to be arbitrary, and an adoption of emotional absolutes: that one word must fit into only one category or context, or be used in only one specific sense with no alternative. I do not wish to suggest this at all; on the contrary, I believe that the ability of anger words to defy concrete semantic categorization cannot be overstated. The categories outlined below are a means to approach discussion only, and to delineate relationships between groups of words or concepts as clearly as possible. Semantic overlap is inevitable; all

MOTION, BODILY BEHAVIOR, and SWELL ("Evolution of the Lexical and Conceptual Field of ANGER," pp. 286-91).

the words and phrases discussed below may fall into different categories depending on any individual's interpretation, and may even be able to appear in multiple categories with justification for their presence in each.

However, discussion of *yrre* and *wraþ* will take place outside the fields delineated above, for the reason that they do not easily lend themselves to classification; their value as negative or permissible emotion depends wholly on context, unlike the majority of the other words analyzed below, which, while they overlap with others, allow for subclassification. In making a distinction between *yrre* (or any other anger word) as desirable and *yrre* as sin, I have attempted to avoid terms such as "just" and "unjust," which today have a tint of the legalist about them and are perceived as being mutually exclusive. Further, the ability of "just" anger to shade into excess, as will be seen in Gregory's *Cura pastoralis,* suggests that Latin authorities and their Anglo-Saxon heirs recognized that to become angry was to walk on a slippery slope, no matter the circumstances or source of the anger in question. To that end, I have opted for the somewhat more neutral "permissible" and "impermissible" anger to suggest the gamut of classification; while these terms still form a binary, they seem more netural than "right" and "wrong" or "just" and "unjust."

Yrre and *Wraþ*: Contextualizing Anger

Yrre, as the most common of the words associated with anger in both its noun and adjectival usage,[24] derives most directly from the Latin *ira*, which it glosses frequently. *Ira* itself is a vague term, which seems to have been used to denote a wide range of intensity in the internal experience of anger, that is, "tantrums and annoyance as well as towering rages," a phenomenon to which classical Latin writers admit with some reluctance.[25] This ambiguity carries over into Old English; not only does *yrre* have no inherent moral values invested in it, but the word also appears in glosses paired with Latin words that suggest a slightly different range of emotional response, such as *furor* or *zelus* (Latinized from the Greek, *ζῆλος*), the latter of which seems to indicate any strong emotion, not anger alone. Thus, the extent of the anger expressed by *yrre*, and its nature, must be determined by other methods, specifically the type of work in which it is discussed (didactic, exhortatory, penitiential, hagiographic), the immediate context (is it a list of the capital sins, a recommendation for penance, or the passage leading up to the martyr's passion?), and last, the words used to describe the quality or nature of *yrre*, whether they function adverbially, or discuss anger with respect to its etiology or its expression.

Yrre, as noun, functions as one of the words used most frequently in the discussion of anger as one of the capital sins, though it is by no means the only one, and in some instances is replaced by *weamod*, which refers specifically to anger in the

---

[24] See Gevaert, "The Evolution of the Lexical and Conceptual Field of ANGER," pp. 286-91 for relative frequency tables for anger words. *Yrre* (as simplex) occurs significantly more often than the majority of other anger words in all three time periods covered by the study.
[25] Harris, *Restraining Rage,* p. 69.

sinful sense.[26] Several of the homilies discussing *yrre* in this context mention its effects in the context of impatience: lack of reasonable thought, hasty action, violation of the commandments (by committing such acts as blasphemy or homicide), and desire for revenge or to inflict harm. Vercelli Homily 20 is one such, describing anger's place in the hierarchy of vice and the consequences that arise from it:

> Þonne ys se fifta heafodleahter gecweden yrre, þurh þæt ne mæg nan mann habban fullþungennesse hys geþeahtes. Of ðam sprytt modes toðundennes & saca & teonan & æbylgð & yfelsacung & blodes agotenes & mannsliht & grædignes teonan to wyrcanne. Þæt byð soðlice oferswiðed þurh geðyld & þurh þolomodnesse & þurh andgytlic gescead ðe God on asæwð on manna modum.[27] (ll. 98-103)

> [Next, the fifth capital sin is called *yrre*, through which no one can achieve full development of his understanding. From this springs swelling of the mind and strife and contumely and irritation and blasphemy and bloodshed and homicide and eagerness to do harm. But that is overcome through patience and through suffering and through intellectual reason which God placed in the minds of men.]

VercScragg 20 is related to a later Latin homily found in MS Pembroke College 25, both of which owe their material to Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*.[28] Alcuin's tract which enjoyed wide dissemination throughout the Middle Ages in

---

[26] *Weamod* is one of the rare anger words that refers exclusively to impermissible anger. For further discussion, see "Anger as Sin," below.

[27] The Old English version derives from a Latin homily in Cambridge MS Pembroke College 25, and is related to Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*. Both homilies discuss the eight capital sins in some detail, and the spiritual powers capable of defeating them: "Quintum vitium est ira per quam nemo potest habere maturitatem consilii sui. De qua pullulat tumor mentis, rixae, contumeliae, indignatio, blasphemia, sanguinis effusio, homicidia, cupiditas ulciscendi iniuriam, quae autem uincitur per patientiam et longanimitatem, et per rationem intellectualem, quam Deus inserit mentibus hominum."

[28] Paul E. Szarmach, "The Latin Tradition of Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*, cap. xxvii-xxxv, with Special Reference to Vercelli Homily xx," *Medievalia* 12 (1989): 13. For a more extensive discussion of the relationship between Pembroke 25 and VercScragg 20, see his "Pembroke College 25, Arts. 93-95," in *Via Crucis: Esays on Early Medieval Sources and Ideas*," ed. Thomas N. Hall, Thomas D. Hill, and Charles D. Wright (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2002.

England, Scandinavia, and the Continent.[29] From the ninth and tenth centuries, 35

manuscripts survive (out of approximately 140 medieval manuscripts), attesting to the

early popularity of the work, a *florilegium*, or collection of commonplaces on a

variety of doctrinal topics.[30] Alcuin drew on Cassian, Gregory, and Isidore for his

understanding of the vices and virtues, and his debt to Cassian is particularly clear in

the section of the *De virtutibus* devoted to the eight capital sins, which is replicated in

VercScragg 20.[31] The texts of VercScragg 20 and Pembroke 25 represent a significant

compression of Alcuin's work, reducing his lengthy discussion of anger to a

description of it, its results (violence, disturbance, and misery), and how to combat it.

Nonetheless, in this distillation we can clearly see outlined the essence of Alcuin's,

and by extension later Anglo-Saxons', attitude toward sinful or impermissible anger.

As will be discussed further below, the consequences of impermissible anger

were negative in terms of both the damage done to the individual's spiritual state and

the targets of his rage. In VercScragg 20, impermissible anger is harmful because it

impairs perception and understanding, and this impairment is discussed elsewhere in

many ways—as heat, intoxication, or darkness. *Yrre* in this context is distinguished

from dislike or hate, which can give rise to *yrre*, but suggests an emotion of longer

duration; in his explication of Matt 7:1-4 (ÆHom 14.153-61), Ælfric refers to the

beam in the beholder's eye as "þa teonfullan hatunge" (contemptuous hatred) and the

---

[29] Paul E. Szarmach, "A Preliminary List of Manuscripts Containing Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*," *Manuscripta* 25 (1981), pp. 131-140.

[30] Szarmach, "The Latin Tradition of Alcuin's *Liber de Virtutibus et Vitiis*," pp. 13-16.

[31] Clare A. Lees, "The Dissemination of Alcuin's *De Virtutibus et Vitiis Liber* in Old English: A Preliminary Survey," *Leeds Studies in English* n.s. 16 (1985): 175. Alcuin modifies Cassian's octad slightly; he moves *superbia* to the head of the list and reverses the order of *tristitia* and *acedia* (p. 179).

16

mote in the brother's eye as "þæs mannes yrsunge" (the anger of man), which cannot

be dislodged until hatred—Ælfric specifies this as one of the capital sins—in the

former individual is removed. Gregory the Great, with reference to the same passage

from Matthew, also states that wrongful, enduring anger can transform into hatred.[32]

Further, *yrre* almost always results in reaction to provocation, whether the

provocation be insult (to the body, honor, or property), failure of another party to

comply with the angry individual's desire, or some combination of the two. The

expression of the quality, extent, and duration of wrong *yrre* can take a variety of

forms, dependent on the nature of the material in question. *Unriht yrre* appears in

VercScragg 21 in order to specify wrong *yrre* as the *yrre* to be avoided by Christians,

suggesting that an angry reaction to the types of provocation above was viewed

negatively:

> Þonne ys þæt oðer mægen þære sawle þæt man fylige geþylde & forbuge ælc
> unriht yrre.[33]   (ll. 63-64)

> [Next, the second virtue of the soul is that a person should follow patience and
> forsake all wrong anger.]

Because impermissible anger is often reactive anger, writers contrast it with its foil,

patience (*geþylde*), one of the virtues granted to the soul to help it overcome the

attack of vice. Numerous homilies discuss the efficacy of patience in warding off the

negative effects of impermissible anger, and stress its status as one of the chief virtues

---

[32] "Atque in irati oculum festuca in trabem uertitur, dum ira in odium permutatur" (And in the eye of an angry man the mote is turned into a beam, when anger is changed into hatred) [*Moralia* 5.45.79]. The metaphor also occurs in Augustine's sermon on the same passage (*Sermones de scripturis, sermo* 82).
[33] The homily makes use of *An Exhortation to Christian Living*, a poem surviving in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 201 as well as the St. Père homilary (Scragg 347-48). The Old English

and as a characteristic of God, who in contrast to impatient, easily offended mortals, is held up as a model of restraint (though God, of course, is also capable of offense and anger himself). Ælfric's homily "The Memory of Saints" emphasizes the importance of forbearance in the face of anger and provocation:

> Seo feorðe miht is *patientia*, þæt is geðyld and þolmodnys gecwæden, þæt is þæt se mann beo geðyldig and ðolomod for Gode, and læte æfre his gewitt gewyldre þonne his yrre.   (ÆLS 16.334-36)

> The fourth virtue is *patientia*, that is called patience and long-suffering, so that a man is patient and forbearing for God's sake, and alway allows his reason to be stronger than his anger.

Ælfric continues on to assert that patience is necessary not only because it preserves reason's rule over potentially sinful compulsions, but because patience is a characteristic of God (in whose likeness the soul is formed). Anger "hæfð wununge on ðæs dysegan bosme" (has its home in the foolish heart), and leads to impulsiveness, but because God the all-powerful judge rules with mercy and compassion, it is incumbent upon humans that "we sceolan mid geðylde oferswyðan þæt yrre" (we must conquer anger with patience) [ÆLS 16.341-44].[34]

Though *yrre* of this sort arises from some immediate stimulus, and demands that the individual act to avenge himself, *langsum yrre*, or anger of long duration, was also to be avoided. Perhaps the most famous injunction to avoid grudges is that of Eph 4:26, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." The injunction appears in Basil of Caesarea's *Hexameron* and Ælfric's translation of it:

---

diverges from the Latin here; the Latin reads "Secunda est patientiam sectari et a pusillamitate declinare"; the translator seems to have read "peruersa animositate" (Scragg 354).

[34] Other examples include BlHom 3.123-29, VercScragg 20.145-51, and ÆLS 28.142-49.

Gif þu hwilon yrsie swa swa oðre men doð ne læt þu þæt yrre licgean on þinre heortan ofer sunnan setlunge ac foh to sibbe æror and adræf þa hatheortnysse fram þinre sawle hraðe.[35]   (ÆAdmon 5.22)

[If you become angry for a time just as other men do, do not allow anger to lie upon your heart after sunset, but keep to peace and drive fury quickly from your soul.]

The phrase *langsum yrre* only occurs once in the corpus, in VercScragg 10, which includes it in a list of the sins not embraced by mankind before the Fall, "ne to yðbylge ne syn we, ne to langsum yrre næbben we" (we should not be given to offense, nor to long-standing anger) [ll. 34-39], cautioning the audience against irritability and long-held anger. However, as seen in Ælfric's translation above, Old English also borrowed into it words and concepts concomitant with long duration, such as allowing anger to lie, or holding anger to oneself. The distinction between expressed *yrre* and *langsum yrre* seems to be that *yrre*, once avenged or acted upon, is assuaged, but *langsum yrre*, not being able to find expression for whatever reason, is kept until the individual can act upon it—or, in the case of Christian writers, until the individual can conquer it with patience. Further, commentaries on the *Quae sint instrumenta bonorum operum* of the *Regula Benedicti* suggest a difference between the commandment not to act on anger and the commandment not to cling to anger with respect to the former being a single episode or occurrence and the latter being a

---

[35] (PL 103.683-88). "Quod et si quandoque ut homo iratus fueris, ultra solis terminum non producas iracundiam tuam; sed et reconciliare ad pacem, et deprime omnem furorem ab anima tua" (For whenever you become as an angry man, do not persist in your anger beyond sunset; but both reconcile to peace, and put away all anger from your mind).

habit.[36] This distinction will be discussed more fully in the following section with reference to anger as an innate human characteristic, both as a feature of the human spiritual and mental makeup and as an individual failing.

Anger on the part of heathens in hagiography is always construed as impermissible anger, a failing arising from their bloodthirstiness, power-grasping, and persistence in the delusion of their idol worship. Indeed, words of cruelty, hostility, and delusion often accompany descriptions of such men, whether in direct relation to their expression of anger or in the description of their characters (in which case, this ferocity is always in the background as the heathen vents his fury on his Christian target). These words provide the valence of *yrre* in this context, and *yrre* is further elaborated by the addition of some kind of adverbial enhancement which emphasizes the negative quality of what is being experienced and expressed. In Ælfric's passion of St. Edmund, the Vikings react with fury to the martyr's expression of his faith: "þa hæþenan þa for his geleafan wurdon wodlice yrre" [then the heathens became insanely angry on account of his belief) [ÆLS 32.113-14], indicating the extent and quality of the anger at hand—the heathens are not only angry, they are angry to the point of loss of reason, to the point of madness. Similarly, Datianus the evil tryant from Ælfric's passion of St. Vincent becomes "fiendishly angry" (*deofollice yrsode*), emphasizing the persecutor's kinship with the devil, as both share anger as a negative trait (ÆLS 37.113-16).

---

[36] *Regulae Benedicti*, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1972), 4.22-23. *Ira* and *iracundia* could both refer to anger in genderal, but *iracundia* could also refer to the propensity to be angry (that is, irascibility) or anger of long duration (*TLL*, s.v. *ira* and *iracundia*).

20

Conversely, the *yrre* of the Christian could be employed beneficially, and patristic writers did at times regard the anger of righteous people, especially saints, as a positive force. Moreover, a Christian could use anger in specific ways either to avoid sin in himself or to correct other sinners. Martin of Braga specifically protested this concept, arguing that whoever used anger as a method of correction *vitium vitio opponit* (opposes sin with sin): two wrongs, he says, do not make a right.[37] However, Gregory insists on anger, or an anger-like emotion, having priority in spiritual correction; it can spur the actions of individuals who are attempting to evangelize or to correct the behavior of their followers (*CP* 40.3; *Moralia* 5.45.83). In most instances, Alfred uses *ryhtwislice anda* as opposed to *ryhtwislic yrre* to render the phrase *iustitiae zelus* in Gregory's *Cura pastoralis*, perhaps to distinguish the specific emotion of *yrre* from the more general sense conveyed by zeal in the positive sense, that is, emulation and passion.[38]

Nonetheless, human anger—despite directed towards a spiritual purpose—was in perpetual danger of being transmuted into impermissible anger by lack of moderation. Ælfric writes that the soul is given anger so that it can fight against the

---

[37] Martin of Braga *De ira* 9.1. The Anglo-Saxons were familiar with him; his highly influential *Formula honestae vitae* was known in England before the Conquest (Gneuss 112). Certainly the attitude expressed by Ælfric toward "productive" or "permissible" anger indicates the predominance of the Gregorian tradition; Ælfric also could have inherited his attitude through Augustine (see below), though he certainly knew Martin's *De correctione rusticorum*, part of which influenced ÆHom 21.1-209, on false gods (see Pope, pp. 271-73).

[38] *Anda* has a wide range of defintions. It can indicate anger, as in some of Ælfric's homilies; for example, in ÆCHomI 1.265, the Jews listening to Christ's teaching *nam... micelne andan ongean his lare* (take great offense at his teaching) and because of it, plot his death. However, even the usage here is vague, as *andan* can also indicate vexation, which can lead to anger, but as we have seen, not necessarily—it is always within human power to repress anger at affront or annoyance. Whenever *anda* is used in its specific sense, it most frequently refers to jealousy. In glossed texts, *anda* almost invariably glosses *invidia*; in lists of the eight capital sins, it is used for the sin of envy, but never for anger.

temptation to sin and not be subjugated by it—but, he notes, the anger that can function as prophylactic can also be turned to evil purposes (ÆLS 1.104-8). Chrodegang of Metz describes the evils of the angry authorities or teachers (*iracundi doctores*), whose madness (*rabies*) leads them to abuse those whom they are supposed to correct. Gregory frequently emphasizes the importance of priests stressing the difference between permissible anger—which is closer to the "likeness" of anger, rather than anger itself—and impermissible anger, which is provoked needlessly:

> Ac ða irsunga sindun suiðe ungelica: oðer bið suelce [hit sie] irres anlicnes, ðæt is ðæt mon wielle æt oðrum his yfel aðreatigan, & hine on ryhtum gebringan, oðer bið ðæt irre ðæt mon sie gedrefed on his mode butan ælcre ryhtwisnesse; oðer ðara irsunga bið to ungemetlice & to ungedafenlice atyht on ðæt ðe hio mid ryhte irsian sceall, oðer on ðæt ðe hio ne sceal bið ealneg to suiðe onbærned.[39]   (CP 40.293.12)

> [But these [types of] anger are very different: *one is very like the image of anger*, so that one wants to rebuke the other for his evil, and bring him to correction; the other is that anger by which one is upset in his mind without any justification; the first kind of anger is too immoderately and too improperly incited against that with which it should be rightly angry, the second is perpetually too much inflamed against that which it should not be.] (my emphasis)

The Old English takes pains to differentiate between what is anger-like *in appearance*—that is, an emotion that compels, existing to make the individual behave in a certain way—and what is actually anger—something that arises from and acts out of impatience. The first, *ryhtwislice anda*, is only anger if it is immoderately or directed in a harmful way against the person whom the individual is supposed to instruct; the second is genuine anger, which is aroused no matter the circumstances.

22

To distinguish the two, Augustine remarks that anger in a pious soul must be questioned with respect not to the *if* but the *why*:

> Accordingly, in our learning it is not so much asked whether a pious soul is angry, but why it is angry; nor whether it is sad, but from what cause it is sad; nor whether it is afraid, but what it fears. For I do not believe anyone, out of proper consideration, would not condemn anger directed at a sinner, in order that he be amended, commiserate with the afflicted, that he may be relieved, or fear for one going into danger, lest he perish.[40] (*De civitate dei* 9.5)

Augustine here makes a specific case for anger as a tool of correction; moreover, he applies the discussion of anger not to humans in general, but to the *pius animus*, the individual who is driven by Christian zeal. He places anger in the context of ecclesiastical office, along with commiseration on behalf of a person tormented by spiritual or physical difficulty; it is a tool by which he can seek betterment in another's life. This is *iustitiae zelus*, passionate emotion centered on promoting the Christian life, accepted so long as it prevents the individual from engaging in unproductive or harmful behavior. Gregory recommends that one who suffers from an overzealous approach to correction, such as that inferred by Augustine above, be restrained and taught patience; anyone seeking to amend an angry or irascible individual, he says, should "strike him down with a gentle answer" and not reproof (CP 40.297.20).

---

[39] "Sed longe alia est ira quae sub aemulationis specie subripit, alia quae turbatum cor et sine justitiae praetextu confundit. Illa enim in hoc quod debet inordinate extenditur, haec autem semper in his quae non debet inflammatur."

[40] "Denique in disciplina nostra non tam quaeritur utrum pius animus irascatur, sed quare irascatur; nec utrum sit tristis, sed unde sit tristis; nec utrum timeat, sed quid timeat. Irasci enim peccanti ut corrigatur, constristari pro afflicto ut liberetur, timere periclitanti ne pereat nescio utrum quisquam sana consideratione reprehendat." All subsequent references to *De civitate dei* are from Bernard Dombart and Alfonse Kalb, eds., *De civitate dei*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1981).

Anda and *zelus* may be differentiated from *yrre* and *ira* by a brief examination of Gregory's *Moralia* 5.45.78-83.[41] In his discussion of anger types and expression, Gregory articulates the position he holds in *Cura pastoralis*: that passion or anger in the service of reason and correction is beneficial and not sinful, though one must always be aware of the temptation to step out of bounds. In order to advise his reader to beware of anger stemming from this sort of passion lest it dominate the mind (Cavendum ne ira menti ex zelo commotae dominetur), he clearly differentiates between *zelus* and *ira*, the latter of which comes from the former.

> For then [*zelus*] is more strongly aroused against the vices since, being subdued, it serves reason. For anger, however great, arises from the zeal of rectitude. If it is immoderate, it conquers the mind, and forthwith scorns to serve reason; and it more shamelessly extends itself by as much as it considers vice of impatience to be a virtue.[42] (*Moralia* 5.45.83)

Gregory argues that *zelus* as motivating factor is not itself anger—it is not even "righteous anger," but rather the impulse born of rectitude. *Zelus* only becomes immoderate when reason does not control it, and when reason does not control it, it transforms into anger. Indeed, throughout the entire discussion of anger, Gregory casts the phenomenon in an almost exclusively negative light, focusing on it as a sin or potential failing (*culpa*), rather than a component of the active virtuous life. Because an individual's zeal can quickly get out of control and become anger,

---

[41] *Anda* frequently glosses *zelus* in psalter texts. "Anda [vel] lufa" glosses *zelus* in Ps. 7.7, in Matthew Korhammer, ed., "Monastic Canticles, London, British Library, MS. Cotton Vespasian D.XII," in *Die Monastischen Cantica im Mittelalter und ihre altenglischen Interlinearversionen*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur englischen Philologie 6 (Munich: 1976). See n. 38 above for further discussion on the definitions of *anda*.

[42] "Tunc enim robustius contra uitia erigitur cum subdita rationi famulatur. Nam quantumlibet ira ex zelo rectitudinis surgat, si immoderata mentem uicerit, rationi protinus seruire contemnit; et tanto se impudentius dilatat, quanto impatientiae uitium uirtutem putat."

Gregory re-emphasizes the importance of reflecting on oneself and taking care to restrain any irrational impulse through self-study and control.

In contrast to *yrre, wraþ* is rare. Typically, it is a poetic word; it occurs three times more frequently in the poetic corpus than the prose, and with somewhat more flexibility in terms of the anger it references—that is, divine, human, and demonic anger are all covered by *wraþ*. In prose works, however, *wraþ* most often refers to wrongful anger in the human sense, though it is occasionally used for God, and for the judgment suffered by the unrighteous at the end of time.[43] The Canons of Edgar advise the reader to love God and keep his commandments, for "gif ge nellað, þonne sculan ge hit wraþe gebicge" (if you do not, you will repay it with wrath),[44] though whether this is "wrath" in the sense of God's wrath, or with the misery of eternal punishment, is not clear. Elsewhere, *wraþ* is a characteristic of the physical life, a feature of its misery and its transitory state, expressed in the torment of storm, disease, and human feebleness: "Hwæt, we magon geseon, hu læne and hu lyðre þis lif is... and hu teonful, hu tealt and hu wrað, hu wiðerweard and hu swicful" (Indeed, we can see how temporary and detestable this life is... and how hostile, how adverse and how angry, how contrary and how deceitful) [WulfNap 50.221-24]. Like *yrre*, its valence is context-specific; occasionally, the word refers to God, either explicitly or by inference (as in the quotation from Edgar above), but when it does not, *wraþ* is clearly negative in connotation.

---

[43] The penitential psalms in psalter collections emphasize the need to avert or appease God's anger. See also n. 99 below for the wine and cup of God's wrath.

[44] Roland Torkar, ed., "Canons of Edgar, edited from Cambridge, University Library, MS. Ii.1.33, fols. 219v-222r," transcript edited from MS, ll. 14-16.

Anger as Innate Quality vs. External Manifestation

In order to discuss how anger operates, it is necessary first to discuss, in brief,

the nature of the mind in Anglo-Saxon thought. In "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind,"

Malcolm Godden points to two traditions operating in vernacular prose and poetry:

> ... a classical tradition 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... Secondly,
> there is a vernacular tradition more deeply rooted in the language, represented
> particularly by the poets but occasionally reflected even in the work of Alfred
> and Ælfric.[45]

Both Alfred and Ælfric conceive of the soul as being of tripartite nature, inherited

from Alcuin's *De animae ratione,* which discusses the competing demands of desire,

anger, and reason in human consciousness.[46] Godden points to Alcuin's treatise as

being primarily interested in the soul as an intellectual faculty, by integrating *anima*

with *mens*,[47] and referring to *mens* as the highest (or principal) property of the soul,

itself one substance but divided into *memoria, intelligentia,* and *voluntas.*[48] This

---

[45] Malcolm Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind," in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 271.

[46] The substance of Ælfric's Christmas homily, the nature of the soul and man's responsibility to live by reason, is borrowed almost entirely from Alcuin's treatise. For a discussion of the vocabulary involved in distinguishing the faculties of the soul, see Harbus, *The Life of the Mind*, pp. 35-36.

[47] Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind," pp. 273-74.

[48] Alcuin *De animae ratione* (PL 101.639-50). The tripartite mind is also Augustinian (*De trinitate* 10.11). Augustine conceived of the mind, like the Trinity, as a unified whole: "non sunt tres uitae, sed una uita, nec tres mentes sed una mens, consequenter untique nec tres substantiae sed una substantia" (there are not three lives, but one life; not three minds but one mind, and consequently there are not three substances but one substance). For subtle differences in the arguments of Augustine and Alcuin, see Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind," pp. 271-74.

implies that Alcuin understood the *mens* to be the rational faculty, which governs the

other two parts of the soul, the concupiscible and the irascible:

> The nature of the soul is tripartite, as the philosophers would have it: the first
> part in it is the concupiscible part, the second is the rational, and the third is
> the irascible. For wild beasts and animals have two parts of their souls in
> common with us, that is, concupiscence and anger. Man alone among mortal
> beings is endowed with reason, strong in understanding, and excels in
> intelligence. But reason, *which is specific to the mind*, must rule over the other
> two, that is, concupiscence and anger. [49] (*De animae ratione* 3; my emphasis)

Alcuin, in segregating the rational *mens* from the irrational properties of anger and

concupiscence, also assigns the *anima* (a rational thing) to humans alone, as the only

beings that possess reason. Further, though he grants reason priority, it is bound to

concupiscence and anger in a relationship that emphasizes human responsibility to

control its baser impulses; reason governs concupiscence and anger by moderation

(*temperantia*), and when it fails to do so, the result is perversion in the hierarchy of an

orderly mind and the emergence of sin (*De animae ratione* 4).[50]

Alfred and Ælfric incorporate Alcuin's doctrine of *anima/mens* and his

distinction between reason into their writings; Alfred into his translation of Boethius's

De consolatione philosophiae and Ælfric into his sermon on the Nativity. Wisdom's

discursion on the tripartite soul is not found in the original Latin text, though Lady

Philosophy insists on the importance of reason to the human mind, [51] and the

---

[49] "Triplex est enim animae, ut philosophi volunt, natura: est in ea quaedam pars concupiscibilis, alia
rationalis, tertia irascibilis. Duas enim habent harum partes nobiscum bestiae et animalia communes, id
est, concupiscentiam, et iram. Homo solus inter mortales ratione viget, consilio valet, intelligentia
antecellit. Sed his duobus, id est, concupiscentiae et irae, ratio, quae mentis propria est, imperare
debet."
[50] "Si enim vel concupiscentia, vel ira rationem vincit, et dominatur quaelibet illorum in anima; ordo
perversus praecipitabit consentientem in pejus; et tenebit solium rationis ira, si immoderata erit, vel
concupiscentia effrenata" (For if concupiscence or anger conquer reason, then either one of those rule

perversion of those who behave like wild animals. Alfred expands significantly upon Boethius' brief discussion of the world-soul, refocusing it onto the tripartite human soul.[52]

> þu eac þa ðriefealdan sawla on geðwærum limum styrest, swa þæt ðære sawle þy læsse ne bið on ðam læstan fingre ðe on eallum þam lichoman. Forþi ic cwæð þæt sio sawul wære þreofeald, forþamþe uðwitan secgað þæt hio hæbbe þrio gecynd. An ðara gecynda is þæt heo bið wilnigende, oðer þæt hio bið irsiende, þridde þæt hio bið gesceadwis. (Cons 13.81.13-18)

> [You also move the tripartite soul in obedient limbs, so that the soul is no less in the smallest finger than in all the body. Therefore I say that the soul is threefold, because the authorities say that it has three natures. The first of these natures is that it is desirous, the second that it is irascible, the third that it is rational.]

Alfred seems to have drawn his explication of the human soul and mind from an Alucinian gloss on Boethius' passage; wherever Alcuin and Boethius differ on the subject of the mind, Alfred takes Alcuin's side, to the point where *mod* and *sawul* can be interchanged.[53]

Ælfric's homily for the Nativity borrows from both Alfred's translation of *De consolatione philosophiae* and his own study of *De animae ratione*; the introduction to his discussion of the tripartite soul shares vocabulary and structure with Alfred's

---

within the mind; the order, turned askew, will cast down what is harmonious into [something] worse, and anger will control the throne of reason, if it becomes immoderate, or concupiscence unrestrained."

[51] Boethius *De consolatione philosophiae*, 2 vols, ed. L. Bieler, CCSL 94 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1984), 2.pros.5.29. "Humanae quippe naturae ista conditio est, ut tum tantum caeteris rebus, cum se cognoscit, excellat: eadem tamen infra bestias redigatur, si se nosse desierit. Nam caeteris animantibus sese ignorare, natura est: hominibus vero, vitio venit" (Indeed, the condition of human nature is such that man exceeds all other things when he knows himself; nevertheless, if he ceases to remember, he is forced lower than the beasts. For it is the nature of other animals to be ignorant of themselves; but for men, it amounts to failing).

[52] Augustine's *De trinitate* 10.11.18, which discusses the three properties of the mind (memory, intelligence, and will) as a reflection of the Trinity, is the ultimate source for Alcuin's doctrine. Alcuin stimulated copying and transmission of both Boethius and Augustine, and was an important authority for both Alfred and Alcuin (pp. 129; 133).

[53] Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind," pp. 274-75.

translation, [54] but the subsequent elaboration is almost a direct translation from the Latin of Alcuin:

> Gewylnung is þam menn forgifen to gewilnienne þa ðing þe him fremiað to nitwyrðum þingum and to þære ecan hæle. Þonne gif seo gewylnung miswent, þonne acenð he gyfernesse and forlygr and gitsunge. Yrre is ðære sawle forgifen to ðy þæt heo yrsige ongean leahtres, and ne beo na synnum underþeodd, for þan ðe crist cwæð, ælc þæra þe synna wyrcð is þæra synna ðeow. Gif þæt yrre bið on yfel awend, þonne cymð of þam unrotnisse and æmylnysse. [55] (ÆLS 1.100-7)

> [Desire is given to man to desire those things which will be beneficial to him, both in needful things and for his eternal salvation. But if concupiscence is perverted, then it gives birth to greed and fornication and avarice. Anger is given to the soul so that it is angered against the vices, and will not be subjected to any sin, as Christ said: "Anyone who commits sin is the slave of sins." If anger is turned to evil, then sorrow and sloth come of it.]

Ælfric, like Alcuin, insists on the utility of both desire and anger; the former drives us to acquire that which is needful for our well-being, the latter so that we may shun sin and harmful behavior. However, if base compulsions (for food, sex, money, or revenge) are not controlled or are otherwise corrupted, then they lead to the excesses of the capital sins—gluttony, fornication, avarice, grief, and sloth. [56] It is in this excess

---

[54] "Uþwytan sæcgað þæt þære sawle gecynd is ðryfeald: An dæl is on hire gewylnigendlic, oðer yrsigendlic, þrydde gesceadwislic. Twægen þissera dæla habbað deor and nytenu mid us, þæt is gewylnunge and yrre. Se man ana hæfð gescead and ræd and andgit" (The authorities say that the soul's nature is threefold: One part in it is concupiscent, the second irascible, the third rational. Animals and beasts share two of these parts with us, that is, concupsicence and anger. Man alone possesses reason and understanding and insight) [ÆLS 1.96-100].

[55] The corresponding passage in Alcuin is from *De animae ratione* 4: "Concupiscentia data est homini ad concupiscenda quae sunt utilia, et quae sibi ad salutem proficiant sempiternam. Si vero corrumpitur, nascitur ex ea gastrimargia, fornicatio, et phylargiria. Ira data est ad vitia cohibenda, ne impiis, id est, peccatis, homo serviat dominis, quia iuxta Domini vocem: *Qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati.* Ex qua corrupta, procedit tristitia, et acedia" (Desire is given to man to desire those things which are useful, and which offer perpetual well-being to him. But if it is corrupted, from it are born gluttony, fornication, and avarice. Anger is given for the curbing of sins, lest man serve wicked masters (that is, the vices), for according to the word of the Lord: "Who commits sin is the slave of sin." Once corrupted, from [anger] come worldly grief and sloth).

[56] Alcuin omits *superbia* (pride) from the sins occasioned by unrestrained desire and anger; instead, he assigns pride to the failure of reason: "Ratio data est, ut diximus, omnem hominis vitam regere, et

that anger becomes sinful, as its excess leads the individual to commit not only crime but other sins. Moreover, what is of great significance to this study is that the most prominent homily writer of the later Anglo-Saxon period ascribed to a theory that made anger, or the propensity for it, *not* something that is inculcated (by teaching, temptation, affliction, etc.) but rather an inherent trait of human nature. Humans in Ælfric's view, as in Alcuin's, have a natural predisposition to anger, and it is the work of the soul to prevent that irascibility from being inflamed, and to prevent the individual from acting on anger.

Anger seems to be exclusively associated with the *mod*, rather than *sawol* or *gast*, and thus is explicity connected with the human rational faculty. Ælfric speaks of individuals being *yrre* or *gram on mode*, as in the life of Vincent, when the persecutor Datianus "þa deofollice yrsode, and wæs gram on his mode" (Datianus then became wickedly angry, and was angry [or fierce] in his mind) and then begins to lash out at his own men (ÆLS 37.113). In the Old English translation of the *Dicts of Cato*, anger afflicts the rational mind and causes loss of judgment,[57] and in the *Dialogues of Gregory*, anger must be driven out of the mind as well (62.389.20).[58] Poetic compounds such as *yrremod* also indicate this tendency.

We come to an important distinction between types of manifestation of anger within the human consciousness. First is the anger of the soul which is natural to it

---

gubernare, ex qua si corrumpitur, oritur superbia, et cenodoxia" (Reason is given, as we have said, to rule the whole life of man, and govern it; from this, if it is corrupted, arises pride and vainglory).
[57]Robert S. Cox, "The Old English *Dicts of Cato*," *Anglia* 90 (1972): pp. 1-42. "Ne beo ðu on þinum yrre to anwille, forþon þæt yrre oft amyrreð monnes mod þæt he ne mæg þæt ryht gecnawan" (Do not be too persistent in your anger, for anger often mars a man's mind so that he cannot perceive justice) [1.25].

and restrained by reason; it is neutral, not sinful within itself, merely a base impulse needing the control of reason. Alcuin does not seem to pass judgment on the "goodness" or "badness" of natural anger and concupiscence—they are there, he says, and were put there by God in men and animals alike; the natural property of irascibility does not equate to evilness or wrongness, but can *become* evil or wrong if unrestrained.[59] Second is anger as sin, whether it is irascibility allowed to run amok, or anger that is conceived of as external to the body—that is, anger originating outside the individual and then being inflicted on him, usually by the devil. This type of anger is almost exclusively impermissible; it is the anger "brought" or "taught" by the devil to the humans who listen to him. Impermissible anger is that which comes from excess that leads to loss of reason, and ultimately, to loss of one's identity as a spiritual being. Alfred's translation of Boethius retains the insistence that a man who contravenes his own nature by forgetting himself and his reason (whether through anger or any other agency) is worse than a beast. Ælfric and his fellow homilists insist on dire consequences of "vice"-anger.

The exercise of patience can counteract the effects of both types of anger; Alcuin speaks of *temperantia* moderating both anger and concupiscence, and the homilies, without exception, say that *geþyld* must be exerted against anger. Nonetheless, patience is a difficult virtue to cultivate; more often, *im*-patience is what characterizes the human condition. BlHom 3 says

---

[58]Hans Hecht, ed., *Dialoge Gregors des Grossen* (Darmstadt: Wissenchaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965), 62.20. "yrre sy ær ut adrifen of ðam mode."

Us is eac to geþencenne hu mycel Godes geþyld is, & hu mycel ure ungeþyld is; & gif us hwa abylgþ, þonne beo we sona yrre, & willaþ þæt gewrecan gif we magon, þeah we beotiaþ to. (ll. 127-29)

[We must also consider how great is God's patience, and how great is our impatience; and if someone irritates us, then we are quickly angry, and want to avenge it [the insult] if we can, [and if we are unable], then we threaten to do so.]

The homily places human impatience in contrast with the infinite patience of God (though, of course, God's patience has a limit, and the end of it is described in similar terms), and draws in brief a sketch of the progression of human anger. First is the initial provocation; *abylgan*, as discussed below, can mean "to insult" or "to irritate" (perhaps by means of insult, whether physical or verbal). This stimulus leads the individual to anger—quickly, the homily adds—and then to the desire for vengeance; if the person can obtain vengeance, then it seems to be understood that he will, but if he cannot for reasons of lack of opportunity or inequality with respect to social status or physical power, then he threatens to carry it out.

In the discussion of anger in the *Moralia,* Gregory draws a distinction between how impermissible anger is manifested in any given individual according to his nature—that is, he unites the adoption of anger by the mind with an explanation of how the person's nature influences its intensity and duration. This attempt to account for different psychological patterns is striking, as it diverges from earlier conceptions of anger as something that impels an individual to immediate action. He offers four

---

[59] Gregory makes the same inference in CP 40; there are some people, he says, who are more passionate and irascible than others, and their irascibility becomes problematic if it leads to behavior harmful to others and oneself.

types of anger, categorized by how easily anger is "kindled" in the individual, how long is required to "put it out," and the intensity of the emotion:

> But it must be understood that anger inflames some men more quickly, and forsakes (them) more easily. Conversely, it yet stirs up some men more slowly but holds them longer. For some are like burning reeds, when they make a great clamor with their voices, as though the thunder of their burning returns to them; indeed, they build the fire more swiftly but on the spot they cool to ashes. Some, however, are not dissimilar to fiercer and harsher flames, (as) they slowly begin burning, but nevertheless, having been ignited only once, they are the harder to put out and because they spur themselves more slowly in their bitterness, they keep the fire of their wrath the longer. But some, which is more evil and more hasty, embrace the fires of anger, and more slowly forsake them. Yet some both take these flames up more slowly and put them aside more swiftly.[60] (*Moralia* 5.45.81)

Gregory's classification not only draws distinctions between different manifestations of anger, he insists that these differences are rooted in nature—though he does not say it, he could be implying the natural quality of irascibility could express itself in different ways according to the disposition of the individual. Some are quickly angry and quickly calm, some have a "long fuse" but once their anger is ignited, pacification is impossible. Gregory's purpose in outlining differing manifestations of the same psychological phenomenon is twofold: first, he wants to judge which of these is worse (he cannot decide), but more importantly, he argues that understanding how different individuals become angry is necessary to understand how to control the mind and

---

[60] "Sciendum uero est quod nonnullos ira citius accendit, facilius deserit. Nonnullos uero tarde quidem commouet sed diutius tenet. Alii namque accensis calamis similes, dum uocibus perstrepunt, quasi quosdam accensionis suae sonitus reddunt; citius quidem flammam faciunt sed protinus in fauilla frigescunt. Alii autem lignis grauioribus durioribusque non dispares, accensionem tarde suscipiunt, sed tamen accensi semel difficilius exstinguuntur et quia se tardius in asperitate concitant, furoris sui durius ignem seruant. Alii autem quod est nequius et citius iracundiae flammas accipiunt, et tardius deponunt. Nonnulli uero has et tarde suscipiunt et citius amittunt."

restore serenity.[61] Latin and Anglo-Saxon writers developed methods to express the negative consequences of anger, in terms of its impact on the individual's reason and spiritual state, and employed them extensively in their discourses admonishing patience, reason, and self-control.

Anger as Darkness

As discussed above, Gregory's concern was with preserving the mind and soul's likeness to the "supernal image" from the damaging effects of anger. In the list of the debilitating effects of anger contained in the *Moralia*, he states that "per iram lux ueritatis amittitur" (by anger the light of truth is put out), and the brilliance of the Holy Spirit is shut out from its perception. Further, anger produces *confusionis tenebras* (shadows of disorder) in the mind, which deprive it of reason and insight (*Moralia* 5.45.78). The metaphor of anger as darkness, or an agent that produces darkness by clouding the mind, seems to be connected to the image of the *oculum mentis*, the mind's eye, the tool by which it perceives and makes sense of the world surrounding it. In this sense, then, Gregory conceived of anger and its concomitant darkness as being a wholly internal phenomenon. Cassian understood anger this way as well, describing the effects of anger as "clouding the mind's eye with evil shadows" (oculum mentis noxiis tenebris), which impair judgment, discretion, contemplation, and reason (*Institutes* 8.1).

---

[61] "Sed quid prodest quod iracundia quomodo mentem teneat, dicimus, si non etiam qualiter compesci debeat exprimamus?" (But what reveals how anger controls the mind, as we say, if we do not now describe how it must be restrained?) [*Moralia* 5.45.81]. In CP 40, Gregory also refers to Paul wishing

Anglo-Saxon writers also depict anger as darkness, though the metaphor is not frequent. Typically, the metaphor is expressed in terms of the effect on thought via adjectives such as *sweart* or *sweorc*, and the anger expressed is usually concomitant with hostility or evil, which may be the predominant idea being emphasized. One homily says the devil dwells in the darkness of hell because of his *sweartum ingehydum* (dark thoughts) [ÆHom 4.222-30] and another insists one who cherishes *sweartan nyð*, "dark hatred," can never please God until he abandons his hatred [BazCr 7.121-35]. More clearly, the Jews in Ælfric's homily on the Forty Soldiers contemplate *mid sweartum geþance* (with dark [or hidden] thought) how they can kill Christ; the incitement for this hostility is explained by the Jews having heard Christ preach the gospel, which incites the Jews to anger [ÆLS 11.318]. The most explicit identification of anger with darkness comes in the Anglo-Saxon translation of cap. 20 of Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*:

> Se hatheorta dema ne mæg he behealdan ðas domes riht, for ðan þe for ðæs yrres dimnesse he ne mæg geseon ðas rihtes beorhtnesse. [62] (l. 14)
>
> [The angry judge cannot perceive the correctness of judgment, because he cannot see the light of justice for the darkness of anger.]

Anger-as-darkness exploits the importance of mental perception and the ability of the mind to "see" right and wrong, and to "see the light of reason."[63]

---

to "ignite" Titus with righteous fervor: "Titum he wolde onælan mid rhytwislicum andan, Timotheum he wolde gemetigan" (He wanted to ignite Titus with righteous anger; Timothy, he wanted to restrain).
[62] Felix Liebermann, ed., "Judex," in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903-16; rpt. Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1960). Roland Torkar identified this as 'De iudicibus,' the twentieth chapter of Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis* in *Eine altenglische Übersetzung von Alcuins* De virtutibus et vitiis, *Kap. 20 (Liebermanns* Judex*): Untersuchungen und Textausgabe: mit einem Anhang, Die Gesetze II und V Aethelstan nach Otho B. xi und Add. 43703* (München: Fink, 1981).
[63] Chapter III will contain a further discussion of the phenomenon in poetic diction.

Darkness of mind was more commonly associated with sadness. In part, this is because an excess of *melancholia* (or *swearte gealla*) was primarily associated with grief and torpor. However, *geall* also appears in compounds and phrases describing anger, such as *gealgmod*, implying that anger and sadness were conceived of as being both mentally and physically similar with respect to origin. Interestingly, the word most often used to describe sadness or grief (the modern-day equivalent would be depression), *unrotnys*, also employs a contrast between the lightness and darkness of the mind; it is literally "unbrightness" in the mind, the darkening of thought associated with the obscurity of despair.[64] Indeed, anger and sadness were intimately connected in the classical and medieval traditions, as we shall see.

Anger and Sadness

I wish to challenge here one of the definitions of *unrotnys*. Although certain aspects of grief and sorrow in medieval (as well as classical) writing seem to apply to anger as well, sadness should be more properly understood to be both a *component* of anger and a result of it, not anger itself. Frequently, the same situations that provoke anger can provoke what is akin to the modern sense of being "aggrieved" or offended, and this can demand the same responses as anger, such as desire for revenge, and like anger, grief can have either a positive or negative valence: in its positive capacity, it leads a sinner to guilt and remorse for his actions, while if it is sinful (that is

---

[64] Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *rot.*

excessive), grief devolves into depression and inertia.[65] Both anger and sorrow, in their negative senses, were construed as disturbances to the natural state of the mind.[66] However, sorrow should not be mistaken for anger itself.

Yrre and *unrotnys* frequently appear together as a pair in homilies discussing the eight capital sins.[67] In the Cassianic octad, what is today regarded as sloth was split into two separate sins, *acedia* and *tristitia*; the former eventually developed into sloth, while the latter constituted despair and a corollary lack of belief in God. The commonality here appears to be that impermissible anger and grief are responses to insult—"insult" in the sense of injury or harm of a physical or personal nature (e.g. loss of honor, property, a loved one). Because they can develop from the same impulse, anger and grief can either be the cause of or the result of the other. For Gregory *tristitia* could develop into anger, especially if the individual was already given to chronic sadness:

> Đæm oferbliðan oft folgað firenlusð, & ðæm unrotan ierre. Forðæm is micel niedðearf ðæt mon hiene wið ðæt irre an & wið ða ungemetlican sælða warenige, ac eac wið ðæt ðe forcuðre bið, ðe ðæræfter cymð, ðæt is fierenlusð & unryhtlicu iersung, ðæt is ðæt mon iersige on oðerne for his gode.[68] (CP 27.85.4-8)

---

[65] As in VercScragg 20.114, where the two manifestations are described as "halwendlic oðer cwylmberendlic" (helpful or killing). The latter does not seem to refer to sadness directed outward, but rather the slaying of the spirit through despair.

[66] Korhammer, "Monastic Canticles, Ps. 24.14.
Non erit tristis neque turbulentus.
He ne byð unrot ne sorhfull oððe weamod.

[He should not be grieved or sad or angry.]

[67] e.g. ÆLS 16.286-99; ÆHom 19.128-9; ÆHom 20.126-28.

[68] "Habent enim laeti ex propinquo luxuriam, tristes iram. Unde necesse est ut non solum quisque consideret quod ex conspersione sustinet, sed etiam quod ex vicino deterius perurget; ne dum nequaquam pugnat contra hoc quod tolerat, ei quoque a quo se liberum aestimat, vitio succumbat."

[To the light-hearted often come sinful desires, and to the unhappy, anger. Therefore it is greatly needful that a person condemn anger and guard against immoderate happiness, and also against that which is despicable, which follows afterward—that is, sinful desire and wrongful anger, which is that one is angry against another because of his goodness.]

Gregory implies here that, if sadness is a pre-existing condition, anger can then develop from it—specifically impermissible anger, which prompts revenge. It may be that the transition between the two emotions also marks a transition from the stasis associated with sadness (and thus with sloth) and the more "active" anger that incites the individual to bloodshed, revenge, and hatred. Ælfric borrows Gregory's dynamic via Alcuin's *De animae ratione*, asserting "Gif þæt yrre bið on yfel awend, þonne cymð of þam unrotnisse and æmylnysse" (If anger is turned to evil, then grief and sloth comes from it" [ÆLS 1.108].

Alfred's translation of Boethius contains a reversal of this relationship, in which grief develops *after* the onset of discord and strife. In this sense, "grief" is perhaps best understood not as the onset of personal sin, but a general circumstance— "grief" in the sense of the emotion felt when the results of anger and madness are made manifest. The experience of grief follows a time of madness brought on by excess of food and drink:

> þonne weaxað eac þa ofermetta & ungeþwærnes; & þonne hi weorðað gebolgen, þonne wyrð þæt mod beswungen mid þam welme þære hatheortnesse, oððæt hi weorþað geræpte mid þære unrotnesse, & swa gehæfte. (Cons 37.111.26-112.1)

> [Then pride and discord arise, and when they become aroused, then the mind is beset with the surge of anger, until they are fettered with grief and thus held captive.]

It is interesting to note, however, that "hi weorþað geræpte mid þære unrotnesse" may reverse the interpretation offered above; instead of sorrow leading to anger, for Alfred and Boethius anger leads to sorrow.[69] At any rate, writers recognized that grief inevitably followed or accompanied indulgence, whether the grief was of a public or private nature; Bede's *Proverbia* includes the axiom "Risus dolore miscetur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat"—"Laughter is mingled with sorrow, and grief occupies the extremes of joy" (Prov. R.7) and acknowledgment that sadness is closest when there is general happiness. *The Fates of Men* describes the sad fate of a man killed in the furor of a fight in the hall (ll. 48-50), a locality otherwise understood as a place of conviviality and friendship. The contrast may serve to emphasize the transitory nature of earthly joy as compared to the eternal bliss found in God.[70]

Finally, grief could also accompany anger, as either an accessory emotion or a method of anger's expression. Grief, when concomitant with anger, seems to repress action; when grief is there, anger is not vented by usual methods, but rather contained. In his homily on I Kings 21.4-5, Ælfric relates the anger of Ahab after Naboth the Jezreelite has refused to sell him his vineyard:

> Þa gebealh hine se cynincg and to his bedde eode, wende hine to wage, wodlice gebolgen. Him eode þa to Gezabel and cwæð, Hwi eart ðu geunrotsod and þe gereordian nelt? (ÆLS 18.177-81)

---

[69] To have the mind be 'bound' by sorrow or care is a prominent feature of the discussion of mental states in Old English poetry e.g. *Deor* 24, *Resignation* 78, *Beowulf* 1742, *Meters of Boethius* 5.38.

[70] Another poetic corollary is found in *Beowulf*, in the woeful visitation of Grendel after the excesses of the feast in Heorot, when the drunken retainers are taken unawares; when the bloody remnants of Grendel's are discovered, "þā wæs æfter wiste wop up ahafen,/micel morgensweg" (Then after the feast was woe raised up,/a great cry in the morning) [ll. 128-29a].

[Then the king was angered and went to his bed, and turned himself to the wall, furiously angry. Then Jezebel went to him and said, "Why are you grieved and do not eat?"]

Naboth's non-compliance has aroused Ahab's anger, but instead of reacting immediately (e.g. by seizing Naboth's property), Ahab goes home to brood. Jezebel is the one who takes action in the end, by blackmailing Naboth and guaranteeing his death, but God's judgment falls upon Ahab as well. In this case, a woman takes vengeance for the slight suffered by her husband, while he festers in his grief and anger. Ælfric departs from the Vulgate only in that he takes pains to develop the extent of Ahab's anger: while he is *indignans et frendens* (indignant and angry) in the Vulgate, Ælfric's Ahab is angry, and furiously so. The verb used to describe his anger, *gebelgan*, appears twice in the passage, and is common in OE prose to describe anger and provocation.[71] Yet equally striking is his stasis—his lying in bed and refusal to eat, which Jezebel describes as grief, not anger.

This differentiation between grief and anger continued in the works of Latin authors writing after the Anglo-Saxon era. Writing just after the Norman Conquest, Hugh of St. Victor preserves the distinction between *ira* and *tristitia*—though they appear together, they are not mistaken for being the same phenomenon. In the fifth chapter of his *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, he discusses anger and its attendants (its *comitatus*), and lists grief alongside blasphemy, hostility, boldness, fury, and displeasure:

---

[71] The implications of *gebelgan* will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

Grief is what, after the mind is vexed [to anger], satisfies by weeping within itself what it is less able to satisfy by vengeance against a stronger force.[72]

Hugh associates grief with impotence in the face of injury done by a greater power, when anger cannot be acted upon—anger demands action, not inertia. In this sense, grief accompanies an anger that is not able to express itself, or else results from failure to obtain satisfaction. Thus, anger is anger by virtue of expression; if it is not expressed, it devolves into either hatred or grief, but is not itself grief.

Anger as Oppression or Exerted Force

Inequality in power between the angered party and the object of its anger is one of the things that gives rise to grief. This disparity is described in several ways, usually with reference to a sense of weight and oppression. Such anger is described as a burden to be borne by those who incur it as punishment, and frequently the speaker (i.e. the sufferer) specifies that the anger sits or is placed *over* him; in Ælfric's homily on Thomas, Migdonia tells Thomas she fears that, if he is persecuted, "Godes yrre becume for þam intingan ofer me" (God's anger will descend upon me because of your suffering) [ÆLS 34.277-81]. Wulfstan's *Sermo lupi ad Anglos* laments the oppression of God's anger in the face of the evils of the age:

> ...þæt is gesyne on þysse þeode þæt us Godes yrre hetelice onsit. And la, hu mæg mare scamu þurh Godes yrre mannum gelimpan þonne us deð gelome for agenum gewyrhtum.[73] (ll. 96-100)

---

[72] (PL 177.9987-1009). "Luctus est, qui exacerbato animo, quod minus in superiorem potest ultionis in se fletibus satisfacit."

[73] Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *Sermo lupi ad Anglos* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1976).

[... that is visible among this people that God's anger bitterly oppresses us. And alas, how can more shame come upon men through God's anger than it often does for our own deeds?]

God's anger as force exerted on people in order to correct them is typically described as "coming over" them, or as in the example above literally "sitting upon" them. In a sermon on unbaptized children, the homilist writes that "godes grama wunað ofer þone hæþenan" (God's anger dwells over the heathen) suggesting that God's anger is not temporary when it comes to the perpetual crime of pagan belief, but rather it dwells on them in perpetuity, unless they convert.[74] Similarly, the evil Datianus "gecydde his wodnysse ofer þa cristenan menn," (inflicted his madness upon Christian men) the *ofer* implying that his madness was exerted directly on Christians, by means of torture (ÆLS 37.32). Of course, there is a difference between the punishment of God's anger—which is permissible—and the unreasonable punishment of unreasonable anger.[75]

Because of the pronounced differences in status and power, writers took pains to emphasize that those in positions of authority should not anger those who serve under them, and in turn, should not themselves become angry lest their anger pervert their judgment.[76] Ælfric's translation of Basil's *Admonitio ad filium spiritualem* includes the injunction "Ne astyra þu yrsunga þinum underþeoddum ne unmihtigum men" (Do not stir up anger in your servants nor in powerless men) [ÆAdmon1 5.11], in part perhaps to keep the peace but also out of a recognition that human anger is

---

[74] *De infantibus non baptizandis,* in Arthur Napier, "Ein altenglisches Leben des heiligen Chad," *Anglia* 10 (1888): 131-56, ll. 11-15.
[75] The difference between the just punishment of wrongdoers by God and the anger-driven impulse of private justice in the form of vengeance will be discussed in Chapter IV.

blind and often misdirected, specifically against those who are in inferior positions who cannot defend themselves. As we have also seen with the *doctores iracundi* of Chrodegang, monastic authorities directing their anger against lay brothers and novitiates was not looked on kindly, as anger signified (especially to Chrodegang) an excessive concern with the affairs of the world. Additionally, the numerous depictions of the angry ruler in the hagiography of Latin and Old English literature may serve to emphasize the miscarriage of justice wrought by anger in a spiritually blind ruler—who is functionally the judge and jury of the martyr.[77]

Anger as Weapon

Just as anger could be a static, oppressive force, it could be an active one as well, serving not to oppress but to break, destroy, or shatter. Like its counterpart, anger as weapon appears most frequently when a difference in power or agency between two parties exists, but it is also used in a variety of contexts and operates in a variety of ways. For example, the anger of God may be described as a weapon or a force that shatters an individual or nation, while the impermissible anger inculcated by the devil may be introduced through means of weapons, especially arrows, darts, or spears. Related closely to this is the tradition of *psychomachia*, in which personified vices and virtues fight for dominance. Prudentius' *Psychomachia* conceives of Ira as a wild woman wielding a spear and sword, both of which she breaks on the shield and

---

[76] So LawIudex 14 above.
[77] The role of anger in the miscarriage of justice is discussed in Chapter III, below.

head of Patientia, and with which she later destroys herself. [78] Aldhelm's *De laude virginitate* depicts Ira as a warrior-woman who attacks the Christian mind with pikes (ll.2640-42).[79]

God's anger could either be conceived of as a specific weapon, such as a sword, or another, unspecified force that destroys its object. In the Bible, God's anger is often destructive and lamented; the Psalmist in one of many Psalter glosses addresses God, saying "Fram ansyne yrres æbilignysse þine forðon upahebbende ðu forgnide me" (From the face of the anger of your affront you have destroyed me because of pride) [PsGlKim 101.11]. *Forgnidan* glosses *allido*, "to strike one thing against another,[80] as well as *rapio*, *devoro*, and *contero*, all of which describe grinding, crushing, or pounding something to destruction.[81] Ælfric's homily on St. Benedict expresses the clerical anxiety of the age, seeing the suffering of the people as a form of retribution, as God punishes the nation "mid swurde þæs heofonlican graman" (with the sword of heavenly anger) [ÆCHomII 9.115]. Here the sword is a single specific image for God's anger; elsewhere, Wulfstan elaborates the image of God's anger as a fourfold weapon and expands upon the consequences of arousing divine ire:

> And, gif ge þis nellað healdan, cwæð god, ic wylle swingan eow mid þam smeartestum swipum, þæt is, þæt ic witnige eow mid þam wyrstan wite, swa

---

[78] In *Carmina*, ed. Maurice Cunningham, CCSL 126 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1976).

[79] In *Opera,* ed. Ruldolf Ehwald, MGHAA 15 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1919).

[80] Lewis & Short, s.v. *allido*.

[81] Aldhelm, "De laude virginitatis," in Louis Goossens, ed., *The Old English Glosses of MS. Brussels, Royal Library 1650* (Brussels: 1974; rpt. with corrections by Schabram, 1979) [=AldGoos], ll. 3235 and 3706. Also Robert T. Oliphant, ed., *The Harley Latin-Old English Glossary: Edited from British Museum MS Harley 3376* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966) [=HarlOliph], l. C1649.

þæt ic sende ofer eow min yrre on feower wisan, þæt is, hunger and sweordes ecge, cwyld and hæftnunge.   (WulfNap 57.108-110)

[And, if you do not keep this, said God, I will strike you down with the cruelest blows, that is, I will punish you with the worst punishments, so that I send my anger over you in four ways: that is, hunger and sword's edge, destruction and captivity.]

Here Wulfstan seems to be combining God's anger as oppressive force with anger as a weapon. Whereas oppression is static, God repeatedly uses active images to make his point: he will destroy the people with the cruelest blows and the harshest punishments. Here, the weapon of his anger is not described metaphorically—that is, as a sword—but through specific physical punishments (especially captivity—and captivity among the heathens at that) of which his Anglo-Saxon audience undoubtedly would have been aware.

God's anger was a weapon to punish wrongdoers; the devil's anger was among the sins that inspire the former's rage. The devil, the source of sin, could inflict anger on individuals in a variety of ways, and writers discussed these at length. As with the anger of God, impermissible anger brought by the devil could take the form of a specific weapon, but could also be discussed without metaphor as the method by which the devil destroys an individual's spiritual and mental balance. The "attack" on the soul by the devil originally stems from Eph 6.11-17, which adjures the Christian to "put on the armor of God" in order to protect against the devil's depredations. Later writers incorporated Paul's injunction into images of the *miles Christi* and further elaborations of battles over the welfare of the Christian soul.[82] One

---

[82] John P. Hermann, "Some Varieties of *Psychomachia* in Old English—I," *ABR* (1983): 75.

of the most influential developments of this image was Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, from which Anglo-Saxon writers drew a considerable amount of inspiration; the *psychomachia* at the end of Aldhelm's *De laude virginitate* bears some resemblances to Prudentius' work, but is concerned with the danger attacking sins present to the Christian soul.[83]

While Prudentius and his imitators depict the struggle of the virtues and vices, the image of the devil's arrows transforms the conflict into one between the infernal and the individual. C. Abbetmeyer interprets the devil's attack as a metaphorical expression of the four steps to sin outlined by Gregory; first, the arrows represent *suggestio,* which comes from the devil, then *delectatio*, the approval of the flesh, then *consensus*, by which the spirit agrees to sin, and at last the defense of pride, the *defensionis audacia*, which increases the sin by defending its commission.[84] Each arrow represents a type of sin, and the devil uses these arrows to attack the Christian soul; the Christian must, in his turn, use spiritual armor to counter such offensives. (Alternately, the Christian is conceived of as a walled city under siege).This type of *psychomachia* finds its fullest Old English expression in VercScragg 4:

> Se boga bið geworht of ofermettum, & þa stræla bioð swa manigra cynna swa
> swa mannes synna bioð. Sumu stræl byð geworht of niðe & of æfste, sumu of
> gebelge & of hatheortnesse... sumu of gifernesse & of yrre, sumu of reaflace &
> of scincræftum, sumu of drycræfte & of morðorcwale, sumu of þeofunga & of
> feounga. Swa manige stræla syndon swa nis æniges mannes gemet þæt hit

---

[83] John P. Hermann, "Some Variations on Psychomachia in Old English II: The Middle Ages," *ABR* 34 (1983): 193-94. Hermann discusses the different variations on the "Devil's Missiles" motif in Old English literature.

[84] C. Abbetmeyer, "Old English Poetical Motives Derived from the Doctrine of Sin," (Diss., University of Minnesota, 1900), p. 35. "Quatuor quippe modis peccatum perpetratur in corde, quatuor consummatur in opere. In corde namque suggestione, delectatione, consensu, et defensionis audacia perpetratur. Fit enim suggestio per adversarium, delectatio per carnem, consensus per spiritum, defensionis audacia per elationem" (*Moralia* 4.28.49).

asecgan mæge. & ælce dæge þæs diofles willa bið, þæt þissa stræla nan ne sie geunfæstnod, gif he findan mæg hwær he hie afæstnian mæge. & on helle þa dioflu scotiaþ mid þissum strælum, & eac swa some he hæfð ælce dæge his bogan to us gebend, & wile us scotian mid þam strælum þe ic ær nemde. (ll. 308-21)

[The bow is made of pride, and the arrows are of as many sorts as man's sins are. Some arrows are made of hatred and of envy, some of rage and of fury... some of covetousness and of anger, some of robbery and of sorcery, some of witchcraft and of murder, some of theft and of hatred. There are so many kinds of arrows that no man can properly tell it, and each day the devil's will is that no one is freed of these arrows, if he can discover where he can stick them, and in hell the devil shoots with these arrows. And he has his bow aimed at us every day, and wishes to shoot us with the arrows I described before.]

As the above catalogue demonstrates, anger is only one of a great many sins with which the devil tempts the Christian soul. The prose passion of St. Guthlac adds poison to the devil's devices, in addition to the arrows that he attempts to lodge in the mind of Christ's warror.[85] The Christian has to defend himself from such onslaughts. As has been discussed above, patience was the counter to anger; thus when the devil "us onbebringeð yrsunge, uton we fylgean geþylde" (inflicts us with anger; we should counter with patience) [VercScragg 19.73]. For Gregory, the *thoraca patientiae*, the breastplate of patience, is a specific protection against the incitement of anger (*Moralia* 5.45.81).[86] This is, as he concludes his discussion of anger, to protect against being torn to peices by anger:

---

[85] Paul Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des heiligen Guthlac* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1909) [=LS (Guthlac)], 4.42. The motif appears in several places in the poetic corpus, including *Beowulf* 1735-47, *Christ II* 756-82a, *Juliana* 382-409a, *Vainglory* 26-39, *Andreas* 1189, *Solomon and Saturn* 22-29 (in which the devil casts iron missiles from his sling).

[86] For Alcuin, patience, subsumed under *fortitudo* (strength or endurance) was one of the four virtues of the soul (*Liber de virtutibus et vitiis* 35). See further Paul E. Szarmach, "Alfred, Alcuin, and the Soul, in *Manuscript, Narrative Lexicon: Essays on Literary and Cultural Transmission in Honor of Whitney F. Bolton*, ed. Robert Boenig and Kathleen Davis (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2000), pp. 127-48.

"Anger slays the foolish man." And it has been clearly said: Anger through zeal arouses the wise, but anger through vice cuts them to pieces, because the former is held in check under reason, but the latter irrationally rules the overthrown mind.[87]

In the above discussion of anger as a static, exerted force or an active weapon (whether for divine or infernal purposes), anger appears as something external to the individual experiencing it. Now we turn to more internal expressions of anger that are discussed in terms of the effects they have on the body and the mind.

Anger as Heat

Gregory almost certainly influenced the Anglo-Saxon anger-as-heat metaphor, for the *Moralia* discusses anger almost exclusively as a fire with which an individual is ignited. *Moralia* 5.45.78-83 is an extended treatment of anger as fire; in his description of the four manifestations of anger, individuals are inflamed or ignited (*accenditur*) by anger; they embrace or take up the fires of anger (*accipere*), and extinguishing the flames of anger (*exstinguere*) or cooling them (*frigescere*) can be either very easy or very difficult. Gregory states that understanding these different ways in which people are angered and stay angry is crucial to understanding how to control their anger. In the *Cura pastoralis*, Gregory emphasizes the connection between anger and burning; in explaining how to best correct an angry person, he says that wise confessors, when they see an angry person, refrain from harsh correction, but instead use gentle words to put out the flames (CP 40.3). The Alfredian

---

[87] "*Virum stultum interficit iracundia.* Ac si aperte diceretur: Ira per zelum sapientes turbat, ira uero per uitium stulto trucidat quia illa sub ratione restringitur, haec uero irrationabiliter deuictae menti dominatur" (*Moralia* 5.45.83).

translation elaborates on the heat imagery, saying, "ðonne hie ongietað hwelcne monnan gesuencedne mid irre & mid hatheortnesse onbærnedne" (when they see some man tormented with anger and inflamed with madness) then the wise confessor refrains from provoking that man even more (CP 40.23).

In the Gregorian vein, Anglo-Saxon writers employed verbs of burning and igniting in order to describe the experience of being "fired" with anger.[88] Frequently, an individual is burned with or by anger, as is the case with the villain Maximianus in Ælfric's passion of St. Maurice, who "mid micclum graman ontend" (burned with great anger) at the saint's slighting of the authority of himself and his gods. In this particular example, the heat of anger is also impulse for action, as Maximianus immediately orders his heathen followers to kill the saint, in order that men might see how he [Maximianus] avenged his own insult, and that of his gods (ÆLS 28.54-57).

As with many other words within anger's metaphorical field, verbs such as *ontendan* and *onbærnan* are not inherently negative, for writers speak of various saints or pious individuals being fired with the zeal of righteousness. The Anglo-Saxon translator of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* writes of Caedmon that "wið þæm þa ðe in oðre wisan don woldon, he wæs mid welme micelre ellenwodnisse onbærned" (he was ignited with a great surge of zeal against those who would not submit to monastic discipline).[89] The anger of God was particularly

---

[88] Caroline Gevaert points out that fire and heat as descriptors of anger predate the Alfredian translations. See Gevaert, "The Evolution of the Lexical and Conceptual Field of ANGER," pp. 286-89. She ascribes the surge in the use of the heat metaphor largely to the tranlations of Gregory's works, but also acknowledges that other influences (such as Scriptural translations) may have had some effect.
[89] Thomas Miller, ed. *The Old English Version of Bede's* Ecclesiastical History of the English People, 4 vols., EETS 95-96, 110-111 (London: N. Trubner, 1890-98), 4.25. Morris's chapter numbers differ

associated with fire, both as anger itself and as a tool of the expression of that anger. Ps. 77 remarks that "fyr onæled on iacobe & yrre astah on israhel" (Fire burned over Jacob and anger rose up over Israel), syntactically uniting both the fire, which burns, and God's anger, which rises up *(astigan)* as fire.[90] In Deuteronomy, God's anger can ignite a fire that destroys the earth.[91]

In addition to verbs such as the ones described above, one of the most common anger-related nouns participates in the semantic domain of 'anger as heat.' *Hatheortnys* may be related to the *cor accensum* of Gregory's *Moralia*, which in turn may have its roots in classical theories regarding how anger was manifested in the body.[92] In a sole instance in Old English, *hatheortnys* is given as a gloss of the word *fel* (bile).[93] Thus, *hatheortnys* seems to have a physical dimension that is not present in other words such as *yrre*, which is present in the *mod*, though the primary focus of

---

from those of the Latin, for which see Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969): "Erat enim vir multum religiosus, et regularibus disciplinis humiliter subditus; adversum vero illos qui aliter facere volebant, zelo magni fervoris accensus" (4.24).

[90] PsGIKm 77.21. The Latin is "ignis accensus est in iacob et ira ascendit in israhel."

[91] Deut 32.22. So also Num 11.1: "ða wearð he yrre, & Drihtnes fyr wearð onæled & forbærnde þone ytemestan dæl þæs folces" (then he was angry, and the Lord's fire was kindled and burned the last part of the nation). For both passages, see S.J. Crawford, ed., *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, EETS o.s. 160 (London: 1922; repr. with additions by N.R. Ker, London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[92] Harris, *Restraining Rage*, pp. 56-57 and p. 68. Aristotle conceived of anger as "a boiling of blood [or heat] which is about the heart." In *De ira* 2.19, Seneca says "Opportunissima ad iracundiam fervidi animi natura est" (A natural property of the fiery mind is that it is most apt to anger) because "actuosus et pertinax ignis" (fire is bold and recalcitrant), and passes on Aristotle's location of anger in the heart, because the heart is the warmest part of the entire body. Harris remarks on the lack of distinction between metaphor and scientific statement: "... a person or some element in the person [in Greek literature] was often said to boil with anger, but Aristotle asserts, as we have seen, that a natural scientist would define anger as the boiling of blood around the heart. Such concepts are perhaps sufficiently widespread to count as a "cultural theory."

[93] "Psalter Canticles," in James Rosier, ed., *The Vitellius psalter. Edited from British Museum Ms. Cotton Vitellius E. XVIII* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962) [=PsCaRos].

Hatheortnesse dracena wingeard heora & attor nædrena unhalwendlic.
Fel draconum uinum eorum et uenenum aspidum insanabile. (Ps 7(6).33)

50

the word does not seem to be on *heort* as the location of anger within the body; rather, *hat* seems to carry much of the semantic heft. In a passage from the passion of Machutus, the evil Raedwala is described as being burned with fury; he stalks to Machutus' cell "mid hatheortnesse onæled & mid gedrefdum gaste & yrsiendum mode" (burn[ing] with fury and with a troubled spirit and angry mind),[94] which seems to emphasize incitement and disturbance of the mind by anger, rather than the body.

Further, *hatheortnys* seems to represent a step up in the level of anger expressed by *yrre*. In glossed texts, *hatheortnys* is primarily (but not exclusively) paired with *furor*, which more properly refers to rage or madness.[95] Elsewhere, the glosses use *hatheortnys* to refer more directly to heat, glossing the passive forms *inflammatur* and *accenditur*, again reinforcing its connection with heat and burning. When it glosses words related to *ira*, such as *iracundus* or *iracundia*, it may be used in the sense not of common anger, but either a propensity to anger or anger of long standing.[96]

Like other heat-related words, *hatheortnys* is applied to a wide variety of individuals and circumstances, which necessitates careful translation of it in some instances. God frequently is *hatheort* (see the passages from Deuteronomy and Numbers, above), but it would be wrong to understand God as being filled with madness—"fury" would be more appropriate. In some instances, especially when

---

[Their vinyard (is) as the fury of dragons and the deadly poison of serpents.]
[94] David Yerkes, ed., *The Old English Life of Machutus* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1984) [=LS (Machutus)], 23r16-20.
[95] *TLL*, s.v. *furor*.
[96] The distinction is a subtle one in Latin, and not always present. See Harris, *Restraining Rage*, p. 69.

dealing with heathen and demonic figures, or people who are understandably enraged, *hatheort* can be used adverbially in order to indicate the extent of the anger being manifested. The crowd that goes to Nero to burn him is "hatheortlice yrre" (furiously angry) at Nero's abuse of them—yet another reason not to anger one's subjects— while in one of Ælfric's homilies, the speaker asserts that he knows "þæra deofla hatheortnysse" (the madness of demons) [ÆCHomII 27.77-78].

Anger as Liquid

    Like the blood boiling around the maddened heart, anger could be discussed as liquid and the body as its container, whether by employing verbs associated with filling and surging, or by nouns that suggest either containment (in the case of the body or mind) or violent movement.[97] Ælfric writes of one pagan king that he "wearð þa afylled mid graman" (he was then filled with anger), a description that comes immediately before his ordering three martyrs to be pushed into an oven. Similarly, possessed or mad individuals could be "mid deoflum afylled" (filled with demons). An individual could, of course, be filled with love (*caritas*) or the Holy Spirit as well; on some occasions, passion narratives parallel the saint, who is "filled with the Holy Spirit" with the pagan tormentor, who is *mid graman afylled*, in the same manner that

---

[97] God's anger is equated both with wine and the cup, e.g. Rev. 14:10: "Et hic bibet de vino irae Dei qui mixtus est mero in calice irae ipsius et cruciabitur igne et sulphure in conspectu angelorum sanctorum et ante conspectum agni" (And he will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and by fire and brimstone he will be tormented before the face of the holy angels and before the face of the lamb). In Rev. 14:8, Babylon falls because the whore of Babylon forces the nations to drink "a vino irae fornicationis suae" (from the wine of the wrath of her fornication).

52

the *anrædnys*, or resolution, of a saint comes from his belief in the true faith and the

pagan's *anrædnys* comes from his spiritual blindness.

In all of these cases, it is the body which is usually conceived of as the

receptacle for whatever fills it, whether it is anger or divine grace, and not the mind.

In Ælfric, the typical formula is "N. wearð þa afylled mid [anger, love, grace, etc.]"

with no reference to the mind itself, though in the case of anger, it is usually the mind

that suffers from the anger that upsets its balance. One homily that is particularly

relevant for the body as a receptacle of anger may be employing the body-as-vessel

metaphor as inherited from Scriptural and exegetical tradition:

> Witudlice on þære forman acennince þe we þurh wer & þurh wif on þis lif
> becomon, we wurdun yrres fatu. Þurh þa oþre acennednesse þe we on þam
> fullwihte geedcennede wurdun, we geearnedon þæt we sint mildheortnesse
> fatu. [98]
>
> [Certainly in the first birth, by which we enter into this life through man and
> through woman, we were vessels of anger. Through the second birth, in which
> we were wholly reborn, we merited becoming vessels of mercy.]

The image derives ultimately from Romans 9:22-23, and was a popular one among

the patristic works concentrating on the problem of predestination and the duality

between the perverseness of the body and the eternal nature of the soul.[99]

Rufinus of Aquila, in his exegesis on Ps. 2:8, interprets *vas irae* to mean the

body as the seat of fleshly desires; the root of the comparison is the potter's vase, *vas*

---

[98] Rudolf Brotanek ed., 'Dedication of a Church', in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur altenglischen Literatur und Kirchengeschichte* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1913) [=DedCh], ll. 10-11.

[99] E.g. Leo I, *Epistola ad Demetriadem*, ed. and trans. Sister M. Kathryn Clare Krabbe (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), 11.44-50. "Vasa irae in vasa misericordiae transferuntur, et in corpus Christi convertitur caro peccati. De impiis iusti, de captivis liberi, de filiis hominum fiunt filii Dei, qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate viri, neque ex voluntate carnis, sed ex Deo nati sunt" (Vessels of wrath are converted into vessels of mercy, and sinful flesh becomes the

figuli, which like the body is a fragile thing fashioned out of the mud of the earth—and therefore, Rufinus argues, the body hungers after temporary, ignoble, and earthly things.[100] The application of the *virga ferrea*, the iron rod which God employs to keep people on the straight path, breaks the sinner and in doing so refashions him into the divine likeness. The Old English homily has something of the distinction between birth into fleshly life, which leads to the devil and his torments, and birth into the spiritual life, which leads to the glory of heaven. Augustine, however, uses *vas irae* to refer to one of two groups of people: heretics and those not predestined to be saved. The expression appears in his tracts inveighing against heretical groups such as the Donatists and the Pelagians.[101]

The anger that the body-as-vessel contains could be discussed in terms of intoxication by virtue of its close link with alcohol and the problems of overindulgence. Drunkenness and anger function as cause and effect; the ability of alcohol to rob men of their right minds saturates discussions of the dangers of overindulgence. While alcohol was considered to be a benefit to the sad, and in some sense good for the health, drinking to excess was viewed in a decidedly negative light, because drunken people were easily angered and more likely to be violent. Isidore

---

body of Christ. The unholy are made holy, captives are made free, sons of men are made sons of God, who are born not of the will of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God."
[100] *Commentarius in LXXV Psalmos* (PL 21.650-54).
[101] Augustine *Epistolae secundum ordinem* (PL 33.405-12) *Epistola* 108.3.12. "Sive per se, sive per Angelos suos, a tritico zizania, a frumentis paleas, a vasis misericordiae vasa irae, et haedos ab ovibus, pisces malos a bonis in fine saeculi separaret" (Either through himself or through his angels, he will separate the chaff from the cockles, the chaff from the corn, the vessels of wrath from the vessels of mercy, and the goats from the sheep, the evil fish from the good at the end of time). This letter was written to answer the Donatist belief that baptism could not be given by heretics, schismatics, or anyone lacking moral requirements for divine office. Augustine countered that it *could*, but one should not

remarks that "wine drunk overmuch produces hostility, anger, and many disasters."[102] In part, the irrationality produced emotionally and chemically could have the same results as the irrationality produced by anger, including offense, verbal and physical contention, and bloodshed.

The didactic Old English poem *The Fates of Men* lists death through means of alcohol-induced anger as one of the many unfortunate ends with which anyone might expect to meet:

> Sumum meces ecg   on meodubence
> yrrum ealowosan   ealdor oþþringeð,
> were winsadum;   bið his worda to hræd. (ll. 48-50)

> [From one angry ale-tipper, a man drunk with wine on the meadbench, the sword's edge steals life; his words are too hasty.]

In this instance, the ruin of alcohol and anger are united; the unadvised tongue, spurred on by alcohol, incites an insult that is paid for in blood. As will be discussed later with reference to the heroic ethos, drunkenness and anger were at the limits of acceptable behavior, the point at which the conviviality of the mead-hall was threatened by the personal disputes of its occupants, and at which order was either restored or lost.

The link between anger and intoxication, present already by the fact that alcohol drunk to excess can produce anger, was exploited by Gregory in *Cura pastoralis* 40.3. In explaining how to best correct an angry man, Gregory employs the

---

accept it (his full argument is contained in *De baptismo contra Donatistas*). The Pelagians were involved in the dispute with Augustine over the agency of free will in the salvation of the soul.
[102] In LibSc 28.13, the Old English gloss is "win swyþe gedruncen graman & yrre & hryras fela hit deð" (Wine drunk [in great quantities] works wrath and anger and much ruination).

example of Abigail and her husband, and Abigail's circumspection in convincing

Nabal to acknowledge his misdeeds (the exemplum is from I Sam 25:36-37):

> Ac ðæt mod, ða hwile ðe hit bið oferdruncen ðæs ierres, eal ðæt him mon ryhtes sægð, hit ðyncð him woh. Forðæm [ðæt] wif ðe Abigall hatte suiðe herigendlice forsuigode ðæt dysig hiere fordruncan hlafordes, se wæs haten Nabal, & eft, ða him ðæt lið gescired wæs, full herigendlice hio hit him gecyðde, & he forðæm sua micle bet his agen dysig oncnew sua he undruncendra wæs.

> [But the mind, while it is intoxicated with anger, considers wrong (or as an insult) all the beneficial things said to it. Therefore the lady who was called Abigail very commendably hid the error of her drunken husband, who was called Nabal, and afterwards, when the wine had left him, very commendably she told him of it, and he because of it recognized his own error better, as he was more sober.]

Gregory's moral on Nabal and Abigail is somewhat reductive. First, the fuller

Scriptural narrative casts Nabal as a perpetually irritable man, who unknowingly

insults David, thus requiring Abigail to make amends with the king. After assuaging

the king's anger (which is ostensibly anger at Nabal's insult), Abigail gives a feast at

which Nabal becomes drunk—a circumstance that only increases his natural

irascibility. Gregory omits Nabal's insult as well as his ultimate punishment, which is

a sudden palsy and death by the decree of God. He becomes a figure for the mind that

is utterly disordered by the anger it embraces, and his anger is as temporary as the

effects of the drink he has imbibed. Abigail is the gentle corrector, who waits until

Nabal has regained his sobriety to tell him of his fault.

Oferdruncen ðæs ierres translates *furore ebriae* in the original Latin. The *ofer-*

prefix may function to play up the severity of Nabal's intoxication, or else to place it

alongside the *oferdruncenys* associated with gluttony (one of the eight capital sins).

The image does not occur in Old English outside of Alfred's translation, and so cannot be construed as a widely known metaphor for being overcome by anger. Nonetheless, it fits into a category similar to the anger that is described by adverbial forms such as *wodlice* or *deofollice*—anger that overwhelms the mind and causes reason almost literally to be washed away. Similarly, anger and its companion sin, hatred, appears as liquid poison in only one homily, one for the third Sunday in Lent, both of which must be cast out from the heart.[103]

This sort of disturbance, in addition to being compared with strong drink, also can take the form of violent liquid motion, such as surging or tossing. Alfred's translation of *De consolatione philosophiae* refers to the "surge of passion" with which the mind is overwhelmed (*mid þam welme þære hatheortnesse*), and frequently participles such as *gedrefed* (for *turbulentus*) are used to describe an individual whose mental balance has been upset.

Anger as Madness

Anger is manifested along a continuum in terms of its development both from incitement (by offense or irritation) and from one "level" of anger into another. Gregory, as we have seen, recognized that even anger or passion aroused to correct sin or wrongdoing had the potential to get out of control and become sinful. Likewise,

---

[103] "Third Sunday in Lent," in Bruno Assmann and Peter Clemoes, eds., *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben* (Kassel; rpt.Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), ll. 111-14. "And ælce yrsunge and andan and hatunge and ealle yfelnesse utan aworpan fram urum heortum eal swa atter and gelomlice mid rihtum geleafan and mid godum willan to cyrcan cuman and þær mid micelre geornfulnesse æt gode biddan forgifennesse ealra þara gylta, þe we dæghwamlice wyrcað" (And all anger and passion and hatred and all evilness we must cast out from our hearts just as poison and

57

anger could develop through stages, moving from *yrre* to *furor*, and then into insanity, which represents the culmination of irrationality.

Wod, in its noun, adjectival, and adverbial (*wodlice*) forms appears most often to discuss anger that has progressed to madness. Ælfric uses *wodlice* to describe the extent to which various pagans are angered by a saint's recalcitrance; in the case of St. Edmund, after the heathens have put him through various tortures and the saint does not recant his faith, they then become *wodlice yrre* (ÆLS 32.106-115).

One *–wod* compound, *ellenwod*, is problematic. Gevaert places *ellenwod* in the "anger as insanity" domain but does not acknowledge that more often the word refers to zeal in the best sense—that is, the zeal that drives a person to do good works—or else the anger of God, which clearly cannot be construed as insanity or anything approaching it.[104] Like *hatheort*, the primary emphasis seems to be on the first element in the compound, *ellen*, focusing on resoluteness of purpose. Further, "mad" anger (of the type not typically expressed by *ellenwod*) is something of which God and the saints are not guilty; its expression is limited to those individuals who, for one reason or other, cannot control their rage and give vent to it through sin.

The close association of pagans with madness (and anger) is in part due to the "madness" of refusing to recognize the true God. Ælfric plays on the shades of meaning of *gedwola*, which can be applied either to madmen or heretics, and *gedwyld* in painting a portrait of the sorcerer Olimpus, "sume oðer gedwola, se sæt him on bæðe, and he ungesæliglice spræc mid gedwylde, for ðan þe he gedwola wæs"

---

continually with right belief and with good will go to church and there with great eagerness pray forgiveness from God for all these sins which we commit daily).

58

(another heretic who was sitting in his bath, and he spoke wickedly and heretically because he was a madman) [ÆHom 10.105-6]. Ælfric and other homilists argue that, once a heretic, always a heretic; the darkness of delusion and madness is not curable in the case of those who persecute the clearest examples of Christian excellence. Madness and blasphemy—of which the pagans were naturally guilty—were also closely linked; *woffung* and its verb form *woffian* gloss both *blasphemia* (LibSc 2.20).[105] and two obscure Latin terms for madness, *stomachans* and *debachans* (AldGoos 3665).

A striking instance of the progression of anger from initial offense to madness is the story told by Ælfric in his homily for the birth of St. Stephen, which recounts the travels of Paul and Palladia, two disciples of the saint. Their mother, apparently exasperated with one son who torments her, seeks redress, an action with dire consequences:

> Þa wearð seo modor biterlice gegremod. æfter hire weres forðsiðe. fram hire anum cilde to ðan swiðe. þæt heo on eastertide eode to cyrcan. and wolde ðone sunu þe hi getirigde mid wyriungum gebindan. (ÆCHomII 2.102-04)

> [Then the mother was sorely provoked by her own child after her husband's death, so that she went to church at Eastertide, and wished to fetter with curses the son who tormented her.]

The mother meets a devil disguised *on mannes híwe* (in a man's likeness), who finds out her business, approves of it, and advises her not to curse only one child, but to curse them all, as none of them defended her against their brother (ll. 105-13). Then

> Þæt earme wif gelyfde his wælhreowum geðeahte. and wearð mid maran wodnysse astyrod. eode þa to ðam fantfæte. and tolysde hire feax. and bedypte

---

[104] Gevaert, "Evolution of the Lexical and Conceptual Field of ANGER," p. 286.
[105] Also LibSc 78.19, *wiþersacendra wodnysse* (the madness of blasphemers).

on ðam fante. and mid micelre hatheortnysse ealle hire bearn manfullice
wirigde. (ll. 114-17)

[The wretched woman heeded his bloodthirsty counsel, and was stirred with
greater madness. Then she went to the baptismal font, and tore her hair, and
immersed [herself] in the font, and with great fury evilly cursed all her
children.]

After committing blasphemy by using the church's sacraments for evil purposes, the
woman goes home to find all her children suffering from a terrible pain that makes
their limbs tremble, whereupon she is struck through with remorse and hangs herself.
Ælfric concludes the homily with a remark that the devil who incited her to curse her
children in his turn led her to her own hanging (ll. 118-23).[106]

In the above story, the progression from provocation to madness is clearly
delineated. First is the provocation—the son who torments his mother—so that the
mother is *gegremod*, provoked to the point of taking action. In the process of going to
the church to gain satisfaction for herself, she encounters the devil, who encourages
her to even greater madness—that is, instead of cursing one child, cursing all of them
and thus utterly abandoning her duties as a mother (to nurture her children and not
destroy them).[107] Ælfric's *maran wódnyss* implies that the mother is already
somewhat maddened, for wishing to harm her own son in the first place, and after
hearing the devil's advice, she becomes even more so, acting out her anger not only in
cursing her children, but by tearing her hair. (The tearing of hair and clothes is a

---

[106] Fortunately for Paul and Palladia, they escape and eventually become two of Stephen's disciples.
[107] The ability of anger to turn people against their kin is mentioned elsewhere. Martin of Braga (*De ira*
3) laments (in line with Seneca) that if anger is given to a father, he becomes an enemy, a son becomes
a parricide, a mother becomes a *noverca* (lit. "stepmother"; most likely she becomes cruel to her own
children). In Ælfric's *s Life of Saint Eugenia*, Eugenia's father Philippus addresses his own daughter

classic manifestation of human rage.)[108] At last, the woman curses her children with the utmost fury, and only comes to regret her actions when she sees her children suffering. Immediately, her anger and madness give way to profound despair (*tristitia*) and those in turn lead the woman to suicide, a sin for which there can be no atonement.

Anger as Nature and Display

Seneca insisted that anger was not a secret or hidden vice—unlike others, its nature compelled it to be displayed.[109] These methods included a series of spectacular physical transformations, many of which are still accepted today as the "stock" images of the angry person, including flashing eyes, red face, violent gestures, and the gnashing of teeth.[110] Additionally, classical writings associated certain animals with anger and fury, particularly the lion or lioness, wild boar, bear, and snake.[111] Seneca provides the reason why this association was so pervasive in Greek and Latin

---

with fury (Ða cwæð Philippus mid fullum graman to Eugenian his agenre dehter) [ÆLS (6 .199)]; Ælfric here seems to be emphasizing that Philppus's fury does not respect the bounds of kinship.

[108] See *Juliana* 594b-600a for another Old English example. Ira in the *Psychomachia* goes about with wild hair and disordered clothes.

[109] Seneca *De ira* 1.5. "Cetera licet abscondere et in abdito alere; ira se profert et in faciem exit, quantoque maior, hoc effervescit manifestius" (Other [vices] can be hidden away and cherished in darkness; anger displays itself and appears in the countenance, and the greater it is, the more plainly it bubbles up). Also Martin of Braga, *De ira*, 2.12-14.

[110] Seneca *De ira* 1.3. So also Martin of Braga *De ira* 2.1-11. Late classical and early medieval borrowers of Seneca include Lactantius (*De ira dei* 4), Eusebius (*Commentariorum in Joelam*, incipit), Cassian (*Collationes* 1.9.5), Cyprian (*De zelo et livore* 8) and the Pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo de conscientia*. This last explicitly equates the appearance of an angry man with that of the devil (Haec imago diaboli est). For discussion of the image, see Roger E. Reynolds, "The Pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo de conscientia* and the Related Canonical *Dicta sancti gregorii papae*," *Revue Bénédictine* 81 (1971): 310-17.

The stock images associated with the expression of anger in the Senecan tradition will be discussed more fully in Chapter III, below.

[111] Harris, *Restraining Rage*, p. 68.

literature: these sorts of animal give visible signs of their ferocity (which he later

asserts is not the same as anger):

> Do you not see how all animals, when they rouse themselves to harm
> something, give signs ahead of time and how their whole bodies abandon their
> accustomary and peaceful demeanor and provoke their ferocity? Wild boars
> foam at the mouth and sharpen their tusks by grinding them, bulls wave their
> horns in the empty air and scatter the sands by stamping their hoofs, lions
> growl, the necks of snakes puff up when they are angered, and the face of a
> rabid dog is gloomy.[112]

The visibility of anger is specifically tied to animal-like behavior, and as has been

discussed with reference to Alcuin and Boethius above, the loss of human reason to

anger equals a reduction to animal status, which contravenes man's nature as a

rational being.[113] Seneca, however, asserts that humans do not share in the irascibility

of animals, because what is called "anger" in animals is only something approaching a

human metaphor for understanding animal behavior (*De ira* 1.3.6-7).

Felix's prose life of Guthlac offers a near parallel to the above description by

Seneca, as the saint is being accosted by demonic beings in the shapes of horrible

animals:

---

[112] Seneca *De ira* 1.1.5-6. "Non vides ut omnium animalium, simul ad nocendum insurrexerunt,
praecurrant notae ac tota corpora solitum quietumque egrediantur habitum et feritatem suam
exasperent? Spumant apris ora, dentes acuuntur attritu, taurorum cornua iactantur in vacuum et harena
pulsu pedum spargitur, leones fremunt, inflantur irritatis colla serpentibus, rabidarum canum tristis
aspectus est."

[113] Boethius sets up a scheme of animal imagery in *De consolatione philosophiae*, 4.pros.3, using the
metaphor of the transformation of humans into beasts: "... euenit igitur ut quem transformatum uitiis
uideas hominem aestimare non possis... Irae intemperans fremit: leonis animum gestare credatur"
(Therefore it happens that you cannot consider him a man whom, as it were, you see transformed by his
vices... The immoderate man growls with anger; you should think that he has the heart of a lion).
Alfred's translation: "Forðæm gif ðu swa gewlætne mon metst þæt he bið ahwerfed from goode to
yfele, ne meaht þu hine na mid ryhte nemnan man ac neat... þone ungemetlice modgan & yrsiendan þe
to micelne andan hæfð þu scealt hatan leo, næs man" (Therefore if you meet a man so debased that he
is turned from good to evil, you cannot properly call him a man, but a beast... The excessively proud
and angry man who has great malice, you should call a lion, not a man) [Cons 37.4].

Ærest he geseah leon ansyne, and he mid his blodigum tuxum to him beotode; swylce eac fearres gelicnysse, and beran ansyne, þonne hi gebolgene beoð. Swylce eac næddrena hiw, and swynes grymetunge, and wulfa geþeot, and hræfena cræcetung and mislice fugela hwistlunge, þæt hi woldon mid heora hiwunge þæs halgan weres mod awendan.   (LS (Guthlac) 8.5-8)

[First he saw a lion's face, and he [the lion] threatened him with his bloody fangs; also he saw an ox's likeness, and a bear's face, when they are provoked. Also, with their a serpent's aspect and a boar's grunting, and the howling of wolves, and ravens' croaking and the whistling of various birds, they wished with their appearance to shake the holy man's mind.]

Grymetung in the above passage is of particular interest, as the verb form of the word, *grymettan,* is used of human display as well. Ælfric describes the persecutors of the virgin saint Agnes who, seeing the fire that had been set to burn her be miraculously put out, believe it comes from sorcery and "grymetende mid gehlyde" (roar with dissension), and become angry (ÆLS 7.240-2). The devil, too, "færð onbutan swa swa grymetende leo" (goes about like a roaring lion), connecting his cruelty and ferocity to that of a wild beast (I Pet. 5:8).

Ferocity is associated not only with anger, but with those who willfully contravene God's commandments. A Rogationtide homily includes numerous angry and hostile people among two of the four *gefylcea* (hosts of men) at the last judgment. The third group includes those who do not keep God's commandments, and who "gremedon God mid gramlicum dædum and fulice leofodon on fulum synnum æfre" (provoked God with hostile deeds and impurely lived in filthy sins all the time); their sins include murder, soothsaying, and wizardry, and among them are numbered the "þeofas and ðeodscaþan, ryperas and reaferas and þa reðan drymenn" (thieves and criminals, robbers and plunderers, and the mad sorcerers) [BazCr 6.192-201]. In the

Old English translation of Gregory's *Dialogues*, the heathens who are angry also become fierce; while attempting to burn a holy man out of his house, they find that God's grace has protected the building and then "hi ongunnon ma reðian & hi gebelgan" (they began to grow even more fierce and they became angry) [GD 18.219.5-11]. In one of Ælfric's homilies, the adjective substantivized, *reþe*, came to stand in for any cruel person.[114]

Because ferocity and cruelty was associated with anger, *gram* eventually came to indicate anger by metonymy, and then by later extension, was substantized to enemy. Fabiszak argues that this is because anger is incited by deprivation, the presence of an enemy, or his actions.[115] Gevaert attests to the development of *gram* as synonym for anger, noting that *gram* appears more frequently in the years after the Alfredian translations, as well as in Ælfric's prose.[116] In most instances, it does not seem to have "animal" connotations when being used in its anger sense, as *gram* is applied to divine, infernal, and human beings alike, nor is there any inference that *gram* represents a more naturalistic anger than *yrre* or other words; indeed, *gram* and *yrre* are used more or less interchangeably in glossed texts for *ira* and *iracundia*. However, *gram* may possess a range of meaning more versatile than *yrre*, as attested to by the glosses; in the glosses on Aldhelm, *gram* appears alongside *wraþ* to gloss *furibundus* and *inaestuans*, suggesting a component of deeper mental disturbance (as with *furor*) [AldGoos 4362]. *Grama* demonstrates the greatest range in the glosses of the *Liber scintillarum*, where it seems to indicate stages of progression to anger—

---

[114] e.g. LS (Machutus) 21r.16-18.
[115] Fabiszak, "Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF, and ANGER in OE," pp. 267-68.

irritation and provocation—rather than the fully-developed emotion, as it glosses

contumelia, inritatio, and *molestia.*[117]

The Products of Anger

Anger, with rare exceptions, did not exist as a purely internal phenomenon in

Anglo-Saxon writing; almost inevitably consequences attended it, both in terms of the

impact on the angry person's mind (loss of reason) and the circumstances that arose

out of its expression. VercScragg 20 discusses some of the consequences that come

from impermissible anger, both internal and external, saying that of anger comes

"modes toðundennes & saca & teonan & æbylgð & yfelsacung & blodes agotenes &

mannsliht & grædignes teonan to wyrcanne" (a swollen or deranged mind, and strife

and contumely and irritation and blasphemy and bloodshed and homicide and

eagerness to do harm) [ll. 98-103]. By contrast, a consequence of "permissible" anger

may be that the individual, so long as he is angered against sin, either corrects himself

(if he is at fault) or corrects another (if the other is at fault). This section does not

discuss the results of anger in terms of "emotional aftermath" in the individual; these

effects have been, to some extent, outlined in the preceding sections. Rather, the

"byproducts" of anger refer to how anger is "vented," what the angry person does in

---

[116] Gevaert, "The Evolution of the Lexical and Conceptual Field of ANGER," p. 291.
[117] For *contumelia* (contumely, hostility) LibSc 2.18, 2.48; for *inritatio* (annoyance; it can also mean 'anger' or 'wrath,' as well as the stimulus provoking it) 28.13; for *molestia* (annoyance or vexation, disgust), 61.12.

terms of physical acts that impinge on the lives and welfare of the people around him.[118]

In some cases, the consequences of mere affront are minor, and somewhat amusing; according to Bede, when he learned of the king's division of the diocese of Winchester—done without his counsel—the bishop Ægelberht became "swiðe abolgen" (very angry), and abandoned England to return to his home in Gaul (*Historia* 3.5). By contrast, anger could lead to a violation of familial or social duty, to contention between individuals, and then acts requiring the intervention of secular or ecclesiastical authorities, such as blasphemy and manslaughter.

Strife or contention could take a variety of forms, and range anywhere from localized, individual disputes of a physical or verbal nature (*geflit*) to war. Words such as *teon* and *hosp* can imply both verbal abuse, such as insult or slander, and physical injury. The heathen nobleman of Ælfric's homily on the Forty Soldiers ponders "hu he mihte his hosp on þam halgum gewrecan" (how he might vent his anger on the saint) [ÆLS 11.111-12], suggesting that *hosp* is being used both to indicate a desire for physical harm in order to avenge an insult, and the anger that is fueling that desire. Elsewhere, *hosp* is used as verbal injury or hostile speech; angry noblemen speak *mid hosp* to the targets of their fury, and compounds such as *hospcwide* suggest perhaps a specific set of words that could be spoken with hostile intent, whether to wound with words or to injure the reputation of another person.

> Se þe his breþer hosp gecwyð, se bið þeahtes scyldig. Her syndon nu twa þing, þæt yrre and se hosp, and þær gæð geþeaht to þam twam þingum, þæt man

---

[118] As the above homily indicates, blasphemy is one of these results; because blasphemy is described as a "madness," it is discussed in the section on 'Anger as Madness,' above.

mid geþeahte secge him his wite, hwæt he sylf þrowige for ðam twam þingum; ac swaþeah hwilon swa scyldig man ætwint, be ðam þe se trahtnere us sægð on Leden.[119]   (ÆHom 16.143-50)

[He who insults his brother will be guilty of thought. Now here are the two things, anger and hostility, and wherever the thought goes to these two things, a person with design tells him of his injury, what he himself suffers on account of these two things; but all the while the guilty person taunts him, concerning which the commentator tells us in Latin.]

Ælfred here implies that *hosp* is not wholly impulsive; his emphasis on thought and design (*geþeahte*) indicates that hostility or anger expressed through words can require contemplation and forethought, though in other instances anger is famed for making a person speak unadvisedly.

Teona operates similarly; like *hosp*, it is an act that requires the perpetrator to make amends:

Þy is manna gehwylcum micel þearf þæt se þe ær ænigne tionan oððe ænigne graman his neahstan gedyde þæt he hrædlice to dædbote cyrre & him forgifnesse bidde æt gode & æt þam þe he æbylygðe gedon hæbbe.[120] (DedCh 175-79)

[It is incumbent upon every man that he who has done any injury or any harm against his neighbor that he swiftly go to make amends and beseech forgiveness from him for God and for that injury which he had done.]

Additionally, *teona* can apply both to verbal and physical manifestations of anger. In the *Liber scintillarum, teona* glosses *contumelia* on almost all occasions, and in most cases the scenario being described seems to be that of verbal abuse or calumny:

---

[119] Ælfric suggests another type of *hosp*; he refers to the Hebrew word *racha* as "signifying indigation or anger" (æbylignysse oððe yrre), and classifies it as an interjection, noting that both Hebrew and English have their own types, but are difficult to translate into the other language (ælc þeod hæfð synderlice *interiectiones,* ac hi ne magon naht eaðe to oðrum gereorde beon awende). Johann Zupitza, ed., *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar* (Berlin; 1880; repr. with intro. by H. Gneuss, 1966), p. 279. The analysis is similar to Gregory's explication of Matt. 5:22 in *Moralia* 21.5.9 (commenting on Job 31.4).

[120] The passage bears resemblance to VercScragg 14 (which in turn takes its material from Gregory, *Dialogues* 4). VercScragg 14 focuses on the need to make amends with both God and man.

*Contumelias detrahentium patientia supera sagittas contumeliae patientia
supera sagittas contumeliae patientiæ clypeo frange contra linguæ gladium
patientiae prebe scutum* graman tælendra mid geþylde oferswyð flana teonan
mid geþylde oferswyð flana teonan mid geþyldes scylde tobrec ongean tungan
swurd geþyldes gearwa scyld. (LibSc 2.48)

[Overcome the insults of detractors with patience, the arrows of slander with
patience; overcome the arrows of slander with the shield of patience, stand
against the sword of the tongue with the shield of patience.]

The major concern of writers dealing with the effects of anger was the

violence the emotion could, and usually did, occasion. As discussed above, anger not

acted on could lead to grief and hatred; while grief and hatred were frowned upon,

they were essentially static—it was only when anger was acted upon did it become

problematic in the larger scheme of society. Killing particularly was of great concern,

as were large-scale conflicts such as brawls (civil strife) and war fought out of anger.

Warfare itself was, in some cases, viewed as being caused by anger. Seneca is

most likely the Latin source of this opinion, lamenting that because of anger one can

observe the ruin of cities and the destruction of entire peoples (*De ira* 1.2.1-2); his

words are echoed in Lactantius (*De ira Dei*) and Martin (*De ira*). Eventually, writers

began to formulate proscriptions regarding the rules under which conflict was to be

carried out, and these trickled down to Anglo-Saxon writers, as again demonstrated

by Ælfric, who uses the tale of the Maccabees to illustrate the differences between

various types of warfare. After narrating the tale of the Jewish resistance against the

invading Selucids, he comes to the heart of the matter, which was certainly a pressing

one for his contemporaries:

Secgað swa-þeah lareowas þæt synd feower cynna gefeoht... *iustum bellum.* is
rihtlic gefeoht wið þa reðan flotmenn. oþþe wið oðre þeoda þe eard willan

68

fordon. Unrihtlic gefeoht is þe of yrre cymð. Þæt þridde gefeoht þe of geflite cymð. betweox ceaster-gewearum is swyðe pleolic. and þæt feorðe gefeoht þe betwux freondum bið. is swiðe earmlic and endeleas sorh.   (ÆLS 25.705-09)

However, the authorities say that there are four kinds of war... *Iustum bellum* is just war against the ferocious Vikings or against other people who want to destroy our land. Unjust war is that which comes from anger. The third war, which comes from strife between fellow citizens, is very lamentable, and the fourth war which is between friends is very harmful and an endless sorrow.

Ælfric insists that resisting the Danish invaders (or anyone else), as defensive war, is justified—it is violence that arises from self-preservation. Moreover, his use of *reðe*—itself an anger word, in one of its capacities—to describe the Vikings links them with the second type of war, which arises out of anger and associated feelings of hostility. Nonetheless, aside from the first type of warfare (which is specifically defensive, and not offensive), the other levels of strife range from intergroup warfare (the second) to more localized conflicts between fellow citizens and family members. The third, as civil discord, arises from *geflit*, localized strife between civil factions while the fourth comes from what Ælfric views as wrongful discord between people who are bound by blood and kinship ties to maintain peace between themselves.[121]

By far, the act most graphically discussed and commonly associated with anger is manslaughter.[122] In the listing of the evil deeds done in anger, manslaughter figures prominently as one of the worst; in the relatively limited catalogue of the outcomes of evil in the Life of Vincent, for example, it is the only specific act

---

[121] A fuller discussion of Isidore's contribution to Ælfric's formulation of just war occurs in Chapter IV.

[122] I use the term 'manslaughter' here to mean the act of 'killing a human being,' not in the modern legal sense. In doing so, I am attempting to avoid invoking the legal connotation of 'murder' (*morþor*) in Anglo-Saxon law, which referred specifically to a killing done in secret.

mentioned, next to the more generic *mycele yfelu*.[123] Elsewhere, Ælfric refers to it as "lamentable manslaughter," and says "seo mæst synn þæt man unscyldigne mann ofslea for his yrre" (the greatest sin is that a man slays an innocent man out of anger).[124]

Several homilies also mention *mansliht* as a sin in its own right, independently of *yrre*. Ælfric's homily for the dedication of a church mentions it as one of the eight *heafodleahtras* or capital sins, though he does not seem to be employing the term in the sense of Gregory or Cassian, but rather as an indexing of the major sins and any behavior that violates the Ten Commandments (the list includes sacrilege, coveting another man's wife, addiction to drink, and witchcraft in addition to pride, avarice, greed, etc.) [ÆCHom 16.72-77]. Similarly, one of the Salisbury pontifical texts mentions the *eahta heafodleahtras* against which the Christian should guard himself:

> And beorgað eow wið þa eahta heafodleahtras, þæt ge huru þa ne gefremman, þæt is morðor, and maneaðas, stala, and gitsunge, modignessa, and yrre, dyrne forligera, and manslihtas, gyfernesse, and tælnessa, wirignyssa, and lease gewitnessa, yfelsacung, and oferdruncennessa, untidætas, and oferdrænceas, wiccecræftas, and wiglunga.[125]

> [And guard yourselves against the eight capital sins, that you certainly do not commit them, that is, murder and false oaths, contention and avarice, pride, and anger, secret fornication, and manslaughter, greediness, and slanders, curses, and false testimony, and intoxication, untimely eating, and feasting, witchcraft, and auguries.]

---

[123] ÆLS 37.133. Also: ÆCHomII 12.512; ÆLS 16.287; VercScragg 20 308-21.
[124] *De sex etatibus huius seculi*, in *Sex aetates mundi: Die Weltzeitalter bei den Angelsachsen und den Iren, Untersuchungen und Texte*, ed. Hildegard Tristram (Heidelberg: C. Winter), p. 140.
[125] Neil R. Ker, "Three Old English Texts in a Salisbury Pontifical, Cotton Tiberius C.I," in *The Anglo-Saxons, Studies in Some Aspects of Their History and Culture, Presented to Bruce Dickins,* ed. Peter Clemoes (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), pp. 262-79, ll. 4-9.

Here the trope of the eight capital sins does not seem to be functioning literally; rather, the writer draws out the list of sins to emphasize the manifold dangers of succumbing to the temptation to sin. Not only that, *mansliht* appears in conjunction with some of the most severely punished crimes in ecclesiastical and secular law, *morþor*-killing and witchcraft.

The penitential prayer for anger found on fol. 44r of London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius iii. focuses almost exclusively on the need to atone for anger. After mentioning the *feala yfela* committed while under the influence of wrath, the prayer moves to an explicit discussion of killing, with the penitent confessing that his hands are covered (literally or figuratively) with the blood of his fellow men:

> Ic þurh weamodnysse wrohte feala yfela, 7 þurh mannslihtas me scyldigne dyde wið þe min drihten, þa ic ðin handgeweorc unwyrcan dorste, 7 deaþe betæcan, nu synd mine handa þurh þone hefian gylt mid manna blodum þe ic ðurh gebeot oft 7 þurh hatheortnesse her on lyfe ageat, yfele befylede, 7 fæste gebundene, swærum gyltum, þurh þa sylfan weamodnysse þe ic ær gewrohte.[126]

> [Through my wrath I wrought many evils and through manslaughter I made myself guilty against you, my Lord, when I dared to unmake your handiwork and chase after death. Now my hands are [stained] by grievous guilt with the blood of men which I spilled here in this life through threats and through fury, befouled by evil and bound firmly with oppressive sins, by that same wrath which I perpetrated before.]

The prayer briefly delineates the progression of killing, from threat (*gebeot*) to the deed committed through the impulsiveness (*hatheortnys*) brought on by wrath. It focuses on two central ideas: that impermissible anger causes the sinner to contravene God's law and destroy his creation by killing it, and that anger is a means of

---

[126] London, British Library Cotton MS Tiberius A.iii., fol. 44r ll. 20-26.

entrapment—to "work" wrath transforms anger from an interior and private sin to one that has ramifications in the wider world in terms of providing motivation to break either a secular law or the law of God.

The punishment for anger-motivated killing does not seem to be judicial in nature; law codes do not set out a specific punishment for "crimes of passion," as it were, unless the notion of 'anger' were concomitant with revenge and killings associated with feud. However, penitentials do distinguish between killing as a result of anger and killing done under other circumstances, which suggests that anger was not a legal problem—rather, the correction of it was still under the purview of the Church. While the killing itself would have legal repercussions—that is, judicial atonement might require the payment of weregild, or stiffer punishments such as execution or outlawry—the law passed no judgment on anger as a motivating factor in the crime.[127] Instead, anger became a consideration in the penitential literature; confessional handbooks distinguish anger killings from other types, such as those involving self-defense, and offer varying suggestions for penance to be imposed. In its subheading concerning homicides, one penitential recommends that,

> Gyf man slyhð oðerne on morð on eorran mode and mid behydnysse, fæste *IV* gear, sume willað *VII.* [128]

> [If one man slays another in secret with an angry mind and in concealment, let him fast for four years; others make it seven.]

---

[127] Patrick Wormald's discussion of killings in *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century.* Vol. 1, *Legislation and Its Limits* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) makes no mention of any early or late elaborations in Anglo-Saxon legislation regarding the role of anger in murder.
[128] "Confessionale pseudo-Egberti ," in Robert Spindler, ed., *Das altenglische Bussbuch* (Leipzig: 1934), ll. 238-39.

The penitential links a *morþor*-type act with anger (or possibly malice aforethought?) and assigns it penance as appropriate, with the observation that a harsher penance is available. Other penitentials assign to anger-motivated killing fasts comparable with the four years first proposed. The *Poenitentiale Theodori* illustrates the vast difference the Church perceived to exist between anger-motivated killing and others; if a man kills another in battle, he is assigned a forty day fast—but, "gif he hit þurh yrre do" (if he kills through anger), the killing merits three years of penance.[129]

Anger as Sin

As stated above, the majority of Old English words dealing with anger, regardless of frequency, do not indicate whether or not the anger being experienced in any given situation is permissible or impermissible, necessitating further contextual information. Only three words in the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary of anger are exclusively associated with anger as sin: *gramfærnys, niðgrama*, and *weamod*.[130] The former two are *hapax legomena*, and thus it is impossible to say if the words were ever applied to a broader domain; all that can be said is that, in their respective contexts, *gramfærnys* and *niðgrama* are explicitly sinful emotions.

---

[129] *Poenitentiale Theodori and Capitula d'Acheriana*, in Franz J. Mone, ed. *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der teutschen Literatur und Sprache* (Aachen and Leipzig: J.A. Mayer, 1830) [=ConfMone] 159. The three-year fast is also mentioned in "A Handbook for a Confessor," in Roger Fowler, "A Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor," *Anglia* 83 (83, (1965): p. 1-34). However, the offense seems to be different here; the selection reads "Gyf hwa his æht ofsliho buton gilte for his hatheortnesse, fæste iii gear" (If he destroys his possessions without guilt because of his anger, [let him] fast three years) [l. 152]; *buton gilte* may mean that the individual was robbed of his right mind, so while not guilty of killing insofar as he was mentally competent, the sinner still bears responsibility for losing control.

[130] To date I have been unable to find any word that pertains specifically to divine anger, or righteous anger of the sort approved by Gregory, Alcuin, Ælfric, etc.

Gramfærnys is a compound, combining the element *gram-* (see above discussion) and possibly *færnys*, 'traffic,' if one take 'traffic' in the sense of 'business.' In its one appearance in a confessor's handbook, *gramfærnys* specifically refers to the anger that overthrows natural order, to sorrow and strife; the devil uses it to incite the mind to contention, and so the Christian must be prepared to counter it:

> Ælc gramfærnys cymð of deofle & ælc geflit & ælc ungelimp, þonne uton wiðstandan him & liþegian ure mod & biddan us Godes miltse & his fultumes þæt we magon his bebodu healdan.[131]

> [All anger comes from the devil, and all strife, and all misfortune; then we must stand against him and calm our mind and ask God's mercy on us and his aid, that we are able to keep his commandments.]

As in the case of the devil's arrows discussed above, *gramfærnys* in this context is either inflicted on or brought as an enticement to the sinner. Other homilies remark on the devil's capacity to introduce impermissible anger to a person; in one, he takes up his harp and presents humans with a lesson of vice in verse, boasting to God that his auditors "me hyrdon georne, and ic hie to þeofendum and to geflitum stihte and to inwitfullum geþohtum" (they heard me eagerly, and I led them to theft and to strife and to malicious thoughts) [WulfNap 49.96-100]. In others he is a teacher, who attempts to inculcate his students with anger instead of the humility adjured by

---

[131] "Formulas and Directions for the Use of Confessors," in Benjamin Thorpe, ed. *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, vol. 2, (London: Great Britain Public Records Commission, 1840), pp. 224-28, ll. 60-64. Fabiszak, "Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF, and ANGER in OE," p. 267 suggests that *gramfærnys* "may witness the origins of the distinction between the righteous anger and the destructive anger." Whether she means this to suggest that Anglo-Saxon writers had inherited the concept from earlier traditions and this is an example of that tradition, or that this is an idea original to Anglo-Saxon writers, is unclear. Certainly the concept that (impermissible) anger comes from the devil was not a new idea by the time the Anglo-Saxons got a hold of it; for example, Prudentius (5th-6th century) discusses anger as the devil's offspring in the hamartological context of the *Psychomachia*.

74

God.[132] It is accompanied by its typical companions, sorrow and strife, and must be countered with a calm mind, patience, and the assistance of God.

Like *gramfærnys*, *niðgrama* is a compound; that it is so allows it to be differentiated from the more general *grama* applied to the anger of God, the devil, and men of good or evil persuasion. The prefix *nið-* in this instance serves to emphasize the negativity of the *grama* being experienced; not only is it anger, or some type of emotion associated with ferocity, it is hostile and destructive in intent (whereas permissible anger is not described as hostile, though it does lead the individual to scorn or detest vice.) In its single occurrence in the corpus, one of Wulfstan's homilies, it is connected with anger, specifically excessive anger, to which it either gives birth or which it accompanies:

> And clænsige his heortan gehwa fram æghwilcum niðgraman and hetelican yrre. And, gif he hwam abulge, gebete þæt georne and girne to godes þeowum, þæt hy him siððan *absolutionem* macigan. (WulfNap 38.8-11)

> [... and cleanse his heart from all malice and excessive anger. And, if he offend (or injure?) anyone, let him amend that quickly and eagerly before God's servants (i.e. confessors), so that they can appoint penance for him.]

Wulfstan's emphasis on the need to "cleanse the heart" of *niðgrama* and the necessity of penance for any misdeed done by it points to the negative associations of the word. Additionally, in the above passage, *niðgrama* seems to have the property of being directed outward, a sort of general hostility to the world at large, as it allows the individual to attack or offend others, perhaps by stimulating him to anger.

---

[132] Antonette diPaolo Healey, *The Vision of St. Paul* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1978), l. 88.

The third, *weamod* (or *weamet*) and the noun *weamodnys*, is rare, but attested

to more frequently than either *gramfœrnys* or *niðgrama*. Moreover, it appears only in

late homiletic texts by Ælfric and Wulfstan, and penitentials, as well as translations of

exhortatory and didactic works such as the Alfredian translation of Gregory's *Cura*

pastoralis, the *Regula Benedicti*, and the *Regula canonicorum* of Chrodegang of

Metz. In the latter two translations, *weamod* is the gloss mate for *iracundus*, and in

both cases it refers directly to those whose anger is a failing.[133] Gregory's *iracundi* are

those who are easily aroused to anger—thus *weamod* in this case refers to the

predisposition to anger, in addition to the sin itself—and because they are so, they act

out of measure with what provokes them; the danger for such individuals, Gregory

says, is that anger leads inevitably to madness and destroys the tranquility of mental

life, in addition to frightening those subject to the angry individual.[134] Chrodegang's

iracundi are those authorities (or teachers) whose anger, stemming from worldly care

and irritation, leads them to terrorize their fellows and underlings.[135] In homilies,

penitentials, and other admonitory works, *weamod* can substitute for *yrre* in lists of

---

[133] *Iracundus* and *ira* can both refer to anger in the general sense, but *iracundus* can also have the sense of irascibility or proneness to anger, as well as anger persisting over a length of time (*TLL*, s.v. *ira*).

[134] "quo impellente ira in mentis vaesaniam"; the Old English translates "gremeð ðæt ierre ðæt hie wealwiað on ða wedenheortnesse" (anger provokes them so that they swell into madness) [CP 40.4.16].

[135] Chrodegang of Metz *De regula canonicorum*, in Brigitte Langefeld, ed. and trans., *The Old English Version of the Enlarged Rule of Chrodegang, Edited Together with the Latin Text and an English Translation* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003). Both Gregory and Chrodegang insist that those who are *iracundus/weamod* do not act according to their station, nor do they act in proper measure; in the fury of their desire for discipline, for example, Chrodegang's *doctores iracundi* would sooner beat their students (*potius uulnere*) than correct them properly: "Iracundi doctores per rabiem furoris disciplinae modum ad immanitatem crudelitatis convertunt; et unde emendare subditos poterant, inde potius vulnerant. Ideo sine mensura ulciscitur culpas doctor iracundus, quia cor ejus, dispersum in rerum curis, non colligitur in amorem unius deitatis" (Irascible teachers turn measured discipline to excessive cruelty through the fierceness of their fury, and with what they could better their subordinates, with that they will hurt them. Therefore the irascible teacher punishes sins without moderation because his heart is distracted by worldly considerations and is not centred in the love of divinity).

76

the eight capital sins; in the confessional prayer for anger in Cotton Tiberius A.iii, both are paired together to emphasize the enormity of the sin to which the penitent is confessing.

The components of *weamod* (*wea*, "evil, sin, wickedness" or "grief, woe, trouble" + *mod*) link the concept of impermissible anger with both sinfulness and sorrow. The ambiguity of the first component of the word may be intentional, or else there was a closer connection between evil (as that which occasions sorrow) and grief than we suppose today; at any rate, neither "sorrow of mind" nor "evil of mind" can be discounted as possible modern interpretations of the term. In the glosses, not only does the noun *weamod* refer specifically to *iracunda*[136] but it encompasses the category of disturbance (*turbulentus*) as caused by both anger and grief. The individual, grieved by some affront, seeks revenge to address it. Like sadness, *weamod* disturbs the mind and leads to loss of emotional equilibrium, which ultimately finds expression in a physical act.

In his *Secunda sententia* for Mid-Lent, Ælfric speaks at length about the capital sins, their danger, and the need to abandon them, and employs *weamod* in his discussion of wrongful anger. The negative use of *weamod* is indicated by two properties: first, like *yrre,* it is selected to translate *ira* in its capacity as one of the eight capital sins; second, its discussion returns Ælfric to enumerating the consequences of reason failing to restrain the irascible nature of the soul:

---

[136] "Theodore, Egbert, Theodulf of Orleans," in Neil R. Ker, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 93-94, c.iv-vii, ix.

Se feorða leahtor is weamet. þæt se man nage his modes geweald. ac buton ælcere foresceawunge. his yrsunge gefremað; Of ðam leahtre cymð. hream. and æbilignys. dyslic dyrstignys. and mansliht.   (ÆCHomII 12.510)

[The fourth sin is anger, that a person has no control over his mind, but without any forethought acts on his anger. From this sin come grief and affront, foolish boldness, and manslaughter.]

Again, the listing of consequences (including grief, a producer and byproduct of anger) emphasizes the severity of anger as an offense. Ælfric repeats the sentiment on several occasions, both in other homilies and private letters; in none of these does *weamod* ever appear as a desirable trait, or one belonging to God, saints, or those who might legitimately become angry.

Conclusion

In the previous discussion, I have attempted to outline and discuss the linguistic and theological underpinnings of the Anglo-Saxon writings regarding anger. Their vocabulary is largely like that of the Latin, with respect to its vagueness; as William Harris remarks, Latin words for anger (specifically *ira, iracundia,* and *indignatio*) all had to serve as general markers of anger with very little specificity, and so it is for Old English as well.[137] As with anger in Latin, Old English does not place an inherent moral or religious judgment on *yrre*, by far the most common word used for anger in the Old English vocabulary; rather, the context of the discussion, and the individuals to whom the word is applied must determine whether the emotion is impermissible and destructive, or constructive and conducive to virtue.

---

[137] *Restraining Rage*, pp. 68-69. This is not to say that Latin lacked words to describe anger, or some component of it; *dolor, stomachari, amarus, acerbus, rabiosus, furor, furibundus, indignatio* (from *indignor*), and other related words could occupy some part of anger's semantic field.

Nonetheless, Old English has a surprising array of metaphor used to describe the experience of anger as a mental and physical phenomenon, and many of these metaphors possess deeper theological underpinnings. The darkness of anger finds echoes in the darkness of delusion and the blackness of hell; its heat burns away judgment; its fury leads to the loss of divinely-granted reason and then to the loss of the soul's likeness to God. Out of anger comes a wide array of worldly sorrows, and it gives illegally to men the power to destroy creation and subvert social order. Metaphors of oppression and violence express the imbalances present in worldly power, and mankind's submission to an omnipotent God.

Having established in some sense the continuum of anger, from its origin to its termination in sadness or insanity, and its role in the Latin patristic tradition and the Old English didactic texts that drew upon that tradition, it now remains to examine anger's role in the broader tradition of English poetry. To do that, we will now turn to two poetic texts, *Juliana* and *Beowulf*, to discuss the display and use of anger in texts with decidedly different aims

CHAPTER III

THE IMAGE OF THE DEVIL: MASCULINE ANGER IN CYNEWULF'S *JULIANA*

Introduction

The previous chapter discusses the vocabulary Anglo-Saxons used to describe the origin, nature, and effects of anger across a range of prose texts that directly reflect their descent from the Latin tradition, an inheritance broad with respect to the emotional spectrum it covers and the variety of metaphor and imagery used to describe that range. The Anglo-Saxons possess a flexible and highly descriptive vocabulary of anger and related imagery, and they applied it in narrative to good effect by exploring the impact anger could have on both the individual and society. One of the areas in which this practice can be observed is the Old English verse saint's life, which leans heavily on the stock figure of the "angry pagan," the king or other authority figure who stands in opposition to a saint and causes the saint's martyrdom. Of particular interest here is the virgin saint's life, in which the self-contained and stoic patience of the saint stands in sharp contrast to the wrath of the pagan persecutor. The angry ruler (who is often judge and jury of the saint) is an object lesson in the danger of anger operating unrestrained in a powerful individual whose judgment is perverted by his fury, leading to a subversion of his role as leader, protector, and judge. The virgin saint's life is ostensibly didactic in purpose, and the

virgin herself is usually considered to be the means by which the lesson of chastity, perseverance, and patience is taught.

This interpretation of the virgin saint's life seems to be standard for both Latin lives and the Old English versions inspired by them. However, the circumstances of the reading and production of Old English saints' lives remain largely a mystery; while it is often possible to speculate as to generalities, individual writers and the audiences for whom they wrote remain elusive. That they were religious, or concerned with the religious life, is most likely beyond question, but aside from a few authorial names and speculation, identities are generally anonymous. Further, the messages transmitted by the various *vitae* and passion stories, in their Latin and vernacular versions, have been subjected to debate. Of particular interest since the rise of feminist and women's studies is the life of the female virgin saint and the ways in which her body is constructed, despoiled, and saved by faith and the workings of God, and the audience who would have read of her passion and profited from her example.[138] She may have provided inspiration for women who wished to avoid the married life altogether and, against the wishes of their parents, take up a monastic vocation. Yet the female saint, though she is often seen in the company of the men who torment her, is too often read as being the *only* exemplar her hagiography provides. Although the *vita* is ostensibly about her and the example her faith draws

---

[138] One such example of work in a rapidly-growing body of hagiographic criticism is Shari Horner's "The Old English *Juliana*, Anglo-Saxon Nuns, and the Discourse of Female Monastic Enclosure," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 19 (1994): 658-75. "Reading" the female body is central to the thesis of Horner's article; here, however, I propose a different type of reading —and different reading material. For a discussion of the problematics of saintly anger—and saintly anger in a woman,

for believers, there too is the parallel lesson drawn from her antagonists, the men who are her ruler, father, or husband, which is often as valuable in their own right as hers. Just as the saint is self-contained, her enemies are violent and easily angered; just as she represents the highest ideal of Christian fidelity, her enemies embody all those things which a Christian and decent citizen ought not to be. Although this binary system has been introduced before, and most heavily mined on the side of the woman, the other half of the binary—the husbands, suitors, fathers, kings (in other words, the persecutors)—has seldom been explored.

Cynewulf's verse rendering of the *Passio Sanctae Julianae*, surviving in a unique copy in the Exeter Book, is one such example of this phenomenon; as Robert Bjork has observed, the Old English life "distils the fact of sainthood" into the moments most fraught with the significance of Christian truth[139]—the events surrounding the saint's suffering, martyrdom, and elevation to heaven, but these events cannot take place without the obdurate heathenism and blind fury of Juliana's opponents, her father Affricanus and the suitor-prefect Elesius. Of particular significance in *Juliana* are those passages in which the fury of men confronts the virgin saint; though these passages are hyperbolic in their description of the men, they are nonetheless indices of Christian doctrinal approaches to anger and its effects. Throughout the text, the two men are explicitly associated with anger and illogic, delusion, and consistent failure in their roles as protector, leader, or father.

---

no less—see Catherine Peyroux, "Gertrude's *furor*: Reading Anger in an Early Medieval Saint's Life," in *Anger's Past*, pp. 36-55.

[139] *The Old English Verse Saint's Lives: A Study in Direct Discourse and the Iconography of Style* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 126-27.

Cynewulf's Sources: Amplifying Anger

The depiction of Affricanus and Elesius as irrational men overcome by their

own fury, and the insistence on the connection between sin, sickness, paganism, and

the demonic appears to be an innovation unique to Cynewulf's rendering of the

legend. The graphic images of furious howling, hair-rending, cursing, and cruelty are

not elaborated to the same extent in the Latin texts considered as the near relatives of

Cynewulf's source.[140]

However, what modification Cynewulf made to his Latin source is not easily

evident, as there is dispute over which remaining version of the passion he could have

used, if any. Historically, scholars have resorted to the Bollandist text in the *Acta*

sanctorum in the absence of any other candidate, though agreement as to the nature of

the relationship between the Latin and Old English has never been reached. William

Strunk, *Juliana's* first editor, appended the Latin text of the *AS* to his edition as a tool

for comparison but little more.[141] In her edition of the poem, Rosemary Woolf

accepted the possibility that Cynewulf's version was descended from the *AS* text, but

later retracted even her qualified statement, arguing that the demonization of Elesius

(not present initially in the *AS* text) may or may not have been Cynewulf's

modification, as "it is clear that none of the surviving texts represents that [text]

followed by Cynewulf."[142] Nonetheless, for nearly 100 years after Strunk no other

---

[140] There are similarities, however, particularly in one of the final passages; these will be discussed below.

[141] *Juliana* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1904), pp. 33-49.

[142] *Juliana* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966), pp. 13-14. The particular text under discussion is the *Acta auctore anonymo ex xi veteribus MSS*, ed. Johannes Bollandus and Godefridus Henschenius, *Februarius Tomus* (Brussels: Culture et Civilisation, 1658), 873ff. Woolf's retraction can

manuscript was put forward as a candidate for the role of Cynewulf's exemplar, and scholars such as Daniel Calder, Joseph Wittig, and Donald Bzdyl, attempting to explore the relationship between the Old English and Anglo-Latin traditions, used the *AS* text for lack of another available version.[143] More recently, Michael Lapidge has proposed that the version of the passion found in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 10861 is significantly closer to the source text than the *AS* collation.[144]

Typically, the Latin phrase used in the *AS* and BNF lat.10861 to describe the anger of Elesius the prefect is *commotus iracundia* (moved by anger); presumably his anger is sufficiently indicated by the various tortures to which he subjects Juliana and requires little more elaboration. Cynewulf, in extending the length of the passages describing the anger of the men and elaborating on not only actions but their concomitant mental states, refocuses the moral of the narrative, transforming it to serve as an *exemplum* of impermissible anger in the most un-Christian sense, and to heighten the tension between the violence of the men and the virgin saint who is the object of that violence.[145] The outer appearance of Elesius and Affricanus mirrors their inner state; their anger is not only physically obvious, as manifested in their mannerisms and actions, but physical metaphors are used to describe its effects on

---

be found in "Saints' Lives," in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. E.G. Stanley (Camden: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1966), p. 44.

[143] Daniel Calder, "The Art of Cynewulf's *Juliana*" *MLQ* 34 (1973) sets out the problems of using the *AS* text: "... the *Acta* is the only possible 'source' (or analogue, if you will) that we have available with which to compare *Juliana*, and such comparison, I think, can clarify what Cynewulf was doing, even if we must be cautious in attributing any specific difference between *Juliana* and the *Acta* to Cynewulf's 'originality'" (p. 356 n.4).

[144] Michael Lapidge, "Cynewulf and the *Passio S. Iulianae*," in *Unlocking the Word-Hord*, ed. Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 147-71.

their souls and, consequently, on the ability of one to act as a father and the ability of the other to be a ruler and a husband. Their failings, severe in and of themselves, are illustrated through Cynewulf's deployment of "the vocabulary of anger," constructed in such a way as to depict Affricanus and Elesius as exhibitors of monstrous emotion and behavior—that is, emotion and behavior taken to extremes in order to function demonstratively, as a lesson in proper action. In particular, Cynewulf employs *yrre gebolgen* (swollen with anger) a phrase found nowhere else in the Old English corpus to bridge the gap between the activity of the mind and the manifestation of it in the men's physical appearances and their resulting actions.

The Iconography of Anger

Before beginning to discuss the use of the phrase within *Juliana*, the iconography of anger should be reviewed, as the depiction of anger in allegory has links with Cynewulf's rendering of anger in the poem. Daniel Calder has discussed the hieratic character of *Juliana*, the qualities of the text that serve to "simplify, elevate, and formalize a narrative that moves in the direction of the abstract," the *telos* of Christian righteousness triumphing over satanic delusion.[146] In part, the abstraction of the text may stem from what some critics have seen as its figural nature—that is, the text is not meant to be a representation of reality as such, but rather of higher truths.[147] Moreover, the images of anger employed in *Juliana* have a long tradition,

---

[145] In *Life of the Mind*, Antonina Harbus also comments on Cynewulf's magnification of anger and the consequent shift of narrative intent, noting the collision of "unmovable object with unstoppable force" in the confrontation of Juliana and the men who attempt to overcome her conviction (pp. 92-93).

[146] Calder, "The Art of Cynewulf's *Juliana*," p. 357.

[147] Joseph Wittig, "Figural Narrative in Cynewulf's *Juliana*," *ASE* 4 (1974): 37-55; rpt. in *The Cynewulf Reader*, ed. Robert Bjork (New York: Routledge, 2001), 148. However, see Earl R.

reaching back through early Christian texts to the classical period; works such as Prudentius' *Psychomachia* and Lactantius' *De ira dei* imported into Anglo-Saxon literature images that were fixed and formulaic, but which were also sourced in a rich visual tradition that began with Seneca the Younger's moral essay on anger, *De ira*.

Seneca's *De ira* represents the core philosophy of Stoicism concerning emotions: they are undesirable, whether in terms of naturalness (that is, appropriate to human nature) or utility in any sense.[148] The essay ranges across class and culture, examining the emotion as personal response and mass hysteria, though as Harris notes, it is largely a skillful cut-and-paste treatise and full of equivocation on significant points, such as whether revenge is always to be avoided, and even on the distinction between hatred and anger, and what constitutes *ira* in and of itself.[149] What is most significant here, however, is the opening of *De ira*, which describes in great detail the physical manifestation of anger:

> For as the marks of a madman are unmistakable—a bold and threatening mien, a gloomy brow, a fierce expression, a hurried step, restless hands, an altered color, a quick and more violent breathing—so likewise are the marks of the angry man; his eyes blaze and sparkle, his whole face is crimson with the blood that surges from the lowest depths of the heart, his lips quiver, his teeth are clenched, his hair bristles and stands on end, his breathing is forced and harsh, his joints crack from writhing, he groans and bellows, bursts out into speech with scarcely intelligible words, strikes his hands together continually, and stamps the ground with his feet; his whole body is excited and "performs great angry threats"; it is an ugly and horrible picture of

---

Anderson, "Juliana," in *Cynewulf: Structure, Style, and Theme in His Poetry* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1983), pp. 84-102 for an argument against figural reading. Anderson evaluates *Juliana* as an exercise in putting an end to moral ambiguity based on what he interprets as the regression of Elesius and Affricanus from rational (if not pleasant) individuals to animalistic, irredeemably evil beings. He questions the strict figural readings of the poem based on this regression, as character change is not a feature of a figural text.

[148] Harris, *Restraining Rage*, pp. 18; 112-13.

[149] Id., pp. 115; 221-22.

distorted and swollen frenzy—you cannot tell whether this vice is more execrable or more hideous.[150]   (*De ira* 1.3-5)

The *Dialogues*, of which *De ira* forms one part, presumably were not known in England until after the Anglo-Saxon period, though the text of *De ira* was still available (possibly in its entirety) on the Continent between the fourth and sixth centuries.[151] The first Christian witness to *De ira* is Lactantius, who appropriated excerpts for his *De ira Dei* (written ca. 305). He includes an adaptation of the above passage within the context of his discourse on how anger in God is not permissible, as it is not permissible even in a wise man.

> For if anger does not become a man who is wise and sober in his manner (if indeed, when it attacks anyone's mind, just like the cruel tempests stir up the waves so greatly, so it upsets the stability of the mind: the eyes burn, the mouth quivers, the tongue stutters, the teeth gnash, at one moment a flush stains the face, at another paleness whitens it) by how much more is this change unbecoming to God?[152] (*De ira Dei* 5)

Lactantius further provides information missing in a *lacuna* in Seneca's text, in which, according to Lactantius, Seneca attributes anger to the desire for revenge

---

[150] "... nam ut furentium certa indicia sunt audax et minax vultus, tristis frons, torva facies, citatus gradus, inquietae manus, color versus, crebra et vehementius acta suspiria, ita irascentium eadem signa sunt: flagrant ac micant oculi, multus ore toto rubor exaestuante a imis praecordiis sanguine, labra quatiuntur, dentes comprimuntur, horrent ac surriguntur capilli, spiritus coactus ac stridens, articulorum se ipsos torquentem sonus, gemitus mugitusque et parum explanatis vocibus sermo praeruptus et conplosae saepius manus et pulsata humus pedibus et totum concitum corpus 'magnasque irae minas agens,' foeda visu et horrenda facies depravantium se atque intumescentium—nescias utrum magis detestabile vitium sit an deforme."

[151] L.D. Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 366-69. I am extrapolating here, as Reynolds does not discuss English familiarity with the *Dialogues*; at any rate, he considers the earliest medieval witness to the text to be a twelfth-century French manuscript, London, British Library Additional MS 11983 (p. 367).

[152] (PL 7. 89) "Quod si hominem quoque, qui modo sit sapiens et gravis, ira non deceat (si quidem, cum in animum cujusquam incidit, velut saeva tempestas tantos excitet fluctus, ut statum mentis immutet, ardescant oculi, os tremat, lingua titubet, dentes concrepent, alternis vultum maculet nunc suffusus rubor, nunc pallor albescens): quanto magis Deum non deceat tam foeda mutatio?"

(*cupiditas doloris reponendi*).[153] Martin of Braga gives similar information in his epitome on *De ira* (fittingly titled *De ira*), undertaken at the request of Bishop Vitimer. The first chapter, "De habitu irae" (Concerning the Appearance of Anger), is a close rendering of the above section of Seneca's tract. Alhough Seneca was not known in England, according to surviving manuscript evidence, Lactantius and Martin were, though Gneuss places only Lactantius' *De phoenice* and Martin's *Formula honestae vitae* in England prior to 1100.[154] However, Stoic ethics were expounded by other early writers influential in early England, notably Augustine, who devoted a part of *De civitate dei* to the debate over emotions between the Stoics and Peripatetics (9.5). Another famous graphic example of the "Senecan" representation of anger, and one most important to the discussion of anger in Old English literature and *Juliana* in particular, is that of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*.

The *Psychomachia* (fourth century) was one of the first wholly Christian allegories of the battle between the virtues and vices, and was apparently a popular text in Anglo-Saxon England.[155] It opens with a preface describing the victory of the patriarch Abraham over enemy tribes that have held Lot captive (ll. 1-68), and proceeds through several "one-on-one" battles between a paired virtue and vice (ll. 21-631) until Pax and Concordia defeat the scheming Discordia and Heresis, who have attacked the virtues unawares (ll. 665-725). After Discordia and Heresis are roundly beaten, Fides and Concordia build a temple signifying the one installed by

---

[153] Harris, *Restraining Rage*, p. 52.

[154] Gneuss 112 (for Martin), 12 and 535 (for Lactantius).

[155] For a review of earlier Christian virtue/vice allegorical battles, see Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, pp. 63-67.

faith in the souls of believing Christians (ll. 726-822).[156] The *Psychomachia* was in

known England from a very early date, possibly from the seventh century; portions of

the text itself are quoted by Bede in his *De arte metrica*, and its influence may be seen

in Aldhelm's *Carmen de virginitate*.[157] The text exists in twelve manuscripts written

or owned in Anglo-Saxon England; of the twelve, seven are illustrated.[158] The earliest

copies date from the ninth century and were originally Continental; production of

manuscripts in England probably began in the tenth and continued on into the

eleventh, a byproduct perhaps of the educational and cultural program instituted by

Alfred the Great, or of the Benedictine Reform in the following century.[159] If

Cynewulf was writing during the ninth century, as posited by Patrick Conner, and the

Psychomachia began to attain popularity within this timeframe, it is possible that he

would have been exposed to the text in some form.[160]

Of particular interest to this discussion is the battle between Ira and Patientia

(ll. 111-77). "Modest Patience" stands, unmoved in the midst of numerous missiles

---

[156] John P. Hermann, "Some Varieties of Psychomachia in Old English, I," pp. 77-84.

[157] Gernot R. Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*," *ASE* 16 (1987): 214-15.

[158] Gneuss 12, 38, 70, 191, 246, 285, 324, 379.5, 537, 661, 852f, 889.5. For description and provenance of all except 379.5 and 889.5, see Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*," pp. 215-17. Both manuscripts not discussed by Wieland, BL Titus D.xvi and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat. 8085, are illustrated. See Colum Hourihane, ed., *Virtue and Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2000), pp. 429-35. For an analysis of the textual relationship discussed in terms of illustration, see Wieland, "The Origin and Development of Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* Illustrations," *ASE* 26 (1997): 174-85. For a discussion of the development of the allegory in medieval art and architecture in general, see Joanne S. Norman, *Metamorphoses of an Allegory* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988) and Adolf Katznellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century* (London: Warburg Institute; rpt. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).

[159] Wieland, "Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* Illustrations," p. 171; 173.

[160] Patrick Conner, "On Dating Cynewulf," pp. 23-56. Based on evidence in Anglo-Saxon martyrologies, Conner dates Cynewulf's corpus to the late ninth or early tenth century.

fired at her; the illustrated manuscripts depict her as veiled, with her hands raised in a gesture of submission or benediction.[161] And then

> From afar, swollen Wrath, rabid with foaming jaws filled with poison, bloody eyes rolling, as she is deprived of war and weapon, she wounds with words, impatient of delay, she attacks with a pike, roars with her mouth, tossing her wild hair on her helmed head.[162]

Prudentius's initial description of Ira recapitulates the most graphic qualities found in the description of anger in the work of Seneca and his followers, the foaming jaws, impatience, physical agitation, and bodily swelling—the characteristics of the madman derided by Seneca as being also the signs of an angry person. As the battle rages, the hostility is mostly one-sided; Patience passively resists as Ira hurls spear after spear at her. Unable to tolerate her lack of success, Ira "picks up one spear of the many which she has cast in vain from the dust of the battlefield; she thrusts home the earth's smooth wood but with the point reversed, pierces herself with a burning wound."[163] Patientia gives a victory oration over the corpse of the riotous vice (*exultans vitium*), having defeated her enemy, the bloodthirsty raging forces (*rabidas uires*) without bloodshed, as is her customary way (ll. 155-59). She concludes with a

---

[161] BL Additional 21499, f. 9r. The drawing originally had Ira helmed; a later hand drew in spiky, disheveled hair. Cotton Cleopatra C. viii, f. 7v portrays Ira with unruly hair blown back (Wieland, "Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*," p. 222).

[162]   Hanc procul Ira tumens, spumanti feruida rictu,
            sanguinea intorquens suffuso lumina felle,
            ut belli exsortem teloque et uoce lacessit
            inpatiensque morae conto petit, increpat ore
            hirsutas quatiens galeato in uertice cristas. (ll. 113-17)

[163]   Missile de multis quae frustra sparserat unum
            puluere de campi peruersos sumit in usus.
            Rasile figit humi lignum ac se cuspide uersa
            perfodit et calido pulmonem uulnere transit. (ll. 151-54)

comment on the slain Ira: "She is enemy to herself in her madness and destroys herself by fury. Fiery Wrath is killed by her own weapons."[164]

Patientia's speech emphasizes the madness of Ira, a madness that drives itself to suicide. Aldhelm echoes the image in the battle of the virtues and vices he appends to his *Carmen de virginitate*, referring to Ira as *Ira bacchans* (bacchanal Wrath), and indeed, classical representations of the Maenad bear a close resemblance to the disheveled, flailing figure of Ira; [165] moreover, he indulges in the occasional classical reference, referring to Ira as *furiarum maxima*, "the greatest of furies," or Allecto. As discussed above, Aldhelm may have been influenced by the *Psychomachia*, though he does not employ the battle between virtue and vice as a consistent figure; rather, the battle is waged between the vices and men of God, whom the vices attack ruthlessly.[166] But nonetheless, like the Ira of Prudentius, "however much she shrieks, stained with Gorgonean blood, and hisses with the stinging of a poisonous serpent," Aldhelm's Ira cannot conquer those who bear patience in mind and ask God for his help.[167]

Similarly, Cynewulf employs images of swelling in connection with anger and its devolution into madness. Interestingly, the phrase he chooses to do this, *yrre gebolgen*, does not specify either an inner or outer state; that is, it does not

---

[164] "Ipsa sibi est hostis uaesania seque furendo/interimit moriturque suis Ira ignea telis" (ll. 160-61).
[165] Jeffrey Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 141. The plate in Russell is a sixth-century Coptic ivory in Aachen. The figure, with its disordered clothes and wild gestures, is distinctly reminiscent of the appearance of Ira in the illustrated *Psychomachia* manuscripts, both inside and outside the Anglo-Saxon tradition.
[166] For a discussion of the differences between Prudentius and Aldhelm, see Gernot Wieland, "Aldhelm's *De octo vitiis principalibus* and Prudentius' *Psychomachia*," *MÆ* 55 (1986): 85-92 and John Hermann, "Some Variations on Psychomachia in Old English II: The Middle Ages," pp. 188-222.
[167] ... Quamvis Gorgoneo stridat maculata cruore

91

specifically refer to whether the anger is acting upon the body, the mind, or both; comparable constructions, such as the poetic compound *bolgenmod* (swollen in mind) or the prose *mid gebolgenum mod* (with swollen mind), both specify the mind as the site of anger's actions and effects.[168] As Seneca, Lactantius, and Martin demonstrate, there is a definite, conspicuous physical and visual component to the demonstration of anger; echoing Seneca, Martin writes

> Terrible anger perverts and thus sickens itself, therefore you cannot know which is more hateful: the vice or the deformity. Of what nature do you think the mind is within, whose outer likeness is so distorted? Other vices are hidden and take refuge in secret; anger forwards itself and is evident in appearance, and by as much as it is greater, the more clearly it burns.[169] (*De ira* 1.10-12)

Unlike other vices, anger involves a component of display that demonstrates the individual's lack of control. Cynewulf's *yrre gebolgen* can be used to discuss this lack in terms of its mental or physical manifestation; indeed, he may use it to link the two phenomena, as will be discussed later, and to introduce other methods of visualizing anger in some of the most highly-charged scenes of the entire passion narrative. As the manifold uses and contexts of *yrre* have been discussed in the previous chapter, we will now turn to an analysis of *gebolgen*.

Yrre gebolgen: The Depiction of Anger in *Juliana*

Gebolgen, the past participle of *belgan*, shares *yrre*'s rather pedestrian usage. It is rarer than *yrre*, but is used in the same contexts, as well as the same texts. It can

---

Atque venenatis mordendo sibilet ydris. (ll. 2634-35)

[168] *Bolgenmod* is a poetic compound occurring in *Dan* 209 with reference to Nebuchadezzar;, *Andreas* 125 and 1219 with reference to the Myrmidons; *Beo* 705 and 1709 for Beowulf and Heremod, respectively; and *Guth* 557 for the evil beings who bring Guthlac to the doors of hell.

be taken to mean 'angered,' which is the sense adopted by King Alfred's translation of Boethius's *De consolatione philosophae*; it typically appears alongside *hatheorted*, or another word signifying impulsiveness, rage, or wrath.[170] Clark-Hall gives the definition of its infinitive, *belgan*, as simply "to be or become angry: offend, provoke," while Bosworth-Toller offers what is the more commonly accepted term, "to swell with anger." Frequently some form of *belgan* will gloss a form of *indignari*, which reaches beyond the modern "to become indignant"; it operated in the sphere of anger as well as offense, in the sense of deeming an object or other individual unworthy, or else an enemy, and was applied to the infliction of physical wounds as well.[171] When applied to animals, *belgan* could mean "provoked" or "aroused," as in the prose *Guthlac*, when the saint encounters the hideous visages of a snarling lion and the likenesses of bears, "þa hi gebolgene beoð" (when they are provoked).[172] It is also incorporated into compounds, all of which have to do with unmastered rage and fury, such as *bolgenmod*, "enraged in spirit," and, like *yrre*, both it and its compounds are attributed equally to divine and infernal individuals, heroes and run-of-the-mill humanity. Like *yrre*, it too is associated with sinful behavior, as in one of the homilies

---

[169] "Horribilis ira depravat se atque intumescit, ita ut nescias utrum magis detestabile sit vitium an deforme. Qualem putas intus esse animum, cuius extra imago tam foeda est?"

[170] As on p. ÆLS 18.178, p. 38 above; also Cons 37.111.29, GD 2.20.18, LibSc 36.14.

[171] Lewis and Short, s.v. *indignor*. *Belgan* will also occasionally gloss some form of *ringor*, "to open wide the mouth, to show the teeth" or "to be vexed, angry; to chafe, snarl" (whence 'rictus'; s.v. *ringor*). Fabiszak discusses anger as a response to an antagonist in "Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF, and ANGER in OE," pp. 268-70.

[172] LS (Guthlac) 8.5-6.

from the Vercelli codex, which depicts sins as so many arrows the devil shoots from a bow fashioned from pride (*ofermettum*).[173]

The close similarity of the definitions of *yrre* and *gebolgen* would seem to render their use together tautological; as seen above, they can function synonymously, and operate generally within the same contexts. What may separate the two, however, is that *gebolgen* in the sense of "angered" does not seem to describe the anger of saints; one will not see Guthlac become *bolgenmod*, though the heathen warriors who accost him most certainly are (Guth l. 557) and the only apostle described as being offended by anything is Judas Iscariot (BlHom 6.45; 6.169). *Bolgen*, when applied to the mind, implies some disturbance, and may link anger to the associated emotion of pride.

> þonne weaxað eac þa ofermetta & ungeþwærnes; & þonne hi weorðað gebolgen, þonne wyrð þæt mod beswungen mid þam welme þære hatheortnesse, oððæt hi weorþað geræpte mid þære unrotnesse, & swa gehæfte. (Cons. 37.111.29)
>
> [Then pride and discord both arise; and when they are aroused, then the mind is overcome with the surge of anger, until they are fettered with their grief and thus made captive.]

In *Juliana,* the phrase is used to translate such phrases as *commotus iracundia,* but it seems unlikely; as stated above, only one of the passages in the Latin text even approaches the level of *amplificatio* Cynewulf employs to describe the histrionics of Elesius and Affricanus. Moreover, *yrre gebolgen* carries overtones perhaps not present in the Latin; *commotus*, like the devil's arrows in the homily, seems to

---

[173] VercScragg 4.308-2. See Chapter II, p. 46 above for the full quotation. The devil shoots three arrows involving anger: "sumu of gebelge & of hatheortnesse... & of yrre" (some of rage and of fury... and of anger).

indicate an outside force either moving or inciting anger, while the process of becoming "bulged" with anger is entirely internal, the result of irrationality, fury, and murderous impulsiveness. In comparison with other similar lives where the fury of the thwarted pagan is a recurrent *topos, yrre gebolgen* is more forceful than comparable expressions. *Juliana* employs it in the place of the relatively mild *swiðe yrre* that *Saint Margaret* adopts as its formula, for example, or the comparable one used by *St. Christopher*.[174] The latter suggests merely becoming angry, but *yrre gebolgen* additionally suggests that not only are the men mad with anger but their bodies have distorted, changed to reflect the loss of humanity that rage has brought upon them. Cynewulf's application of *yrre gebolgen* to Affricanus and Elesius, along with the numerous other synonyms for fury and irrationality that accompany their descriptions, serves to indicate that both men have, in their anger, crossed a line; they have become monstrous and possessed of monstrous behavior, such as torture, tyranny, and murder of a woman who is a daughter to one, the prospective bride of another. *Yrre gebolgen* mediates between anger as a distortion of the mind and of the body, and subsequently the overturning of normative social roles.

The first use of *yrre gebolgen* comes with Juliana's rejection of Elesius, when she informs him—in public (*on wera mengu*)—that she will only agree to marry him if he converts from his misguided and violent heathen worship to the service of her

---

[174] Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, ed. and trans., *The Old English Lives of Saint Margaret* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), ll. 156, 160, 166, 168. A typical formula in the St. Margaret life (from the Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303 manuscript) is *Ða wearð se gerefa swiðe yrre*, "Then the prefect was very angry." For St. Christopher, see Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the* Beowulf *Manuscript* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995). The phrase is "se cyninc þa yrre geworden wæs" (then the king became angry) .

God, and that no matter what he does or threatens to do, she will not be swayed from her conviction:

> Ða se æþeling wearð   yrre gebolgen,
> firendædum fah,   gehyrde þære fæmnan word,
> het ða gefetigan   ferend snelle,
> hreoh ond hygeblind,   haligre fæder,
> recene to rune.   (ll. 58-62a)

> [Then the nobleman was swollen with fury, stained with evil deeds; he heard the maiden's words, then, wild and blind in thought, swiftly ordered a messenger to quickly fetch the saint's father to secret counsel.]

Elesius' reaction is instantaneous and violent: no sooner does he hear Juliana's words than he swells up, becomes "wild and blind in thought," and sends for Affricanus (who has previously promised Elesius Juliana's hand in marriage). The loss of reason is dramatic on this first occasion, as it is whenever Juliana's resolve provokes him, and is closely connected with his being "firendædum fah" (stained with evil deeds) and "hygeblind" (blind in thought).[175] Part of Elesius' fury is associated with the fact that Juliana has very publicly denied his authority and thus rendered him impotent. By stating that she will not waver, no matter what tortures he inflicts on her, she effectively nullifies his power over her will and her body. Not only does her denial of his power smart, she may set the stage for the uprising of other Christian martyrs who do not fear his wrath (e.g. the people who enshrine Juliana's body after her death, ll. 688b-692a).

Elesius' spiritual blindness is established almost immediately in this initial confrontation, important both to the development of the "angry prefect" stock figure

of hagiography and also the development of anger as a central concern of the poem.

The darkness of anger, as seen in the brief discussion in the first chapter, prevents the

individual from seeing the light of proper judgment—a dangerous failing in a judge or

ruler, especially considering (as here) often the judge and the ruler are one and the

same. John Cassian treats anger as a shadow that clouds the eyes of the mind, and

makes the individual unable to see the clarity of true judgment.

> For as this insinuates itself into our hearts and blinds the mind's eye with
> harmful shadows, we cannot acquire the judgment of proper discretion nor the
> insight of true contemplation, nor possess full development of
> understanding.[176] (*De coenubiorum institutis* 8.1)

Cassian is unwilling to leave judgment up to the angry individual, no matter how

much he may be esteemed wise, "quia vir iracundus agit sine consilio (for the angry

man proceeds without counsel).[177] The devil in *Juliana* alludes to the clouding of

judgment and subsequent actions in his reluctant discourse with the saint. At her

demand, he tells her about the myriad ways he incites human beings to their own

destruction, and describes in extremely visual terms the darkening of spiritual sight

caused by anger:

> Oft ic syne ofteah,
> ablende bealoþoncum   beorna unrim

---

[175] The melodrama of Elesius' fury, the impermissible nature of his anger, and his sinfulness provide a significant aid in interpreting the nature of Grendel's anger, which is described by the *Beowulf* poet in much the same way: both Elesius and Grendel are anger, and are also "stained with sin."

[176] (PL 49.53-476). "Hac enim in cordibus nostris insidente, et oculum mentis noxiis tenebris obcaecante, nec judicium rectae discretionis acquirere, nec honestae contemplationis intuitum, nec maturitatem consilii possidere." VercScragg 38.98-103, following Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*, translates Cassian here: "Þonne ys se fifta heafodleahter gecweden yrre, þurh þæt ne mæg nan mann habban fullþungennesse hys geþeahtes" (Now the fifth capital is named anger, through which no man can have full development of his understanding).

[177] Id., 8.1.

monna cynnes,   misthelme forbrægd
þurh attres ord   eagna leoman
sweartum scurum.   (ll. 468b-72a)

[Often I stole the vision of uncounted children of the race of men, blinded
them with evil thoughts, blanketed the light of the eyes with a cover of
darkness by a poisoned spear, with dark shadows.]

The blinding of reason becomes crucial when one considers the fact that the major

antagonist of the poem, Elesius, is Juliana's judge. This particular failing is

condemned by Isidore, who excoriates angry judges, charging that "whoever judges

(and is) angry turns judgment into madness."[178] Like the victims of the devil's attacks,

the angry judge cannot contemplate justice because anger clouds his mind, and in

doing so perverts his ability to render justice.[179] This is particularly damning for

Elesius, who is described as being *hygeblind*, "blind in thought" (l. 61a), when he is

thwarted for the first time by Juliana. Ultimately, his failure to be a good judge leads

to his doom; as Lenore Abraham has argued, the detail of Elesius' ignominious

departure from Nicomedia after Juliana's execution may derive from Anglo-Saxon

law, which legislated exile for those who egregiously abused their power.[180]

Because anger clouds reason, it is also associated with swiftness and hasty

action, as the second usage of *yrre gebolgen*, which occurs not thirty lines later when

---

[178] *Sententiae* (PL 83.537-738) 3.52.15. "Qui enim iratus judicat, in furorem judicium mutat."
[179] Id. 3.52.15-16. "Furor in judice investigationem veri non valet attingere, quia mens ejus turbata furore ab scrutatione alienatur justitiae. Iracundus judex judicii examen plene contueri non valet, quia caligine furoris non videt" (Wrath in a judge is not able to approach investigation of the truth, because his mind, disturbed by anger, is estranged from the contemplation of justice. The angry judge is not able to perceive fully the weighing of justice, because he does not see through the cloud of anger).
   The issue of justice and its perversion will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV. Anger problematizes the administration of justice, as the ideal Christian judge (like God) dispenses judgment without anger. Contemplating justice requires what Isidore calls *mentis serenitas* (calmness of the mind; *Sententiae* 3.52.15); undisturbed by anger, it can contemplate what is right and just.

Affricanus goes to visit Juliana in prison, confirms: "Eode þa fromlice fæmnan to

spræce/anræd ond yreþweorg,[181] yrre gebolgen" (He went swiftly then to speak with

the girl, resolute and cursed with sin, swollen with fury; ll. 89-92a). Affricanus'

failure as a father is perhaps predicated on the fact that he has no idea that his

daughter does not wish to marry, and is exacerbated by his fury when he learns of her

refusal through Elesius. When he goes to speak to Juliana, he speaks in words of

concern and affection and asks her to reconsider her rejection of Elesius' advances—

but his tone and solicitation are, in and of themselves, deceitful.[182] It is known from

earlier in the poem that Affricanus has plans for Juliana to marry Elesius (ll. 32-41a),

and apparently anticipates no problems in opening negotiations; as the *paterfamilias*,

the head of the family, it is he who ultimately would control whom Juliana marries,

and perhaps profit from it. While the interpretation of ll. 38-42a is problematic,

Affricanus expects to gain from marrying off his daughter to an extremely wealthy

man, either materially or by elevation of status.[183] Although such speculation may be

---

[180] "Cynewulf's *Juliana*: A Case at Law," *Allegorica* 3 (1978): 172-89; rpt. in *The Cynewulf Reader*, pp. 171-92.
[181] In his edition of the *Exeter Book* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), Bernard Muir emends to *yfelþweorg*; Krapp and Dobbie retain the MS reading of *yreþweorg,* "very angry" (Clark-Hall, s.v. *ierrþweorg*.) *Yreþweorg* preserves the sense of Affricanus' fury, although the presence of *yrre gebolgen* may make its presence redundant despite its being used in apposition. *Yfelþweorg* may be a compounding of *yfel* and a form of *wiergan* to mean "cursed with evil." If this is the case, it may add to the sense of compatriotism shared by Affricanus and Elesius as fellows in damnation.
[182] For further discussion on the rhetoric of deception in *Juliana*, see Donald Bzdyl, "Juliana: Cynewulf's Dispeller of Delusion," *NM* 86 (1985): 165-75. Bzdyl's arguments provide a helpful corollary to this analysis, examining *Juliana* as the triumph of Christian clarity over the *gedwola*, "heresy" or "deception," perpetrated by Elesius, Affricanus, and the devil. Bzdyl proposes that Elesius and Affricanus, who are themselves victims of the devil's blinding them, also participate in perpetuating the *gedwola* by attempting to draw in Juliana.
[183] Þa wæs se weliga   þære wifgifta,
        goldspedig guma,   georn on mode,
        þæt him mon fromlicast   fæmnan gegyrede,
        bryd to bolde. (ll. 38-42a)

dangerous, especially given the uncertain status of Cynewulf's source material, the poem still makes clear that Affricanus has specific and possibly pecuniary interest in marrying his daughter well. Juliana, however, goes against her father's authority and once more refuses to break her vow of chastity, at which point Affricanus drops all pretense of humane treatment of his daughter; the mask of fatherly concern evaporates in the face of his anger. He answers her in *yrre,* demanding that she stop refusing to marry Elesius and stop worshiping strange gods —neither of which she agrees to do. He becomes a *fæder feondlice* (l. 118), a "hostile father," one who instead of protecting, succoring, or supporting his daughter instead orders her to be beaten and threatens her with death *þurh deora gripe* (being torn apart by animals) [l. 125], if she does not consent. This sort of hostility appears elsewhere in hagiography, Latin and Old English alike. Ælfric makes a brief appeal to it in his life of Eugenia, when the father Philippus speaks angrily to Eugenia, addressing *his agenre dehter* (his own daughter) with hostility; the single word, *agenre,* is stark and effective in its demonstration of the overturning of familial responsibility. In the tale of the mother in the life of Stephen, the central feature of horror is the mother's madness, directed against her own children, who have been left defenseless after their father's death.[184] This anger-induced inversion is yet another aspect of the sin lamented by Martin, for

> Anger changes everything from the best and the most proper into their opposite. Whomever it possesses, it in no way suffers him to be mindful of kindness. Inflict (or instill) it in a father, he becomes hateful. Impose it on a

---

[Then was the prosperous one, the one proud in gold, eager in spirit for the wife-gift, that from him one of the chiefest men might procure the girl, a bride for the brave one.]
[184] See Ch. II, pp. 57-59.

son, he is a parricide; to a mother, she becomes a stepmother; to a fellow citizen, he is an enemy; to a king, he is a tyrant.[185] (*De ira* 2.1-10)

Both Elesius and Affricanus have, in their anger, become what Martin laments; Eleius has become a tyrant, and Affricanus a hateful, devilish father.

Affricanus' assertion does almost come true; Juliana's martyrdom occurs just after the graphic depiction of Elesius' fury and its utter dehumanization of him leading up to the climax and Juliana's death. This last episode of Juliana's passion begins when Elesius inflicts upon her a series of unsuccessful yet horrifying tortures—each one thwarted by an angel—until at last he orders Juliana to be pushed into a cauldron of boiling lead:

> Het þa ofestlice   yrre gebolgen
> leahtra lease   in þæs leades wylm
> scufan butan scyldum. (ll. 582-84a)

> [Then he, swollen with fury, hastily ordered the sinless one to be pushed into the cauldron's welling, without defense.]

Already swollen with fury, Elesius becomes more enraged as Juliana evades death once again; miraculously, the cauldron explodes—Juliana remains unharmed, but 175 of the heathen onlookers die in the conflagration. The collapse of all emotional control—tenuous as it may have been —is complete, and graphically described:

> Þa se dema wearð
> hreoh ond hygegrim —   ongon his hrægl teran,
> swylce he grennade   ond gristbitade,
> wedde on gewitte   swa wilde deor,
> grymetade gealgmod   ond his godu tælde,
> þæs þe hy ne meahtum   mægne wiþstondan
> wifes willan.[186] (ll. 594b-600a)

---

[185] " Ira omnia ex optimo et iustissimo in contrarium mutat. Quemcumque obtinuerit, nullius eum meminisse officii sinit. Da eam patri, inimicus est. Da filio, parricida est. Da matri, noverca est. Da civi, hostis est. Da regi, tyrannus est."

[Then the judge was wild and savage —he began to tear his garment, just as he gnashed and ground his teeth, raging in his wits like a wild animal, the man dark in mind roared and rebuked his gods, because they could not withstand the power of the woman's will.]

Affricanus' prediction that Juliana would die at the hands of wild animals now has a ring of truth to it, as Elesius descends even further into animalistic rage. Cynewulf seems to be following BNF lat.10861 here; however, early on the latter portrays Elesius as, if not the most lenient or tolerant of men, then not as overtly enraged as his Old English counterpart, whereas Cynewulf's Elesius is utterly devoid of reason throughout the poem.[187] It is at this point in Cynewulf's version that the ability of Elesius to be saved comes into question—and the question is answered almost immediately, as Cynewulf makes it clear that, although he is confronted with Juliana's superiority and the superiority of her God, Elesius collapses into insanity and calls on his impotent gods in vain. In Senecan echo, his censure of his gods is inarticulate, mindless roaring and bellowing, compared to his earlier discourses, in

---

[186] Lapidge, "Cynewulf and the *Passio S. Iulianae*," p. 164. "Et cum haec uidisset praefectus, iratus scidit uestimenta sua et cum gemitu uituperauit deos quare non inuicem potuerunt illam ledere" (And when the prefect had seen these things, furious, he tore his garments and with howls rebuked his gods because they could not defeat that unconquered lady) corresponds roughly with the above text. Interestingly, the opening of the paragraph contains the phrase "At praefectus fremebat contra ipsam sicut fera maligna" (But the prefect raged against her like an evil wild beast); Jul l. 597b contains similar phraseology; *fremo* typically means "to murmur, grumble, growl, rage at or after any thing, to complain loudly" (Lewis & Short, s.v. *fremo*), but the Old English compound *gristbitian*, "to gnash the teeth" is employed somewhat tautologically in such phrases as *gristbitaþ mid his toþum* to gloss *fremens dentibus suis* (Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *gristbitian*). The *AS* text is identical to the passage from BNF lat. 10861.

[187] Lapidge, "Cynewulf and the *Passio S. Iulianae*," pp. 157-58. As in the *AS* text, Juliana is somewhat more amenable to Elesius' ovetures; she says she will only marry him if he attains the prefecture: "Illa autem dicebat ad eum: 'Nisi dignitatem praefecture adminitraueris, nullo modo possum tibi coniungi" (However, she said to him, "Unless you obtain the dignity of the prefecture, in no way will I be able to be wed to you). Like any lovestruck prospective husband, Elesius immediately sends money to the emperor, who promotes him. It is at this point that Juliana insists that he convert; Elesius is unwilling, mostly out of fear that the emperor will execute him. (Needless to say, Juliana does not accept this as a plausible excuse.)

which he employed skilled, although ultimately unsuccessful, rhetoric to attempt to win Juliana's compliance.[188] As Elesius' behavior becomes more and more animalistic, he is seen conclusively as a man who has failed as a suitor—that is, to court a prospective bride—but more than that, a man who has failed as a ruler, thwarted by Juliana's will and destroyed by his own uncontrollable passion. More than Affricanus, he becomes the swollen, distorted embodiment of the rage described so graphically by Seneca, and he becomes in a sense the *picture* of wrath as conceived by Prudentius and Aldhelm; his tirade, complete with clothes-rending, howling, and furious invocation of the gods, is meant to be viewed as the manifestation of a mind parted from logic and human feeling. He is the *spectacle* of rage, an example of *yrre gebolgen* at its most extreme, in which not only is the body distorted under the physical effects of anger, but the mind itself is distorted into something less than human, and more closely resembling the animal, the physical and mental embodiment of the perversion of human nature.

Elesius dies ingloriously through drowning after his ship capsizes at sea, along with thirty-four of his thegns—fittingly, perhaps, as it is one of the unfortunate fates to which the demon whom Juliana interrogates subjects sinners who do not die in a state of grace (ll. 478-81). His fury and anger, presumably abated after Juliana's death, have still left their mark on him, as he dies apparently unrepentant for his deeds. Cynewulf concludes his description of Elesius' fate with an ironic observance on the continued existence of the Nicomedian prefect and his comrades in hell:

---

[188] For a full discussion of rhetorical devices in Anglo-Saxon hagiographic writings, see Robert Bjork, *The Old English Verse Saint's Lives*. For its specific application to *Juliana,* see pp. 45-61.

> Ne þorftan þa þegnas   in þam þystrum ham,
> seo geneatscolu   in þam neolan scræfe,
> to þam frumgare   feohgestealde
> witedra wenan,   þæt hy in winsele
> ofer beorsetle   beagas þegon
> æpplede gold.   (ll. 683-88)

[The thegns in the dark home had no need, the band of comrades in the pit of hell, to surely expect treasure from their spear-leader, that they in the wine-hall over the beer-drinking might receive rings and decorated gold.]

This fate is contrasted with the translation of Juliana's relics by the people, which concludes the poem on a triumphant note for Christianity. Beyond this duality, however, lies the further fact that Elesius has led his companions, along with himself, into disaster —and the fact that, unlike Elesius, none of the thirty-four companions is explicitly identified as being particularly sinful. From the moment of the prefect's first meeting with Affricanus, Cynewulf's description of Elesius as *rices hyrde*, "the guardian of the kingdom," (l. 66) becomes deeply and bitterly ironic: a man who would chain and torture a helpless woman—and later lead his men to ignominious, watery deaths—is certainly no guardian or protector. In furthering his comparison between an angry man and an angry God, Lactantius outlines controls placed upon the angry man "who has authority and power"; he "should not inflict harm far and wide through anger, shed blood, topple cities, destroy the nations, or reduce inhabited lands to wilderness."[189]

---

[189] "Et si homo, qui habet imperium ac potestatem, late noceat per iram, sanguinem fundat, urbes subvertat, populos deleat, provincias ad solitudinem redigat; quanto magis Deum, qui habeat totius generis humani, et ipsius mundi potestatem, perditurum fuisse universa credibile sit, si irasceretur?" (*De ira dei* 5). The passage from *Juliana* also echoes Boethius: "Hwæt wille we nu elles secgan be ðam ðegnum. buton þæt þæt þær oft gebyreþ þæt he weorþaþ bereafode ælcre are. ge furþum þæs feores. fram heora leasan cyninge (What else should we say about thegns but this: that it often happens they are deprived of all honor, even of life, by their treacherous king?) [Cons 24.2].

As has become typical in the poem, Elesius is referred to as *se synscaþa*, "the sinful wretch," but his men are referred to generically as a troop of warriors who follow Elesius into death and are thus *heane mid hlaford*, "wretched with their lord," deprived of joy, and without hope. Further, Cynewulf's comments are restricted to what the thegns cannot expect of *Elesius*: that he will give them rings or furnish them a hall, activities which the ideal lord is expected to engage in as part of the system to insure the loyalty of his *comitatus*. In his death, Elesius fails again as a leader of men; not only has he killed his followers, he has given them a death that comes without either redemption in the afterlife (as Christians) or the *lof* (praise) of earthly fame; they die anonymously and ignominiously. Elesius' utter lack of *lof* is further illustrated in the narrative describing Juliana's enshrinement by the faithful population of Nicomedia: they return the saint's body to the city with *lofsongum*, (songs of praise), and the glory of God, *godes lof*, is raised up (l. 689; 693).

Both Affricanus and Elesius are united by their common, ungovernable fury in response to Juliana's actions. Further, their state of absolute sin provides a common ground: both men, alternately described as heathens and warriors, actively conspire against Juliana, leaning their spears together as they talk, neither being particularly hindered by conscience. Their shared fury is expressed simultaneously with their state of sin; both the men are heathens (*hæðne*, l. 64b), possessed of fierce spirits (*frecne mode*, l. 67b), and sick with sin (*synnum seoce*, l. 64a). Indeed, the image of being "sick with sin" further internalizes the idea of being permeated with evil, a disease that might manifest itself in swelling —the swelling of fury exhibited by both men

when Juliana rebuffs them. Cynewulf reinforces their partnership by eliminating the

presence of Affricanus' wife, who according to the life found in the *AS* did not follow

either Christianity or paganism, and consorted with neither party.[190] Both men are

stained with sin, a metaphorical manifestation of their internal corruption.

Their behavior, like their fury, perverts the normative social structure. As

anger is manifested in Affricanus, his fury and blindness drive him to torture his own

daughter, to become a father who is *feondlice,* an enemy—fiendish, like the devil.

Elesius leads his companions into hell; moreover, he attempts to take by force what

Juliana will not give up: her identity as a Christian. In the two times the men meet,

both after they find their demands rejected by Juliana, their conversations are

distortions of the heroic ethic, and are couched in terms that may be seen as a

deliberate mockery of their newfound impotence:

> Reord up astag,
> siþþan hy togædre   garas hlændon,
> hildeþremman.   Hæðne wæron begen
> synnum seoce,   sweor ond aþum.
> Ða reordode   rices hyrde
> wið þære fæmnan fæder   frecne mode,
> daraðhæbbende. (ll. 64b-68a)

> [They raised their voices after they clashed spears together in warlike strength.
> The heathens both were sick with sin, son and father-in-law. Then the
> guardian of the kingdom spoke with the girl's father in fierce spirit, the spear-
> bearing one.]

Although not yet related by marriage, Affricanus and Elesius are nonetheless linked

by bonds of marital relations, just as they are in their shared paganism and corruption

---

[190] *AS*, p. 873. The Latin is "vxor verò eius dum intenione anime sacriligia d. Martis perhorresceret, neque Christianis neque paganis miscebatur." Admittedly, she is little more than a shadow in this particular *passio*; aside from this brief mention, she otherwise does not appear at all.

with sin—they are also both rendered powerless by Juliana's absolute refusal, making their avowal of in-law status something of a joke. Affricanus further adds to the mockery of his own behavior, admitting that he is beholden to Elesius for various considerations—*þine hyldu* (your favors)—and tells him that, if what Elesius says is true, he is welcome to Juliana, "Condemn her to death, if it seems fitting to you, or keep her alive if you prefer" (ll. 87-88), a perverse depiction of returns for services rendered. Further, the multiplicity of spears echoes again the allegory of Ira, who comes equipped with an array of missiles, all of which are useless against the armor of Patientia. Like Ira's missiles, Affricanus and Elesius' threats and tortures are equally ineffectual; Juliana dies a martyr, united with Christ.

Conclusion

The monstrosity of Affricanus and Elesius in *Juliana* is brought about by their anger and their inability to master it, and it is this monstrosity that Cynewulf makes the centerpiece of his lesson. Mentally and spiritually, anger renders both men incapable of performing their duties as father, suitor, or fair ruler, and ultimately places them beyond the pale of salvation as seen in the animalistic rage and graceless death of Elesius, and in doing so affirms that only true love as a father, husband, and lord can be found in God. Their actions demonstrate that which should not be considered proper behavior for men to engage in, just as Juliana's saintliness may demonstrate the importance of virginity and steadfastness for women; thus, the fury of Affricanus and Elesius argues for Cynewulf's work as not being exclusively the catalogue of a woman's deeds and virtues, but also as a lesson on self-control,

continence, and social responsibility. Their failure also stands in contrast to the behavior expected of the powerful (or of a father or husband); it is the manifestation of un-ideal behavior where it is least appropriate. Within the context of *Juliana*, there *is* no permissible anger; no anger is the ideal, for the presence of anger signifies corruption, violence, and spiritual blindness—however, such was not necessarily the case in secular texts, which sought to establish boundaries between the anger and violence required for survival and that which could prove destructive and dangerous.

CHAPTER IV

FIVE ANGRY MEN (AND A DRAGON):
ANGER, MEMORY, AND VIOLENCE IN *BEOWULF*

Introduction

Over time, scholarship has viewed *Beowulf* as a heroic poem, whose narrative

is primarily structured around and driven by action that is resolved by the ending of

concrete, physical human conflict.[191] However, some critics have challenged this

categorization of the poem, citing its preoccupations not with engagement in the

physical world, but rather with "reflection—on human activity and conduct, on the

transience of mortal life."[192] The "real-time" action of the poem, rather than being

pervasive or consistent, is instead limited to H.L. Roger's "three great fights"—

Beowulf's battles with Grendel, his mother, and the dragon—which are in turn

embraced by meditations on past, present, and future events[193] and reflection upon the

effects these events have or will have upon the world and the individual.[194]

Approaching the poem in this way "provides not only a new rationale for interpreting

---

[191] Michael Lapidge, "*Beowulf* and the Psychology of Terror," in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honor of Jess B. Bessinger, Jr.,* ed. Helen Damico and John Leyerle (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Press, 1993), pp. 373-402.

[192] Id., p. 374.

[193] Id., pp.. 374-76.Other authors who touch on the subject include Linda M. Georgianna, "King Hrethel's Sorrow and the Limits of Heroic Action in *Beowulf*," *Speculum* 62 (1987): 829-50; Harbus, *The Life of the Mind*, p. 15; Edward Irving, *A Reading of Beowulf* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Calvin B. Kendall, *The Metrical Grammar of Beowulf*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 5.

[194] For example, the poet's telling of the fight at Finnsburh (ll. 1071-1159a) focuses much more upon the grief of Hildeburh, the funeral of Hnaef, and the premeditated vengeance of Hengest than the fighting itself, either the intial confrontation between the Danes and the Jutes or Hengest's subsequent revenge.

the narrative construction of the text... but also offers a way of understanding the rhetorical basis of a work which dwells on memory, interpretation, and intertextuality."[195]

Of particular importance here is the extent to which the poem contemplates anger and its expression. Though the action of *Beowulf* may be only sporadic, rather than constantly in evidence, the poem is profoundly occupied with anger; it is, in some ways, a meditation upon anger, and can be read as an exploration of how anger is experienced as a mental phenomenon, as well as how it is acted upon and the results of that action. Anger, in some senses, serves to define a social group; warriors and kings should be angry with those who seek to harm or violate social continuity. When directed outside of the community, individual anger could serve a significant public good; it could be used to avenge insult or to protect against hostile incursion, and could function to remind a warrior of his obligation to his lord. However, when directed inward, it results in the violation of communal bonds.

In part, the reading of *Beowulf* as a "heroic" poem stems from the fact that it comes equipped with the violent trappings of a society largely concerned with warfare. The presence of violence in early medieval secular society is evident in the nature of the materials involved in ritual exchange—swords, helmets, mail shirts were all prized possessions, and figure prominently in descriptions of gift-giving.[196] Not only were gifts of weapons of ritual importance, but the weapons themselves had real

---

[195] Harbus, *The Life of the Mind*, p. 163.

[196] Guy Halsall, "Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West: An Introductory Survey," in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Guy Halsall (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 1998), p. 3.

monetary value attached to them; law codes assigned this value, and bequests of weapons attest both to the weapons' personal and monetary significance.[197] Moreover, as John Hill has suggested, poems such as *Beowulf*, which explore the warrior ethos, place blood kinship secondary to that kinship forged between men who face common danger on the battlefield—indeed, the latter may trump the former.[198] Thus, violence served to cement ties between a lord and his men, as well as between members of the *dryht*, the group of warrior-companions serving together under their lord. A further example of this may be found in *The Battle of Maldon*, when each of the retainers gives a speech recapitulating past vows, the gifts granted to them by their lord, and their responsibility to repay those gifts by avenging Byrhtnoth's death—a sort of mnemonic in which are encoded the values that (ideally) bind men to each other and to their lord with chains of reciprocity.

All of the above features of socially-regulated violence figure prominently in *Beowulf*. Anger delineates proper social relationships: with whom one should be angry and those with whom it is necessary to maintain peace, how long anger should

---

[197] Germanic law codes (including Anglo-Saxon ones) regulated the price of weapons and the types of weapons with which each warrior was expected to equip himself. Weapons hoards of the type found at Sutton Hoo, and the valuable bequests left in Anglo-Saxon wills, indicate that weaponry (and perhaps conspicuous consumption) was highly prized. For a review of the laws on weapons and the economic valuation of weaponry, see Edward Schoenfeld and Jana Schulman, "Sutton Hoo: An Economic Assessment," in *Voyage to the Otherword: The Legacy of Sutton Hoo*, ed. Calvin B. Kendall and Peter S. Wells (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1992), pp. 15-27.

[198] Hill's discussion of the relation of battle to the development of kinship ties is most fully discussed in "Wiglaf's Rise to Dear Kinship: The Midwifery of Battle," in *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic: Reconstructing Lordship in Early English Literature* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), pp. 19-46: "We can consider the ways in which kinship is built through reciprocity, loyalty, courage, and violence operating together here within a psychology of loaned gifts, energy, and response to unforeseen events and their consequences" (pp. 22-23). In *Rancor and Reconciliation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), Paul Hyams states a similar view: "The ultimate bonding experience in medieval cultures came not from feasts and parties but from standing together on the battlefield or at a vengeance killing" (p. 30).

be held and how it should find expression. In its proper manifestation, anger drives the individual to earn glory in combat or to avenge a killing and regain honor. When misdirected or disproportionate, it results in wrongful conflict and cannibalism—both literal, as in the case of Grendel, and an equally horrifying social cannibalism as in the cases of Unferth and Heremod. Unferth's kinslaying and Heremod's slaughter of his retainers are as horrific in their own ways as the grisly depredations of Grendel; their anger finds expression in actions that disregard the obligations of kinship and lordship. The following discussion will center on the clerical and secular attitudes (insofar as the latter can be known) toward anger-motivated violence, and the expression of these attitudes in *Beowulf* with particular reference to how anger plays out in feud and violence, and the results of misdirected or disproportionate anger on the societies of the poem. Of particular significance are the poem's "five angry men"—Hengest, Beowulf, Grendel, Unferth, and Heremod—and its dragon, all of whom embody different aspects of anger and whose actions range from the ideal to the monstrous.

Violence and Anger in Old English Poetry

Janet Thormann comments on critical unwillingness to deal with the poem's violence *as* violence, asserting that the tendency of scholars is to "allegorize, idealize, or neglect the poem's violence and its pervasive bodily immediacy."[199] She treats the narrative violence as a feature that frames the past, present, and future of the poem, as it is worked out in conflicts between men and monsters, family members, and

---

[199] "*Beowulf* and the Enjoyment of Violence," *Literature and Psychology* 43 (1997): 65.

competing dynasties—but ultimately anticipating the scenes of bloody physical combat for which the poem is known.[200]

Beowulf is not the only Old English poem to contain elaborate scenes of war; both *Maldon* and *Judith* contain extended descriptions of both general violence—panoramic shots of the fury of armies—and bloody encounters between individuals. Both of the latter poems are infused with "patriotic" sentiment; Byrhtnoth and his warriors stood against the same ravaging Viking forces of which Ælfric wrote when he informed Sigeweard that the story of Judith was meant to serve as an example "þet ge eower eard mid wæpnum beweriæn wið onwinnende here" (that you defend our land with weapons against an invading army),[201] a purpose which the poem could have served as well. Both also have an undeniable Christian bias; Byrhtnoth is a Christian soldier fighting against pagan invaders and Judith is a proto-saint interceding on behalf of her people. The violence of *Judith* is not centered on her decapitation of Holofernes, but rather on the Hebrews who appear, surrounded by the beasts of battle, to avenge the humiliations they suffered at the hands of the Assyrians. It is this scene that is perhaps one of the most vivid descriptions of battle in Old English poetry, mixing the immediacy of action with that of motivation and emotion:

> Stopon heaðorincas,
> beornas to beadowe,   bordum beðeahte,
> hwealfum lindum,   þa ðe hwile ær
> elðeodigra   edwit þoledon,   215
> hæðenra hosp.   Him þæt hearde wearð
> æt ðam æscplegan   eallum forgolden,

---

[200] Id., pp. 65-66.
[201] "Letter to Sigeweard," in Crawford, *Heptateuch*, ll. 772-81.

Assyrium,   syððan Ebreas
under guðfanum   gegan hæfdon
to ðam fyrdwicum.   Hie ða fromlice   220
leton forð fleogan   flana scuras,
hildenædran,   of hornbogan,
strælas stedehearde;   styrmdon hlude
grame guðfrecan,   garas sendon
in heardra gemang.   Hæleð wæron yrre,   225
landbuende,   laðum cynne,
stopon styrnmode,   stercedferhðe,
wrehton unsofte   ealdgeniðlan
medowerige;   mundum brugdon
scealcas of sceaðum   scirmæled swyrd,   230
ecgum gecoste,   slogon eornoste
Assiria   oretmæcgas,
niðhycgende,   nanne ne sparedon
þæs herefolces,   heanne ne ricne,
cwicera manna   þe hie ofercuman mihton.   235
Swa ða magoþegnas   on ða morgentid
ehton elðeoda   ealle þrage,
oðþæt ongeaton   ða ðe grame wæron,
ðæs herefolces   heafodweardas,
þæt him swyrdgeswing,   swiðlic eowdon   240
weras Ebrisce.   (ll. 212b-41a)

[The warriors advanced, men to battle, covered by shields, concave linden, those who had before suffered the scorn of the invaders for a time, the heathens' contempt. At the spear-play that was severely repaid all the Assyrians, after the Hebrews had gone under their banners to the camps. Then they swiftly let fly forth storms of arrows, the serpents of battle, from their horn-tipped bows, very hard missiles; the fierce warriors shouted loudly, sent spears into the host of the enemies. The men, land-dwellers, were angry, stepped resolutely, unwavering in heart, ungently woke their old mead-drunk enemies; with hands men drew brightly-decorated swords from their sheaths, the choicest blades, fiercely cut down the warriors of Assyria; intending violence, they spared none of that army, neither the low nor the great of the living men whom they could overcome. So throughout the morning the band of kinsmen harried the invaders with dire distress, until those who were their enemies, the chieftains of the army, saw that the Hebrew people were giving them vicious swordplay.]

The thirty or so lines of text provide an extensive description of martial anger, as well as the motivation behind it. Judith has just finished explaining the situation to the

Hebrews and exhorting them to battle (ll. 177-98), saying that they will be granted victory because God has judged the heathen Assyrians to death. However, Godly zeal does not drive the warriors once they appear on the battlefield; instead, they seek to repay the insults and scorn (*edwit, hosp*) inflicted on them by their invaders, which they have by virtue of their weaker position been forced to endure. (The idea of suffering, expressed in the verb *þolian*, will appear frequently as part of revenge motivation in *Beowulf.*) The poet mentions the anger of the Hebrews repeatedly; they are specifically described as *yrre* (l. 225), and are referred to as *gram* (l. 224) which as discussed in the first chapter ranges from 'fierce' to 'angry' in its application— certainly the ferocity with which the Hebrews attack the Assyrians is indicative of their anger. Their anger, in addition to its physical expression, serves to diminish fear and harden resolve; indeed, within two lines of the poet's indication that the Hebrews are angry, he adds that they are "resolute and unwavering in heart" (l. 227).

The undeniable celebration of Germanic militaristic imagery in combination with that of Christian ideology does not seem to bother the poet, indicating perhaps some acceptance of the necessity of violence. In his extensive homily on the Maccabees, Ælfric remarks that the Hebrews are types of the Christian warrior, fighting with swords against a physical enemy to demonstrate that the Christian must fight with spiritual weapons to overcome a spiritual adversary (ÆLS 25.701-4). In this sense, war is not a human endeavor undertaken to avenge personal insult (though the Hebrews' furious retaliation against the Assyrians' insults suggests otherwise), but rather the exacting of divine justice. However, what *could* be problematic was the

issue of personal justice—that is, feud undertaken without resort to the remedy of law—and the potential for it to be occluded by anger and resultant desire for personal vengeance by violent means.

Anger and Feud

Medieval feud, as Patrick Wormald argues, should not now be seen as "a barbarous prelude to [the legal institutions] of judgment and penalty, but as a system with its own constructive logic."[202] Feud's acceptability (and its regulation) can be demonstrated by the fact that early Germanic law codes made allowances for—and in some cases were predicated upon—the existence of feud, while at the same time advocating legal recourse and *wergeld* as preferred alternatives.[203] Later codes, particularly those drawn up under Alfred and succeeding Anglo-Saxon kings sought to limit or restrict feud by various measures, but did not rule it out entirely, at least until the legislation of Edmund.[204]

Modern attitudes toward feud, exemplified by the "Hatfield and McCoy" stereotype of feud behavior—behavior appropriate to illiterate, backwater, and isolated families—echoes in some sense the disapproval of early medieval theologians who sought to suppress violence in the interests of creating peace.[205] Clergy writing on the subject of human-enacted vengeance were almost overwhelmingly opposed to it, on the grounds that vengeance was reparation sought out of anger, rather than justice, an attitude formalized in the centuries after the

---

[202] *The Making of English Law*, p. 26.
[203] Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation,* p. 4; also Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, p. 39.
[204] Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, pp. 282-83; see also pp. 311-12.

116

Norman Conquest. Paul Hyams outlines the official ecclesiastical position in post-Conquest England, citing council rulings from the thirteenth century that place anger and hatred in an unequivocally negative light;[206] however, well before these decrees were issued, theologians and clergymen were laying out the reasons for the unacceptability of self-prosecuted vengeance. The argument for this rejection was twofold. First, vengeance taken by the individual was a usurpation of God's priority as outlined in Rom 12:19: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Moreover, vengeance was considered punishment given not in justice, but in anger and hatred, thus opposing sin with sin.

In part, writers sought to impress the undesirability of anger upon their readers because such readers were composed of individuals whose anger could be vented on, as it were, captive audiences—that is, convent or monastery superiors, other monks, kings, and judges. Monastic rules recognized the danger that anger posed to the harmony of communal life, both in the potential for immediate violence and long-festering hatred that could be expended at a later time. Benedict urged his followers not to let the sun set upon their anger (in the spirit of Eph. 4:26), and John Cassian devoted a long chapter to the subject in the *Institutes* to the evils of anger, focusing on its expression in both thought and deed; he states repeatedly that anger ought to be "cut out of our deeds, but it should even be cut out utterly from our inner mind,"[207]

---

[205] Halsall, "Violence and Society," pp. 12-13.

[206] *Rancor and Reconciliation*, p. 50.

[207] "Non solum e nostris actibus haec amputanda est, sed etiam de internis animae radicitus exstirpanda" (*De coenobiorum institutis* 8.19). Variations on the statement occur at 8.13, 8.14, and 8.21. Cassian is explicit when he says anger must be uprooted and utterly banished from the soul; *radicitus*—"by the roots, utterly, completely"—is used on several occasions.

for hatred of one's fellow is equivalent to the act of murder according to the gospels (Matt 5:22).

Human vengeance and anger, and thus the wrongness of vengeance, were inextricably linked by patristic writers. Lactantius, Augustine, and Cassiodorus all offered variations and elaborations on this association; Lactantius classifed anger as one of the three emotions or impulses (*affectus*)—or, correcting himself, one of the three furies (*furias*)—that are the source of all human behavior. He insisted that "ira quae vindictam cupit" (anger is what desires vengeance), though it should be noted that he believed anger restricted and put to proper use is useful for the correction of sinners and restraint of licentiousness in the populace.[208] Augustine equated anger with that desire, saying in effect that one is the other—"Quid est ira? Libido vindictae" (What is anger? The desire for vengeance)—and that hatred is anger that has not gone satisfied.[209] Indeed, Augustine saw anger and vengeance as a vicious circle, by which not only the victim of a person's anger, but the angry person himself, is harmed:

> Put away anger, which incites you to vengeance. For anger is a scorpion.
> When it burns you with your own internal flames, you think it a great thing, if
> you will have been avenged on your enemy. If you wish to take vengeance on

---

[208] *Divine Institutes*, in Samuel Brandt and George Laubmann, eds., *Opera* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1965). "... irae adfectus ad coercenda peccata eorum qui sunt in nostra potestate, id est ut artiore disciplina minor aetas ad probitatem iustitiamque formetur: quae nisi metu cohibeatur, licentia pariet audaciam, quae ad omne flagitum et facinus euadet" (The emotion of anger is for curbing the sins of those who are under our power, that is, so that with tighter discipline the younger age should be shaped for probity and justice; unless this is checked by fear, license brings forth boldness, which proceeds to all evil and crime) [6.19].

[209] (PL 38.396-97). Of interest to Augustine here as well is the parable of the mote and the beam (Matt. 7:1-4), which he considers to be analogous to anger (*ira*) developing into hatred (*odium*).

118

your enemy, you turn yourself to your own hatred: because it (anger) is your enemy, which slays your soul.[210] (*Sermones de scripturis* 58.8)

Cassiodorus distinguishes between *ira*, which is an enduring sense of injury (*longa indignatio*) and *furor*, which is a sudden inflammation of the mind (*repentina mentis accensio*); however, both constitute a force, "ad poenam provocans inferendam" (propelling one to carry out punishment).[211] Isidore's definition of just war (appropriated by Ælfric; cf. ÆLS 25.705-14) excluded war fought out of anger: "Unjust war is that which is begun out of anger, not for any proper reason... For no just war can be waged unless it is to punish or for the sake of repelling an enemy."[212]

Having said this, however, it is important to recognize that theological definitions of anger and definitions of acceptable sentiment may have had some effect on governing behavior in the world at large, but they were by no means definitive or absolute. Indeed, because of the extent to which violence was institutionalized, they often came into conflict with the demands of societies which customarily defined themselves by warfare or feud. As Hyams notes, the reification of anger and feud was largely a clerical fiction, unworkable at personal levels in the secular world.[213] This necessity is demonstrated in the allowances made for feud in Germanic law codes,

---

[210] *In solemnitate Stephani martyris* (PL 38.1431) 4.9. "Frenate iram, quae vos stimulat ad vindictam. Ira enim scorpio est. Si te suis internis flammis excitaverit, magnum aliquid putas, si te de inimico tuo vindicaveris. Si vindicaro te vis de inimico tuo, ad ipsam iram tuam te converte: quia ipsa est inimica tua, quae occidit animam tuam."

[211] *Commentarium in psalterium* (PL 70.61) Ps. 6.2.

[212] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W.M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). "Iniustum bellum est, quod de furore, non de legitima ratione initur.. Nam extra ulciscendi, aut propulsandorum hostium causam, bellum iniustum geri nullum potest" (18.1.2). The acceptable reasons include war undertaken to get rid of enemies—but only, as Cicero argues in the *Republic* (cited by Isidore) if the war is openly proclaimed *and* undertaken if redress has been sought but not given. Isidore reinforces his point with another quotation from Cicero: "De quo in Republica dicit Cicero: *Illa injusta bella sunt, quae sunt sine causa suscepta*" (Concerning which Cicero says in his *Republic*: "Those are unjust wars which are undertaken without cause").

which presupposed the existence of feud as a necessary legal structure, as discussed above. In particular, this difference is relevant for *Beowulf,* for the poem itself, despite the Christian morality that infuses it, is predicated on feud on many levels—divine, intertribal, interpersonal. Moreover, the audience of *Beowulf* would have been familiar with feud and its dynamics, and would have understood the rationale behind the characters' actions.

The working out of feud in the poem is in part due to the perpetuation of anger, for the men and creatures of *Beowulf* are *gemyndig,* that is, mindful beings: mindful of courage, fame, but most of all, injury and feud, the last of which necessitates anger in its perpetuation (and perpetration).[214] Like his characters, the *Beowulf*-poet broods over the anger that will eventually fester into violence as the various disputes of the poem wear on. The task at hand is to analyze the role anger plays in the exaction of vengeance, in both the periods of inaction leading up to violence and then in the taking of revenge itself.

Meditation on harm and injury is one aspect of the "reflectiveness" of the poem, as argued by Lapidge and others. Almost inevitably, revenge is a deferred action, put off until conditions are favorable for it to be carried out; this allows—and indeed, requires—a device by which an individual can recall insults inflicted by an enemy and preserve a sense of anger that cannot for whatever reason find expression. In the Danish scop's recitation of the fight at Finnsburh (ll. 1071-1154), the violence resulting from Hnaef Scylding's death is deferred, but the anger and indignation from

---

[213] Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation*, pp. 36-37.

which it arises is kept fresh by a number of devices typical of feud culture.

Hildeburh's lament at Hnaef's pyre may itself be one of these tools; though the

woman herself was not allowed to take vengeance under Germanic custom, her tears

could serve as a method by which to "whet" the desire for revenge in her male kin.[215]

The great irony of the Finnsburh episode, however, is that the oaths sworn between

the Frisians and the Danes encode a reminder of the need for revenge:

> Ðā hīe getruwedon   on twā healfa   1095
> fæste frioðuwǣre.   Fin Hengeste
> elne unflitme   āðum benemde,
> þæt hē þā wēalāfe   weotena dōme
> ārum hēolde,   þæt ðǣr ǣnig mon
> wordum nē worcum   wǣre ne brǣce,   1100
> nē þurh inwitsearo   ǣfre gemǣnden,
> ðēah hīe hira bēaggyfan   banan folgedon
> ðēodenlēase,   þā him swā geþearfod wæs;
> gyf þonne Frȳsna hwylc   frēcnan sprǣce
> ðæs morþorhetes   myndgiend wǣre,   1105
> þonne hit sweordes ecg sēðan scolde.   (ll. 1095-1106)

[Then on both sides they swore firm peace-pledges. To Hengest, Finn swore
oaths with ill-fated courage, that he would honorably guard the survivors with
the judgment of the wise, that no man there would break the treaty with either
words or deeds, nor ever complain through clever scheming, though lordless
they followed their ring-giver's killer, when great need was upon them; if then
any man of the Frisians with bold (or reckless) speech reminded them of that
deadly dispute, then the sword's edge must settle it.]

The oath Finn swears to Hengest appears to be mutual, for in exchange for rings and a

hall, the Danes must agree to follow Hnaef's slayer—an agreement insupportable to

---

[214] Harbus, *The Life of the Mind*, pp. 171-74. Harbus notes in particular here the role of memory in the perpetuation of feud, to be discussed below.

[215] Carol J. Clover, "Hildigunnr's Lament," in *Cold Counsel: Women in Old Norse Literature and Mythology*, eds. Sarah M. Anderson and Karen Swenson. (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 15-54. More generally, the use of song to perpetuate feud and its obligations is noted in Halsall, "Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West," p. 21.

any warrior mindful of his honor—and it is this that guarantees whatever peace is established will be temporary. The poet is aware of the untenability of this arrangement; the peace enjoined by the pact will last only so long as the Frisians keep their mouths shut—once the Frisians *remind* the Danes of their losses, the peace is off.

Throughout the winter, Hengest chews on this bitter and humiliating peace. As has been remarked before, the storminess of the weather mirrors Hengest's inner and outer existence; just as the waves surge, so do his thoughts, though like water frozen over, he is forced into immobility (ll. 1127b-33a). However, once the spring comes, Hengest bursts into sudden and violent action; though he was once mindful (*gemunde*) of his home, his thoughts turn to vengeance. The incitement to do so is twofold: his comrades Guthlaf and Oslaf "complained of sorrow after the sea voyage" (l. 1149) and Hunlafing places a sword in his lap, the spur for Hengest to "remind the Frisians with iron" (l. 1141) of the feud. The consequences of Guthlaf and Oslaf's goading, moreover, are described in terms of the effect it has on Hengest's emotional state; after their plaint, "ne meahte wæfre mōd/forhabban in hreþre" (the restless spirit could not restrain itself in thought) [ll. 1150b-51a]. The result is the avenging of Hnaef's death, the reciprocal death of Finn, and Hengest's triumphant return to Denmark.[216]

---

[216] The sword as a mnemonic tool used in conjunction with goading occurs also in ll. 2032-66, the speech in which Beowulf predicts that the peace woven by Hrothgar's marriage of Freawaru to Ingeld of the Heathobards will come to nothing. Specifically, he asserts that a Heathobard warrior will recognize a sword carried by a Danish warrior as belonging to his own people. The Heathobard *eall geman*, "recalls everything," a recollection marked again by powerful psychological motivation, described again as simultaneous anger (*grim sefa*) and grief for the insult; *geōmormōd*, he addresses a

The Danes under Hrothgar, however, provide a contrast to Hengest's accomplished (if temporarily delayed) vengeance. Repeatedly the poet mentions the straits in which the Danes find themselves, but he also addresses the insults, *hȳnðu* (ll. 166, 277), that demand redress but are never satisfied. The emphasis on the injuries and humiliations Hrothgar and the Danes suffer at Grendel's hands take on a new resonance if they are viewed as the causes of thwarted anger, for Hrothgar's sorrow comes from his inability to avenge his people; the anger a king or his retainers should feel at the insults inflicted on them by Grendel's attacks has been transmuted into inert grief by virtue of the fact that Hrothgar and his men are in too weak a position to retaliate.[217] Hrothgar's suffering is described by the verb *þolian*, used frequently to describe the period between inflicted insult and satisfaction—and, presumably, meditation on the insult in order to keep fresh one's sense of indignation and being wronged. A notable example is l. 131, in which Hrothgar, described as *ðrȳðswȳð*, "the great one" yet suffers (*þolode, drēah*) the deaths of his thegns. Grendel suffers between the time he hears the song of creation and becomes aroused enough to do something about it (l. 87a).[218] Beowulf points out the danger of allowing grief to slide into torpor and so rob one of proper anger: "Ne sorga, snotor guma! Sēlre bið æghwǣm,/þæt hē his frēond wrece, þonne hē fela murne" (Do not be sad, wise man; It

---

young warrior at the beer-drinking and incites him: "Manað swā ond myndgað mǣla gehwylce/sārum wordum (He complains and reminds at every opportunity with grievous words) [ll. 2057-58a], until the young warrior erupts in violence.

[217] For anger's development into grief, see Chapter II, pp. 36-40.

[218] Other figures who nurse grudges also suffer (*þolian*) in Old English poetry. In Genesis, the Devil and his crew suffer torments (*wite þolien*) while looking on the happiness of Adam, whom Satan sees as

is better for any man to avenge his friend than mourn excessively) [ll. 1384-85]. At the end of his life, Beowulf himself threatens to slide into immobility when he hears of the dragon's destruction of his home (ll. 2331b-32).

Once sparked by anger, however, action taken in the name of vengeance is immediate. Grendel, when his temper has been sufficiently roused by the creation song sung in Heorot, attacks the hall that very night (ll. 115-18), and follows up his initial assault with a second the following evening (ll. 134b-135a). Grendel's mother exacts vengeance for her son's death the night following his ill-fated voyage to the hall (ll. 1255b-59; 2117b-20). As soon as he has ascertained that his property has been stolen, the dragon sets out to destroy what he can—waiting only for night to fall before he departs (ll. 2302b-6a). In each of the above cases, the time period (short as it is) between the insult—or the reminder of insult—is governed by the various beings' predilection for night attacks, and the time elapsed between provocation and vengeance is marked by suffering and rising anger. Grendel, subjected to the happiness of the Danes, "earfoðlice/þrāge geþolode" (wretchedly suffered for a time) [ll. 86b-87a]; *þrāg* is also used to describe the torments of Grendel's mother after her son's death (l. 1257b), and the dragon waits *earfoðlice* for night to fall (l. 2303a).

When Grendel's mother goes to Heorot to avenge her son, the poet is much occupied with her mental state; she is *gifre ond galgmod* "greedy and sorrowful" as she travels to exact vengeance for her son's death (ll. 1276b-1278), and *yrmþa gemunde,* "mindful of injury" (l. 1259). The *sorhfulne sið*, "sorrowful journey," she

---

usurping his rightful place (l. 368). The Jews suffer the insults heaped upon them by the Assyrians (Jud l. 214) until such time as they can avenge them.

takes (l. 1278) is ambiguous—does it anticipate the sorrow of the Danes after finding another of their number dead, or is the sorrow the force that impels her to revenge? Indeed, she is not presented as a mother first and foremost; she is an avenger, *wrecend*, described by a word that means simply that, without any negative connotations attached to it. Her position as a mother is secondary, but is intimately related to the first; the words for mother and avenger appear in pairs separated by no more than two lines: *wrecend* and *modor* (ll. 1256b; 1258b), and then her motherhood, as expressed in *modor*, is enacted by the verb *wrecan*, "to avenge" (ll. 1276b; 1278b), explicitly uniting the concept of blood relation and blood vengeance.

Grendel himself is angry throughout his appearances in the poem, though the nature of his anger appears to change. When he is first described, he is a wretched inhabitant of the fenland, described as a *wonsælig wer*, an "unhappy man" (l. 105a), cognizant of the deprivation he suffers due to his exclusion from society. However, the inertia of his discontent ends when there is sufficient incitement to anger. The song of creation in the hall provokes an immediate response; as soon as night descends

> Wiht unhælo,
> grim ond grædig,   gearo sōna wæs,
> rēoc ond rēþe,   ond on ræste genam
> þrītig þegna.   (120b-22a)
>
> [The evil being, fierce and greedy, was soon ready, savage and furious, and seized in their sleep thirty thegns.]

The nature and expression of Grendel's anger requires further discussion; as we have seen with Elesius and the pagans, inordinate anger in the context of medieval

125

concepts of the mind could be problematic. Analyzing the nature, form, and expression of Grendel's anger may shed light on the poet's conception of Grendel's mind and thus his orientation to humanity.

Monstrous Psychology? Grendel and the Dragon

That feud, or at least reciprocal violence, is a central structural feature of the poem is not disputed—but the nature of this reciprocal violence is at times contested. David Day has pointed to the difficulty of addressing some behavior as "feud" behavior on legalistic grounds; feud is only feud if it follows a pattern of culturally-constructed, specific behavior, serving to differentiate between the ideologies of opposing groups.[219] Certainly the question of aggression and the forms it takes arises when discussing Grendel's depredations on Heorot and the Danes. Ward Parks offers another interpretation of the nature of Grendel's aggression, which does not rise out of hatred or resentment, but from the desire "to ravage like a predator," which Parks outlines in terms of the difference between predatorial and agonistic aggression. It is the response of the Danes and Beowulf that explains his behavior as feud—terms that allow them to account for Grendel's behavior in terms of human social interaction.[220] It is only when Beowulf fights Grendel on his own terms that the poem begins to

---

[219] David Day, "*Hwanan Sio Fæhð Aras*: Defining the Feud in *Beowulf*," *Philological Quarterly* 78 (1999): 77-95.

[220] Ward Parks, "Prey Tell: How Heroes Perceive Monsters in *Beowulf*," *JEGP* 92 (1993): 1-2. The difference between predatory and agonistic aggression is partly one of who is targeted; predators do not, as a rule, eat their conspecifics (members of the same species), while agonistic aggression is expressed against members of the same biological species. The Danes, Parks argues, have fallen into a "prey" mode and have habituated Grendel to his actions—Beowulf refuses to take on the prey role, and instead treats Grendel as a conspecific adversary.

"move out of the predatorial pattern of stealthy-attack-and flight into that of formal, agonistically-styled contesting."[221]

Whether Grendel's aggression was predatorial or provoked, early scholars of the poem did not hesitate to identify him with uncontrollable, bloodthirsty rage, at least on etymological grounds. Thomas Arnold posited that *Grendel* was an early form of ME *gryndel* (angry), and Gregor Sarrazin that it was cognate with ON *grindill*, a violent wind. In 1925, A. Pogatscher derived *Grendel* from *gram*, which denotes hostility and hatred, and by metonymy, came to mean "angry."[222] More recently, Felicia Steele has suggested a derivation from an unattested form of *drencan*, referring to Grendel's taboo acts of cannibalism and drinking blood.[223]

Just as the "real" meaning of Grendel's name may be forever a matter of debate, his nature may remain so as well. Earlier scholars, perhaps due to what Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe refers to as "an unfortunate glossing" and tradition of interpretation, cast Grendel ineluctably as inhuman in his monstrosity or an evil hell-sent spirit.[224] Both O'Brien O'Keeffe and Lapidge have argued for an indeterminacy of form, an ambiguity that is not an impediment, but rather a benefit to the narrative. O'Brien O'Keeffe's Grendel moves from insubstantial threat to terrifying, concrete

---

[221] Id., pp. 2-3. Certainly Grendel's mother is an example of "formal" feud exchange in action; she kills Æschere, Hrothgar's most beloved retainer, and makes off with Grendel's hand. Her "restraint" is discussed in John Edward Damon, "*Desecto capite perfido*: Bodily Fragmentation and Reciprocal Violence in Anglo-Saxon England," *Exemplaria* 13 (2001): 399-432.

[222] The various etymologies are summarized briefly in Lapidge, "*Beowulf* and the Psychology of Terror," pp. 378-79. Also Felicia Jean Steele, "*Grendel*: Another Dip into the Etymological Mere," *ELN* 40 (2003): 1-13. Fabiszak suggests the metonymy in "Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF, and ANGER in OE," p. 267-68.

[223] "Another Dip into the Etymological Mere," p. 1; pp. 8-9.

[224] "*Beowulf*, lines 702b-836: Transformation and the Limits of the Human," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 23 (1981): 484-94.

violence as he "scrithes" from the moors to Heorot.[225] Lapidge's Grendel inspires

terror because his nature is uncertain; like modern horror movies that prevent the

viewer from seeing the deformed serial killer or the vampire, the poet uses this

indeterminacy as a method of increasing tension through engagement of the

imagination.[226] What adds another dimension to the fear occasioned by Grendel,

however, is the terminology with which the poet describes not his appearance but his

mind, which seethes with greed, grief, and anger.

This is not to say that one is divorced from the other. Grendel's appearance,

though man-like, is clearly gigantic; he is referred to as a *þyrs* and *eoten* (ll. 426, 761),

both words for "giant," and Hrothgar explicitly states that Grendel goes about *on*

"weres wæstmum/næfne hē wæs mara þonne ǣnig man ōðer" (in the likeness of a

man, save that he was larger than any other man) [ll. 1352b-53]. He is also possessed

of amazing strength, sufficient enough to seize thirty thegns and carry off the leftovers

in his glove. The biblical giants, to which Grendel is in some way related, were

viewed by exegetes as types of pride, as evidenced by their swollen figures.[227] What is

interesting to note, however, is that anger is also associated with swelling (though it is

not a sin applied to the antediluvian giants) and physical distortion, not only of the

mind but of the body. His incredible strength is also associated with his wrath; as he

stands before the doors of Heorot, "onbrǣd þā bealohȳdig, ðā hē gebolgen

wæs/recedes mūþan" (the one hostile in heart ripped open the hall's mouth when he

---

[225] Id., pp. 486-87.
[226] Lapidge, "Beowulf and the Psychology of Terror," pp. 393-94.
[227] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 80-83.

was enraged) [ll. 723-24b]. For Seneca, the total effect of anger is "an ugly and horrible picture of distorted and swollen frenzy"[228]—and Grendel, with his unnatural size and strength, is suggestive of Seneca's description.

Another classical and patristic indicator of anger is the burning eyes, which Grendel also possesses. It is the first clear description of any of his physical properties, and is closely tied to the fact that he is angry; as he goes *yrremōd* (angry in mind) across Heorot's floor, his eyes burn:

> Raþe æfter þon
> on fāgne flōr   fēond treddode,
> ēode yrremōd;   him of ēagum stōd
> ligge gelicost   lēoht unfæger.   (724b-27)

> [Then swiftly the enemy stalked, angry in mind he went upon the decorated floor; in his eyes stood a hideous light, most like a flame.]

Eyes that burn like lamps or flames are a hallmark of monstrous beings, particularly quasi-human creatures and serpents. According to the *Wonders of the East*, the serpents of Hascellentia have eyes that shine at night "swa blacern" (like lanterns),[229] and elsewhere is a race of people possessing eyes with the same property.[230] The Old English legend of St. Christopher remarks upon the brightness of the eyes of Christopher the *cynocephalus*, which glow "swa leohte swa morgensteorra" (as brightly as the morning-star) [l. 67]. [231] In Ælfric's life of the saints Julian and Basilissa, the saintly Julian relates to the evil Marcian his vision of Hell, where he

---

[228] Seneca *De ira* 1.5. "Foeda visu et horrenda facies depravantium se atque intumescentium."
[229] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 186.
[230] Id., p. 198.
[231] Joyce Tally Lionarons, "From Monster to Martyr: The Old English Legend of Saint Christopher," in *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Press, 2002), p. 177.

was approached by "silhearwan atelices hiwes swa heage swa entes, mid byrnendum eagum and egeslicum toðum. Heora earmes wæron swylce ormæte beames, heora clawa scearpe, and hi sylfa unmildheorta" (Ethiopians of horrible aspect, as large as giants, with burning eyes and terrible teeth. Their arms were like unto gigantic tree-trunks, their claws sharp, and they were merciless)—a description very suggestive of Grendel himself.[232]

However, burning or glowing eyes were also hallmarks of the angry human, who possesses *flagrant ac micant oculi*, flashing and burning eyes.[233] In a Senecan context, the hideous flame in Grendel's eyes and his swift step (ll. 724b) become physical signs of his fury, a precursor of the violence about to ensue. The display is coupled to Grendel's mental state, which is *yrremōd*, *bealohydig*, and *gebolgen* (ll. 722; 725a), and anticipates—as Grendel does—the coming feast. What is significant here is the poet's dual focus on Grendel's inner state and his actions; as O'Brien O'Keeffe has said, Grendel *thinks*[234]—but his thoughts are driven not by reason, rather by desire and anger. Recalling Alcuin's definition of the human soul, we know that three components are required: "the first part in it is the concupiscible part, the second is the rational, and the third is the irascible... . But reason, which is specific to

---

[232] ÆLS 4.283-90. A Latin version can be found in the *AS, Januarius* vol. 1: "Ducebar nescio a quibus Æthiopibus, quorum statura erat ut gigantum et aspectus horridus, oculi ut fornaces ignis, dentes ut leonum, brachia ut trabes, ungues ut aquilarum, in quibus nulla misericordia erat" (I know not by what Ethiopians I was led there, whose height was that of giants and their faces were ugly, their eyes were as fiery furnaces, their teeth like those of lions, their arms like beams, their claws like eagles' claws, in whom there was no mercy). Similar to this description and Ælfric's is that of a marvelous race, found in the *Liber monstrorum*, who have bodies "sicut Aethiopes... dentibus et oculis tantummodo et unguibus nitentem" (like Ethiopians... with shining teeth and eyes and nails) [Orchard, p. 274].
[233] Seneca *De ira* 1.3. See Chapter III, pp. 85-87 for a discussion of the Christian inheritance of Seneca's imagery. David Lee has suggested that the *Beowulf* poet was familiar with Lactantius' *Divine*

the [human] mind, must rule over the other two, that is, concupiscence and anger" (*De animae ratione* 3).

The question of the "rule of reason" becomes crucial when arguing for Grendel's humanity, or lack of it. Does Grendel possess the innate capability to reason or does he not? Such a distinction is critical for writers such as Augustine, who separate shumans from animals on the basis of qualities distinct from appearance. (In part, Augustine's argument is that appearance is irrelevant; his definition is formulated at least in part to account for the existence of what we would today call birth defects.) One of Augustine's prerequisites for humanity is descent from Adam; this Grendel claims by virtue of his relationship to Cain (ll. 106-14; 1261b-67a). Second, and pivotal to this argument, is Augustine's assertion that humanity is not contingent on one's appearance, but rather on one's mental faculties: those beings possessing *ratio* (reason) qualify as human, by virtue of the fact that reason is an exclusively human trait.

> Yet whoever is born anywhere as a human being, that is, as a *rational and mortal creature*, however strange he may appear to our senses in bodily form or color or motion or utterance, or in any faculty, part or quality of his nature whatsoever, let no true believer have any doubt that such an individual is descended from the one man who was first created. [235] (*De civitate dei* 16.8.42-45; my emphasis)

If one takes Grendel's descent from Adam as a given, then an inherent rational faculty must also be inferred. However, as Grendel's behavior attests, his reason has clearly

---

Institutes in "Lactantius and *Beowulf*," in *Studies in Linguistics in Honor of Raven I. McDavid, Jr.,* ed. Lawrence M. Davis (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1972), pp. 397-413.
[234] O'Brien O'Keeffe, "Transformation and the Limits of the Human," p. 488.

been overthrown by both appetite and anger. In Orchard's lengthy discussion of the exegesis of the antediluvian giants, one of the giants' consistent failings (in addition to pride) is inordinate appetite, which leads them into cannibalism and other taboo acts.[236] Also, as we have seen, the belief that reason was required to harness anger was known to Anglo-Saxon writers. Alcuin, whose *De animae ratione* influenced both Ælfric and Alfred's conceptions of the human soul, introduced anger or irascibility (*iracundia*) as one component, but one that was required to be subservient to the control of reason. Failure to control animal impulses equated to deviance from natural behavior, and its most graphic result is bloodshed. Grendel's cannibalism is doubly horrific; not only is it done in anger, but it is a result of the overwhelming of reason by gross appetite (*concupiscentia* or *gewylnung*); his loss of reason is drastic enough to lead him to consume the flesh of his fellow beings, and also accounts for the predator-type attacks described by Parks.

The lengths to which Grendel's anger takes him—cannibalism and blood-drinking—carries him well beyond the boundaries of regulated conflict. A lone warrior, he contends against the Danes unjustly (l. 144b), committing crimes that go without settlement (ll. 151b-61a). Thus, his behavior violates the prescribed limits of violence set by feud conventions; he refuses to conclude the feud or make amends for his actions by paying wergeld. Guy Halsall has suggested the possibility that the Germanic *wargus* or *wearg* (OE *werg*), "accursed," is synonymous with *latro* (a

---

[235] "Verum quiquis uispam nascitur homo, id est animal rationale mortale. quamlibet nostris inusitatam sensibus gerat corporis formam seu colorem siue motum sive sonum sive qualibet vi, qualibet parte, qualibet qualitate naturam, ex illo uno protoplasto originem ducere nullus fidelium dubitaverit."
[236] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 63-64.

raider, brigand or mercenary), and the unregulated violence associated with them eventually led to the use of *warg* to denote an accursed being, exiled from the rest of human society. *Latrones* lived outside the law as perpetrators of violent criminal acts—that is, as those whose behavior did not correlate with categories of acceptable violence (e.g. defensive warfare, vengeance carried out according to custom)—but retained ties to their former society.[237] In this sense, Grendel is one of the *latrones*; though he is an *eoten* or *þyrs*, he is also a man (*wer*, l. 105; *guma*, l. 1682), and is referred to as a *healðegn* (l. 142), a "hall-thegn" and *renweard* (l. 770), "hall-guardian)—but he is a man who has no thegnship, or place in civilized society. Bosworth-Toller equivocates on the subject of Grendel's humanity in its entry for *wearg*; applied to humans, the word has overtones of the legalistic, referring to criminal activity, but when applied to monsters it shades into realms of accursedness.[238] When Grendel visits Heorot as a *werga gāst* (l. 133a), it is his hostility (rather than his accursedness) that is emphasized; the Danes see his warcraft revealed, and they view him as *lāð*, an adversary (ll. 127; 132) when they see his tracks for the first time.

However, he is an enemy against whom the Danes are powerless, a catastrophic and uncontrollable intrusion upon a society that has developed and elaborated a system by which violence is directed, or failing that, expressed in culturally-approved methods. If he is in fact human by virtue of having human

---

[237] Halsall, "Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West," p. 14. The extant OE glosses do not include *wearg* among the words used to gloss *latro*; however, the general sense of the word appears not to be positive. OE equivalents are typically *ðeof* (thief), *morsceaða* (stealthy ravager), or *sceaða* (ravager); *wicing* (viking) and *flotman* (sailor; usually used for vikings) also appear.

likeness and a soul capable of being sent to hell (l. 852), then his actions are all the more horrifying because they are sourced in a mind over which reason has no restraint. The fear inspired by Grendel may not only be inspired by a being whose identity cannot be known, as Lapidge argues, but perhaps by a being whose identity *can* potentially be known—but that knowledge does not enable the Danes to impose restraint on him. Not only is he physically unknowable, he is a mental alien; none of the Danes know the source of his hostility, and his actions do not conform to expected patterns of violence. Though he goes "on weres wæstmum" (in the shape of a man; l. 1352a), Hrothgar and the Danes cannot account for his motivations; they know him only through the sorrows and bloodshed he inflicts on them.

If Grendel is the embodiment of unnatural human anger, the dragon may be seen as the embodiment of natural animal irascibility, the type inherent in all terrestrial beings. The dragon does what it is enjoined by its nature to do; it sits on its mound and guards its treasure.[239] When it flies out to burn and ravage, it is not doing anything wrong—i.e. unnatural—but rather what is expected of it. Unlike Grendel, who dies "stained with sin," the dragon simply dies; whereas the poet and Beowulf dwell on the fate of Grendel's spirit, the Danes simply push the dragon off the cliff. The poet passes no moral or religious judgment upon the dragon's actions; the anger that drives the dragon to burn Geatish houses is the result of natural irascibility—that is, the animal trait of *iracundia* that arouses them to defend themselves. The dragon is

[238] Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *wearg*.
[239] So MaxII 26b-27a: "Draca sceal on hlæwe,/frod, frætwum wlanc" (A dragon must be its barrow, old and proud of its treasures). Also Beo., ll. 2275b-77a: "Hē gesēacan sceall/hord on hrūsan þǣr hē hǣðen

the standard by which "natural" anger is measured, and Grendel is the individual

whose anger is out of measure to the point that it is unnatural, as seen in the frequent

descriptions of him as being evil, stained with sin, and unredeemed. Because of this,

Grendel can be used to delineate attitudes toward humanity and the necessity for what

we might call today "anger management"; specifically, his overwhelming violence

provides a foil for the controlled wrath of Beowulf, and a lesson in the extremes of

anger that must be avoided.

Beowulf and Heroic Anger

The association of anger with heroes is a phenomenon observable throughout

Western literature. At the beginning of the *Iliad*, Homer invokes his Muse,

beseeching "Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus/and its devastation,

which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaians" (1.1-2) [240] The Irish epic *Táin bo

Culaigne* features the furious hero Cúchulainn, whose anger is demonstrated in

startlingly visual terms:

> The Warp-Spasm overtook him: it seemed each hair was hammered into his
> head, so sharply they shot upright. You would swear a fire-speck tipped each
> hair. He squeezed one eye narrower than the eye of a needle; he opened the
> other wider than the mouth of a goblet. He bared his jaws to the ear; he peeled
> back his lips to the eye-teeth till his gullet showed. The hero-halo rose up from
> the crown of his head. [241]

---

gold/waraδ wintrum frōd" (He must seek a hoard in the earth, where he, old in winters, guards heathen
gold).

[240] Richard Lattimore, trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). For a description of the
behavior to which Achilles' anger impels him, and anger-incited behavior of other heroes in the epic,
see Harris, *Restraining Rage*, pp. 131-34. Heroic restraint and circumspection (at least until the
appropriate moment) is exemplified by Odysseus (*Odyssey* 14.217-238).

[241] Thomas Kinsella, trans., *The Táin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 77.

Closer to *Beowulf*, Norse sources mention the famous berserkers, whose fury allowed them to surpass normal boundaries of human strength and restraint. However, Beowulf does not exhibit the resentful anger of Achilles, nor the dramatic fury of Cúchulainn, nor does he seem to participate in the tradition of heroes driven to the point of the all-embracing heroic furor of his Germanic relatives; rather, he is the exemplar of governed rage.

One indicator of this is the poem's vocabulary, which does not include anger words in any "warrior" compound used to define Beowulf or any other warrior.[242] Instead, they are defined by other qualities, such as their weapons, relationships to other men in the comitatus, and their boldness or eagerness to make war. Nor, as in the case of Achilles, is Beowulf's anger harmful; whereas Achilles' resentment of Agamemnon turns the Trojan expedition into a costly engagement, Beowulf's anger is directed specifically against extra-societal enemies, not his colleagues. Moreover, Beowulf's anger is not marked by Cúchulainn's distortion or the berserkers' fury; rather, it serves to propel and direct action during a conflict, rather than to provide display. As such, anger was indispensable to a warrior in battle, and Beowulf is frequently described as being angry, and these descriptions on occasion will tie him closely to Grendel, the antithesis of control.

The poet continues to weave the impulses behind action with the action itself, which allows for an exploration of heroic anger and its use. The first mention of

---

[242] Caroline Brady, "Warriors in *Beowulf*: An Analysis of the Nominal Compounds and an Evaluation of the Poet's Use of Them," *ASE* 11 (1983): 199-244. An *index locutionum* compiled by Jonathan Wilcox is appended, pp. 245-46. The compound most immediately suggestive of anger in connection

Beowulf's fury comes when the rest of Heorot has bedded down for the night; while the rest of the warriors sleep in curiously secure comfort that the Creator would not allow Grendel to drag them into death without his permission (ll. 705b-7), Beowulf waits up:

> ac hē wæccende   wrāþum on andan
> bād bolgenmōd   beadwa geþinges. (ll. 708-9)

> [but he, waking, furious in his anger, waited, angry in his fury, for the outcome of the battle.]

The anger here is clearly preparatory, a method of maintaining physical arousal at a time that has proved dangerous for the Danes. The next time Beowulf's anger is mentioned, it is used to tie him to the anger of Grendel himself, uniting the two in the shared emotion of pitched battle—the anger brought on by the presence of an enemy. As Beowulf and Grendel grapple, the poet binds them not only in the closeness of physical combat, but in the words used to describe them: "Yrre wæron bēgen/rēþe renweardas" (Both were angry, fierce hall-guardians)[ll. 769b-70a]. The poet emphasizes their mutual anger and hostility; both are angry and enemies—*graman* (l. 777b) could refer to them either as "the angry ones" or "the enemies"—and each is a source of mortal hatred, *lifigende lāð* (l. 815), for the other. What separates Beowulf from Grendel in this confrontation, however, is the poet's explicit reference to Beowulf's wisdom. Unlike Grendel, Beowulf is *snotor* (wise) governing his anger through the use of prudence, foresight, and strategy; the descriptor is used of him after he has purged the hall of Grendel's occupation (l. 825-26).

---

with warrior status is *oretmecg*, which may have "the senses of 'a calling out,' 'defiance,' and 'fury,'

Heroic anger in the poem has further implications as well; it governs the impulse to warlike behavior, and also seems to have some role in ensuring that an individual pursues glory and the enhancement of his reputation, rather than taking the cowardly way out of battle (as is the case with Unferth). In the battle with Grendel's mother, Beowulf comes dangerously close to being bested, but his anger, tied to his mindfulness of his reputation, saves him.

> Eft wæs anræd,   nalas elnes læt,
> mærða gemyndig   mæg Hȳlāces: 1530
> wearp ðā wundenmæl   wrættum gebunden
> yrre ōretta,   þæt hit on eorðan læg,
> stīð ond stȳlecg;   strenge getruwode,
> mundgripe mægenes.   Swā sceal man dôn,
> þonne hē æt gūðe   gegān þenceð   1535
> longsumne lof;   nā ymb his līf cearað.
> Gefēng þā be eaxle   —nalas for fæhðe mearn—
> Gūð-Gēata lēod   Grendles mōdor;
> brægd þā beadwe heard,   þā hē gebolgen wæs,
> feorhgenīðlan, þæt hēo on flet gebēah. (ll. 1529-40)

[In turn he was resolute; not at all did he abandon courage, Hygelac's kinsman mindful of fame: the angry warrior threw the decorated sword, wrapped in treasure, so that it lay on the earth, strong and steely; he trusted his strength, the power of his hand-grip. So must a man do, when he thinks to win enduring fame in battle, not at all fear for his life. The man of the War-Geats seized Grendel's mother by the shoulder—he did not shrink from the feud—; the battle-fierce one, when he was enraged, then took hold of his mortal enemy so that she toppled to the floor.]

Once again, the action of the poem is intimately related to the poet's concern for the cognition of his hero. Beowulf acts out of a twofold motivation: first, he is mindful of his reputation, and second, he is angry. The two are not unrelated; the necessity of defending honor could be seen as an acceptable—and even necessary—incitement to

---

with a connotation of 'pugnacity'" (p. 211).

anger. Beowulf's resoluteness is sourced in his anger, and his anger leads to the disregard for life and limb that is necessary in confronting a deadly situation. Lastly, his anger leads to a direct physical result, his turning the tables on Grendel's mother (though she repays him in kind, out of the desire to avenge her son). His rational faculties and irascibility work together (or perhaps balance each other) to result in a positive outcome.

Beowulf, as an example of *sapientia* and restraint, stands in sharp contrast to Grendel's monstrous anger and the dragon's natural animal fury. As his career progresses from hero to king, however, anger and its use must be further regulated, and in the third section of the poem—Beowulf's kingship—it becomes necessary to examine the temptation of pride, the dangers of royal anger, and the necessity of restraining rage.

Ira regum: Heremod and Beowulf

In the midst of the rest of the violence of *Beowulf,* the killing of one's kinsmen is remarkable for the attention the poet devotes to it. The source of the great feud between the giants and God is the exile of Cain for kinslaying (ll. 107-14). Unferth's slaying of his brothers is mentioned twice; first by Beowulf, who asserts that Unferth will suffer punishment either in this world or the next (ll.587-89),[243] and then by the poet, who remarks that Unferth's comrades believe in his courage, "þēah þe hē his māgum nǣre/ārfæst æt ecga gelācum" (though he was not merciful to his kinsmen in

---

[243] For l. 588b, Klaeber and Dobbie supply *helle,* following the two Thorkelin transcripts; Mitchell and Robinson give *healle.* Either way, Beowulf argues that Unferth will face judgment and punishment for

the strife of swords) [ll. 1165-68a]. Unferth's cruelty, though, is actively exceeded by Heremod, whose hostility extends over both his immediate circle and the rest of the Danish kingdom by virtue of his lordship.

Controlling anger is of central importance to the poem, for it is the primary trait that distinguishes the good ruler from the bad. That is, anger felt in combat against an enemy, or else in the aftermath of a feud killing, can drive an individual to the violence necessary to end the threat or obtain satisfaction. Misdirected, however, anger clouds judgment and causes one to turn against those to whom one is bound by ties of kinship or friendship—with whom, as Hyams remarks, one is obliged to have peace.[244] Indeed, the same Old English word, *sibb*, is used for these three concepts, and the kinsmen who fight together comprise the *sibbegedryht*, "the band of kinsmen" united by ties of common blood and blood shed in battle. The violation of those bonds by the lord or king constitutes the grossest disregard of what preserves peace in a society hedged about by violence or the threat of it. In *Beowulf,* Grendel's anger-driven cannibalism is not the only form of bloody, illicit consumption; he is joined in his rapaciousness by the figures of Unferth and Heremod, whose actions—the killing of kinsmen (and retainers in the case of Heremod)—are a sort of social cannibalism, violating the peace that binds (and indeed defines) friends, retainers, and kin. As with Grendel, anger plays a central role in the motivation behind Heremod's actions, and in doing so it becomes a point of divergence between the good ruler and the bad one: the

---

his actions, if not now then certainly later. The poet's remarks at ll. 1165-78a, however, seem to suggest that the Danes do not hold Unferth's kinslaying against him to the point of social ostracism.
[244] Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation*, p. 22.

good king knows how to restrain his anger and direct it against appropriate targets, while the anger of the *grim cyning*, the fierce king, turns him against his own people.

The importance of restraining rage in the ruler was emphasized in both the classical and early medieval traditions; for Seneca, anger in a ruler or judge was the cause of unfair and cruel sentences, and for Martin of Braga his successor, anger could turn a king into a tyrant.[245] Boethius excoriates Nero on several occasions throughout *De consolatione philosophae*, in each holding Nero up as a bloodthirsty, proud, and angry ruler, bent on the destructions of his friends, family, and subjects.[246] In all cases, inordinate anger against his subjects made a ruler unfit for ruling, as he was rendered incapable of exercising the full extent of his reason, and thus was "unfit for the contemplation of justice."[247] Scholars such as Alcuin and Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel saw anger as harmful, for it impairs the desire to seek justice, and elevates vengeance over the need to act in accordance with the restraint of law—a failing extremely dangerous in a ruler.[248] A letter of Theodoric observes that "Angry people do not perceive what is right, for when those disturbed in mind rage for vengeance they do not seek control of their affairs," and emphasizes the importance of adhering

---

[245] Seneca *De ira* 1-18 and Martin of Braga, *De ira*, 2, respectively.

[246] *De consolatione philosophiae* 16.2, 16.4, 28.1, 29.2. Philosophy (Wisdom) compares Theodoric, who is responsible for Boethius' current situation, with Nero: "hu ne wile he ðonne don swa hi dydon & get doð, ealle ða ricu þe him under bioð oððe awer on neaweste, forslean & forheregian, swæ swa fyres leg deð drigne hæðfeld, oððe eft se byrnenda swefel ðone munt bærnð þe we hata ð Etne" (Will he [Theodoric] not then do just as they [former bad rulers] did, murder and destroy all the nobles who are below or anywhere around him, just as the flame does the dry field of heath, or even as the burning brimstone scorches mountain that we call Aetna?)

[247] Martin of Braga *De ira* 1.

[248] Geneviève Bührer-Thierry surveys Christian advocacy of restraint and its relationship to mutilation and capital punishment in "'Just Anger' or 'Vengeful Anger'? The Punishment of Blinding in the Early Medieval West," in *Anger's Past*, pp. 75-76.

to public justice rather than private vengeance.[249] The *Liber scintillarum,* quoting

Prov. 19:12, remarks that the anger of a king is like unto the roaring of a lion,[250] a

characteristic of the Devil, who according to I Peter 5.8 goes about as a lion "seeking

whom he may devour."

Though the importance of "anger management" in authority figures is heavily

discussed in Christian writings and their classical sources, pagan attitudes toward this

sort of temperance remain in doubt, particularly in Anglo-Saxon sources, which come

mingled with Christian references. Whether the ideal of the self-controlled ruler is

Christian or pagan in nature may never be resolved; one does not necessarily preclude

the other, and as Larry Benson has shown, Christian writers admired the clemency,

valor, and decency of certain pagan kings.[251] Robert E. Kaske argues that the balance

between wisdom and strength (*sapientia* and *fortitudo*) was "an area of synthesis

between Christianity and German paganism,"[252] a statement largely consonant with

Benson's. Certainly Germanic tradition did not lack cruel kings; Eormanric of the

wylfenne geþoht (wolflike mind)[253] tormented the Goths to the extent that his subjects

hoped for the destruction of his kingdom.

---

[249] *Epistola* 10 (PL 69.617-18). "Furentes justa non sentiunt, quia dum commoti animo in vindictam saeviunt, rerum temperantiam non requirunt."

[250] LibSc 19.10. "Sicut fremitus leonis, ita ira regis."

[251] Benson argues that in fact Ingeld did have something to do with Christ in "The Pagan Coloring of *Beowulf,*" in *Old English Poetry: Fifteen Essays,* ed. Robert P. Creed (Providence, Rhode Is.: Brown University Press, 1967), pp. 193-213; rpt. with corrections in *Contradictions from Beowulf to Chaucer,* ed. Theodore M. Andersson and Stephen A. Barney (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1995), pp. 15-31.

[252] "*Sapientia et fortitudo* as the Controlling Theme of *Beowulf,*" *Studies in Philology* 55 (1958): 426. Robert L. Kindrick offers the Germanic side of Kaske's interpretation in "Germanic *Sapientia* and the Heroic Ethos of *Beowulf,*" *Medievalia* 10 (1981): 1-17.

[253] Another king characterized by the wolfishness of his mind is Nebuchadezzar of *Daniel,* who is referred to repeatedly as *wulfheort cyning* (ll. 116, 134, 245). *Liber scintillarum* 19.27 (quoting the *Vitae Patrum*) contains a similar phrase: "Vulpis inhabitant animae que memor est maliciae" (Wolves inhabit the mind that is mindful of evil).

```
        We geascodan        Eormanrices
wylfenne geþoht;        ahte wide folc
Gotena rices.        þæt wæs grim cyning.
Sæt secg monig        sorgum gebunden,
wean on wenan,        wyscte geneahhe
þæt þæs cynerices        ofercumen wære.  (Deor, ll. 21-26)
```

[We learned of Eormanric's wolflike mind; he held sway over the kingdom of the people of the Goths. That was a cruel king. Many a man sat bound by sorrows, in expectation of grief, wished constantly that the kingdom would be overthrown.]

Heremod, another such king, is mentioned twice in *Beowulf*; indeed, his very name, "war-mind" indicates his temperament almost immediately.[254] In his first appearance (ll. 898-915), he is compared unfavorably with Sigmund and Beowulf, two prime examples of the Germanic heroes who go on to become kings in their later careers. His exile to the land of the giants and the realm of demons (ll. 902b-3a) precedes the explanation for his expulsion from human society—that he, instead of being a support and protection for his people, has become an *aldorceare*, a "great sorrow" (l. 906). The cause of his contrary behavior is hinted at as being caused by *sorhwylmas*, surging sorrow that had oppressed him too long (ll. 904b-5a), but the source of that sorrow is more fully developed in ll. 1709b-22a, as is Heremod's behavior:

```
        Ne wearð Heremōd swā
eaforum Ecgwelan,        Ār-Scyldingum;        1710
ne gewēox hē him tō willan,        ac tō wælfealle
ond tō dēaðcwalum        Deniga lēodum;
brēat bolgenmōd        bēodgenēatas,
eaxlgesteallan, oþ þæt hē āna hwearf,
mǣre þēoden        mondrēamum from,        1715
ðēah þe hine mihtig God        mægenes wynnum,
```

---

[254] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 48-49.

eafeþum stēpte,   ofer ealle men
forð gefremede.   Hwæþere him on ferhþe grēow
brēosthord blōdrēow;   nallas bēagas geaf
Denum æfter dōme;   drēamlēas gebād,   1720
þæt hē þæs gewinnes   weorc þrōwade,
lēodbealo longsum.

[Heremod was not such to the sons of Ecgwala, the Ar-Scyldings; he did not
turn out according to their desires, but became slaughter and violent death to
the Danish people; furious, he cut down his companions, close comrades, until
alone, he, great lord, turned away from the joys of men, although mighty God
supported him with the joys of strength, with power, had set him above all
men. Yet the thought within his heart became bloodthirsty; not at all did he
give rings to the Danes according to their judgment; he lived without
happiness, so that he suffered the torment of this strife, a long-lasting
affliction to his people.]

The connection of *sorhwylmas* and *bolgenmod* is significant; as discussed earlier,

grief—or being aggrieved—was one manifestation or aspect of anger, namely, anger

that is thwarted or unable to find expression. Heremod's sense of indignation (that is,

his grief) appears to stem from pride and covetousness, the latter of which is indicted

as being the root of all evil and leads ultimately to anger, which expresses itself in the

slaughter of his companions. In this passage the poet emphasizes Heremod's wrath,

which has moved him from the stasis of grief to active violence; indeed, this is

something of a metamorphosis, for Hrothgar notes that, despite the favors granted to

him by God, his heart becomes bloodthirsty until he finally kills his men. It is

Heremod's anger and his acting upon it that lead to his exile and his abandonment of

the joys of men (ll.1714-15); unlike the ideal king who takes possession of his

inheritance and the guardianship of his people, Heremod is in his anger himself

possessed by sin (l. 915b). In this sense, Heremod is much more similar to Grendel

than he is to Beowulf; the enormity of his crimes, enacted in the slaughter of those to

whom he owes protection and due reward, qualifies him for the same punishment accorded to Grendel (exile).[255] Like Grendel, his anger arises out of grief brought on by deprivation, though in Heremod's case it seems to be a faulty perception or an overdeveloped and unsatisfied sense of entitlement (as explained by Hrothgar, ll. 1748-52), whereas Grendel *is* actually *drēamum bedæled*, "deprived of happiness"; Heremod loses access to human happiness by virtue of his uncontrolled fury and subsequent violence. Both of them, defeated at last by the societies against which they struggle, travel *on fēonda geweald* (ll. 808; 903), "into the realm of enemies," ostensibly to die.

In contrast to Heremod's fury, Beowulf is celebrated as a paragon of kingly restraint. He does not abandon his anger, but his expression of it is directed specifically against those who seek to harm either himself or his people—that is, the dragon, which has been destroying his kingdom. When he recalls his *curriculum vitae* as king, he prides himself on his ability to govern his rage and militaristic efforts. Unlike Heremod, Unferth, and Grendel, he has not killed his own kinsmen (ll. 2741-43a). Even in his old age, Beowulf's fury seems undiminished when he goes to meet the dragon.

> Lēt ðā of brēostum, ðā hē gebolgen wæs,
> Weder-Gēata lēod word ūt faran,
> stearcheort styrmde; stefn in becōm
> heaðotorht hlynnan under hārne stān. (ll. 2550-53)

> [Then, when he was enraged, the man of the Weather-Geats let a word travel from his breast, the resolute one shouted; his voice traveled inward, thundering clear in battle under the gray stone.]

---

[255] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 63.

Leo Carruthers has noted that the anger of the hero lies uneasily next to the praise given to him in the poem's final lines, arguing that "Manliness and strength are surely fitting for both kings and heroes; mildness and kindness on the other hand, hardly seem desirable in either."[256] Here, Carruthers is treating kingship and heroism—and by extension the qualities of patience (or forbearance) and anger as positive characteristics of king and hero, respectively—as mutually exclusive; that is, a man could not exhibit qualities of both the king and the hero. However, as Benson argues, royal restraint and probity was a point on which pagan and Christian custom agreed; the king could indeed be angry, so long as his violence was directed against the depredations of enemies or those who threatened the peace and stability of his kingdom. *Beowulf* does not seem to be as reductive as Carruthers's statement above implies; harmony within the society was exemplified in proper treatment and defense of his people by the ruler (reflected in terms such as *eorla hleo, folces hyrde*, the guardian or the shepherd of the people) and concord within the warrior class (*sibbegedryht, magorincas*; the band of kinsmen and warriors). The gentleness for which Beowulf is eulogized is balanced by his judicious use of violence and anger; he has not done violence against those in his social or kin sphere, and moreover, he has not entered into any *searoniðas*, treacherous quarrels or battles that will ensnare the Geats in political difficulties.[257] In this sense, anger expressed in violence is

---

[256] "Kingship and Heroism in *Beowulf*," in *Heroes and Heroines in Medieval English Literature*, ed. Leo Carruthers (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 19-29.

[257] This may be a reference to Hygelac's raids on the continent (ll. 1202-14), which were done *for wlenco* (out of pride). As Edward B. Irving points out, "If you decide to undertake aggression, it must pay off... This raid gained nothing; it won no booty; it left Geatland with a small child on the throne; it

controlled—rather than succumbing out of pride as Hygelac has done, or seeking misdirected hostility out of anger as Heremod has done, Beowulf has avoided the consequences of precipitate action. Consequently, at the end of his life, he is eulogized as "manna mildust ond monðwǣrust/lēodum līðost" (the mildest of men and the gentlest, kindest to his people" (ll. 1381-82b), in addition to being *lofgeornost*, "most eager for fame," the hallmark of a hero.[258]

Conclusion

Just as the definitions of anger (and anger words) run a gamut in the Old English prose and poetic vocabulary, so do their depictions, functions, and influences in *Beowulf*. Hengest, Heremod, Unferth, Beowulf, and Grendel all provide their own lessons in the use of anger and what prevents it from becoming excessive and dangerous. The dragon functions as the symbol of "natural" anger, that is, the anger that arouses a living creature to defend itself or its territory; it is an anger without moral qualification, condemned only when it gets out of hand in human beings, who are required to exercise reason to control it. Both Heremod and Grendel exhibit anger, but it is anger without restraint, and this leads them into cannibalism, both figurative and literal; their evil is also reflected in other descriptors—Grendel is evil, marked for

---

earned the lasting hatred of the continental tribes who... will rush to invade Geatland as soon as they hear of Beowulf's death." His argument is in "Heroic Role-Models: Beowulf and Others," in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period*, p. 361. *Searoniô* is also used of the situation from which Hama fled, bringing the Brosnings' necklace with him (ll. 1198b-1201); in escaping Eormanric's designs, Hama shows discretion (choosing eternal counsel) to be the better part of valor.

[258] The concluding formulation is very similar to the adjectives used by Einhard in his *Vita Karoli* to describe Charlemagne: "most gentle" (*mitissimus*), "mildest" (*piisimus*), and "most merciful" (*clementissimus*). For a discussion of the development of ideal kingship, see Gerd Althoff, "*Ira regis*: A History of Royal Anger," in *Anger's Past*, pp. 59-74, esp. 64-65 for Carolingian manuals of kingship and Einhard's praise of Charlemagne.

killing as Cain is marked, and Heremod's anger leads him to become an affliction to his people. In contrast, Beowulf's anger is controlled, exercised under the appropriate conditions and directed against his enemies, and prevents him from making the mistake of Hrothgar, whose anger festers into grief due to his inability to gain satisfaction for the deaths of his countrymen. Hengest and Grendel's mother employ anger as a mnemonic device, using it to fuel the revenge they eventually take upon those who killed their kin.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: LOOK BACK IN ANGER

Anger in Anglo-Saxon Writing: An Overview

> No plague hath done mankinde so much harme. Looke into our histories, and you shall almost meet with no other subject, but what a company of hare-braines have done in their rage.

> (Richard Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1.2.3.9)[259]

"Just as the African wind on the sea, so is anger in the heart of a man."[260]

Anger seethes in both Latin and Anglo-Saxon sources; it burns, boils, disturbs, and overwhelms. It can be extinguished like a fire, but it can also lie banked as a grudge or as hatred, only to break forth again when stoked anew, or fester into grief and melancholy. Once inside the mind it operates as a poison or a disease, swelling and distorting the mind so that it is not capable of reason.[261] It is alcohol and madness, destroying the rule of reason and reducing a man to a state of bestiality by turning him against those to whom he is bound by blood, love, or social concord. It is itself a weapon, oppressing those unfortunate enough to live under it, and is given—as lamented by many writers—to violence and bloodshed. It desires vengeance, murder, and hostility, and seeks these things out to the ruination of harmony and justice.

---

[259] Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling and Rhonda L. Blair, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, rpt. 1997), p. 270.

[260] Defensor of Ligugé, *Liber scintillarum*, ed. Henri Rochais. CCSL 117 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1957). "Sicut africus uentus in pelago, ita furor in corde uiri" (19.30).The passage is also in HarlOliph F904.

This thesis has explored some of the ways in which Anglo-Saxon writers and the Latin authorities whom they knew discussed anger. Their imagery was rich and varied, not easily susceptible to categorization. In outlining the different semantic or metaphoric fields of anger, it is possible to see that though anger was certainly a dangerous emotion, the words to describe it are context-specific; that is, anger was recognized as a necessary component of the human psychological landscape (as Alcuin argues), and in moderation it allows a person to eschew sin and live a virtuous life. However, the danger of anger resides in how easy it is to abandon restraint and allow anger to rule in place of reason; when anger is unchecked, that is when it burns, destroys, intoxicates, and poisons, then it becomes harmful to the indivudual and to those around him. Lactantius' epitome on the impulses of anger and desire summarizes this uncertainty:

> For these [emotions], which God has rationally placed in man, are not evil in and of themselves... for just as strength, if you fight on behalf of your country is a good thing, but is evil if you fight against your country; and likewise, emotions are virtues if you put them to good purposes, but if you direct them to evil ends, they are sins. Therefore, anger is given for the correction of sinners, that is, it is given by God for directing the discipline of one's subordinates, so that fear restricts license and checks boldness. But those who are ignorant of its boundaries are angered against their equals, or even against their superiors.[262] (*Epitome divinarum institutum* 51)

Thus, anger was by no means demonized; on the contrary, it could be useful and even necssary. But the dangers authors saw in anger are diverse and subtle, for anger was

---

[261] John Cassian *Institutes* 8.1.

[262] (PL 1017-94). "Non enim per se mala sunt, quae Deus homini rationabiliter insevit... et sicut fortitudo, si pro patria dimices, bonum est, si contra patriam, malum: sic et affectus, si ad usus bonos habeas, virtutes erunt, si ad malos, vitia dicentur. Ira igitur ad coercitionem peccatorum, id est, ad

not only a detriment to the individual, robbing him of proper reason, but it was also

dangerous to those around him. In powerful individuals such as kings or judges, anger

is especially to be feared, for it subverts clemency and turns the guardians of public

safety into cruel, unjust tyrants.

Governing Anger

Anglo-Saxon writers knew of the necessity of governing anger, a necessity

inherited from such writers as Gregory the Great, Isidore, Augustine, Benedict,

Alcuin, and others. In part, the restraint of anger was a necessity that developed out of

the communal life of monasteries and convents, where a group of people forced to

live together (under less-than-ideal conditions) was a ripe breeding ground for anger,

resentment, and revenge. While permissible anger could inspire a monk to greater

virtue and spur a priest to amend backsliding sinners, impermissible anger was

disrupting to the balance of both the individual's mind and his community. Angry

priests, distracted by their sin, could not properly perform sacraments or guide the

laity, for "Iracundi oratio abominata thymimiama, et psalmodia iracundii sonus

horrebilis" (The prayer of an angry man is a detestable incense, and the psalmody of

the wrathful one is a horrible sound).[263] Angry monks who sought revenge destroyed

---

regendam subjectorum disciplinam data est a Deo, ut metus licentiam comprimat, et compescat audaciam. Sed qui terminos ejus ignorant, irascuntur paribus, aut etiam potioribus."

[263] Defensor, *Liber scintillarum* 19.27. In William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, "the erldom of Envye and Wrathe togideres/With the chastilet of cheste and chaterynge out of reson" appear in the charter Favel recites to Mede (2.84-85). Later, Langland gives Wrath a long, boasting speech, in Wrath comments on the ways in which he disrupts the harmony of communal life by spreading slander, gossip insults (5.135-79): "Al the wikkednesse that I woot by any of oure bretheren/ I cou[gh]e it in oure cloistre, that al oure covent woot it" (5.178-79). All quotations taken from the edition by David Pearsall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978; rpt. 1982).

the harmony of monastic life, or, if they let their anger devolve into hatred, were guilty of a sublter, but no less dangerous sin.

Out in the wider world, restraint on anger was enjoined by theological writers, though the extent to which this restraint was enforced is not clear. Certainly writers praised mercy, clemency, and gentleness in a king, but alongside these qualities there was recognition that violence and even anger was necessary either to defend a kingdom or preserve order within it. Again, however, the danger of anger ruling the ruler is very near, as immoderate anger prompts those in power to ignore reason, just counsel, and mercy.

This danger can be seen in Chapters III and IV, which explore the effects of anger on powerful individuals. Elesius of Cynewulf's *Juliana*, corrupted by his lust, greed, and anger, becomes the antithesis of the ideal judge, executing an innocent woman in his inhuman fury. Heremod of *Beowulf* is much like Elesius; spurred on by pride and greed, his anger leads him to slaughter his own companions, the men whom he is obligated by custom to protect. Both poets describe their villains as *bolgenmod*, "swollen in mind," bloodthirsty, and, ultimately, dehumanized; Elesius tears his garments and howls at the apex of his fury (ll. 594b-600a), while Heremod (as Elesius will also do), travels into the realm of enemies (or 'demons'; l. 808) after the Danes exile him for his crimes. Hrothgar represents the inverse of Elesius' and Heremod's active, violent anger; his anger, aroused by the humiliation Grendel inflicts on him through his nocturnal occupation of Heorot, is left unsatisfied because he lacks the power to avenge it. From anger he devolves into inert grief, unable to stop his

152

countrymen from being slaughtered at Grendel's hands. Grendel, though he has no social power, is nonetheless physically powerful, and frighteningly so; the thirty men whom he has the strength to snatch up he takes so that he can devour them, cannibalistic revenge for his exclusion from the society of the hall. He is the embodiment of extreme anger; his appearance, swollen and with burning eyes, is the literal representation of the Senecan "angry man," and the crimes he commits are not mere crimes—the devouring of human flesh is not only bloodshed, it is deeply taboo and thoroughly unrestrained violence.

Unlike all of the men above, Beowulf represents perhaps the closest approximation of the "ideal" angry man in Old English literature. He is certainly angry; like Elesius, Heremod, and Grendel, he is *bolgenmod* and angry when he goes to battle. Unlike them, however, he tempers his anger with reason and thus is able to direct it against those who seek to do him harm or employ it on behalf of those whose deaths he must avenge (e.g. the killing of Dæghrefn for Hygelac). He is also kind, gentle, and mild—the paragon of the Christian and Germanic king—but this does not interfere with the anger that drives him in battle, or the desire for fame for which he is remembered at the poem's conclusion. He may be considered the secular equivalent of the clerical ideal; his anger is useful or "corrective" anger, employed against those who make incursions upon the order of his society. In contrast to the rage of evildoers, and even the restrained anger of Beowulf, stands Juliana, whose Christian patience is never abandoned for the sake of self-defense or vengeance.

Coda

While it is not possible to say that we can know what medieval people thought or felt when they were angry, we have inherited many of the ways in which they talk about and describe the anger they encounter. Though we may not describe our anger as "Mount Etna, ever-burning" as John Gower does, we are not unfamiliar with images of fire, heat, and burning when discussing our own anger, and the impulse to "get back" at someone who has slighted or offended us would not have been alien in a ninth-century Anglo-Saxon homily that discourages such behavior, or the secular poetry that (to an extent) sanctions it. Tracing the development of this vocabulary through the Middle Ages, in conjunction with the historical investigations already undertaken by Barbara Rosenwein, Gerd Althoff, Paul Hyams, and others, may lead us to a better understanding of our own heritage of emotional metaphor and control.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscripts

London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius A.iii.
London, British Library MS Royal 7.C.iv. Defensor. *Liber Scintillarum.*

Primary Sources

Alcuin. *De animae ratione.* Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 101.639-50. [Based on
    the 1777 edition by Frobenius.]
———. *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis.* Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 101.613-38.

Aldhelm. *Opera.* MGHAA 15. Edited by Rudolf Ehwald. Berlin: Weidmann, 1919.

Augustine. *De civitate dei.* 2 vols. Edited by Bernard Dombart and Alfonse Kalb.
    Stuttgart: Teubner, 1981.
———. *Epistolae secundum ordinem.* Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 33.405-12.
———. *In solemnitate Stephani martyris.* Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 38.1431.
———. *Sermones de scripturis.* Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 38.396-97.

Assmann, Bruno, ed., with supplement by Peter Clemoes. *Angelsächsische Homilien
    und Heiligenleben.* Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 3. Darmstadt:
    Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964.

Bazire, Joyce and James E. Cross, eds. *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies.*
    Toronto Old English Series 7. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

Bede. *Proverbia.* Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 90.1091-1114.

Boethius. *De consolatione philosophae.* Edited by L. Bieler. CCSL 94. Turnholt:
    Brepols, 1984.

Brotanek, Rudolf, ed. "Dedication of a Church," in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur
    altenglischen Literatur und Kirchengeschichte.* Halle: Niemeyer, 1913.

Burton, Richard. *The Anatomy of Melancholy.* Edited by Thomas C. Faulkner,
    Nicolas K. Kiessling and Rhonda L. Blair. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; rpt.
    1997.

Cassian, John. *Collationes*. Edited by Michael Petschenig. New York: Johnson Reprints, 1965.

———. *De coenubiorum institutis*. Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 49.53-476.

Cassiodorus. *Commentarium in psalterium*. Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 70.25-1056.

Clayton, Mary and Hugh Magennis, ed. and trans. *The Old English Lives of Saint Margaret*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Cox, Robert S. "The Old English *Dicts of Cato*." *Anglia* 90 (1972): 1-42.

Crawford, S.J., ed. *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*. EETS o.s. 160. London: 1922. Reprinted with additions by N.R. Ker. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Defensor. *Liber Scintillarum*. Edited by E.W. Rhodes. EETS o.s. 93. Oxford, 1889.

———. *An Edition with Commentary of the Latin/Anglo-Saxon* Liber Scintillarum. Sarah S. Getty. Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1969.

———. *Liber Scintillarum*. Edited by Henri Rochais. CCSL 117. Turnholt: Brepols, 1957.

diPaolo Healey, Antonette. *The Vision of St. Paul*. Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1978.

Godden, Malcolm, ed. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*. EETS s.s. 5. London: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Gonser, Paul, ed. *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des heiligen Guthlac*. Anglistische Forschungen 27. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1909.

Goossens, Louis, ed. *The Old English Glosses of MS. Brussels, Royal Library 1650*. Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1974.

Gower, John. *The English Works of John Gower*. 2 vols. Edited by G.C. Macaulay. EETS e.s. 81-82. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1900; rpt. 1979.

Gregory the Great. *Moralia in Iob*. 3 vols. Edited by Mark Andria. CCSL 143. Turnholt: Brepols, 1979.

———. *Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*. Edited by Hans Hecht. Darmstadt: Wissenchaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965.

Hugh of St. Victor. *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*. Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 177.987-1009.

Isidore. *Etymologiae*. 2 vols. Edited by W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

———. *Sententiae* Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 83.537-738.

Ker, Neil R. "Three Old English Texts in a Salisbury Pontifical, Cotton Tiberius C.I." In *The Anglo-Saxons, Studies in Some Aspects of Their History and Culture, Presented to Bruce Dickins*, edited by Peter Clemoes, 262-79. London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959.

Kimmens, Andrew, ed. *The Stowe Psalter*. Toronto Old English Series 3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979.

Kinsella, Thomas, trans. *The Táin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Klaeber, Fr., ed. *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburh*. 3rd ed. New York: DC Heath, 1955.

Korhammer, Matthew ed. "Monastic Canticles, London, British Library, MS. Cotton Vespasian D.XII." In *Die Monastischen Cantica im Mittelalter und ihre altenglischen Interlinearversionen*. Texte und Untersuchungen zur englischen Philologie 6. Munich: 1976.

Krapp, George P. and Elliot van Kirk Dobbie, eds. *The Exeter Book*. ASPR 3. New York: Columbia University, 1936.

Lactantius. *De ira dei*. Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 7.79-147.

———. *De divinis institutis*. In *Opera*, edited by Samuel Brandt and George Laubmann. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1965

Langefeld, Brigitte, ed. *The Old English Version of the Enlarged Rule of Chrodegang. Edited Together with the Latin Text and an English Translation*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.

Langland, William. *Piers Plowman*. Edited by David Pearsall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. Reprinted 1982).

Lattimore, Richard, trans. *The Iliad*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Leo I. *Epistola ad Demetriadem*. Edited and translated by Sister M. Kathryn Clare Krabbe. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1965.

Liebermann, Felix, ed. *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*. 1903-16. Reprint, Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1960.

Martin of Braga. *Opera omnia*. Edited by Claud W. Barlow. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950.

Mone, Franz J., ed. *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der teutschen Literatur und Sprache*. Aachen and Leipzig: J.A. Mayer, 1830.

Morris, R., ed. *The Blickling Homilies*. 3 vols. EETS o.s. 58, 63, 74. 1874-80. Reprint, Millwood: Kraus Reprint, 1967.

Muir, Bernard, ed. *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994.

Napier, Arthur S., ed. *Wulfstan*. Sammlung Englischer Denkmäler 4. Berlin: Weidmann, 1883.

Norman, Henry W., ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the* Hexameron *of St. Basil ... and the Anglo-Saxon Remains of St. Basil's* Admonitio ad filium spiritualem. 2nd ed. London: J.R. Smith, 1849.

Pope, John C., ed. *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*. 2 vols. EETS o.s. 259-60. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Prudentius. *Carmina*. Edited by Maurice P. Cunningham. CCSL 126. Turnholt: Brepols, 1976.

Rosier, James, ed. *The Vitellius Psalter: Edited from British Museum Ms. Cotton Vitellius E. XVIII*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962.

Rufinus Aquileiensis. *Commentarius in LXXV Psalmos*. Edited by J.P. Migne. PL 21.650-54.

Scragg, Donald, ed. *The Vercelli Homilies*. EETS o.s. 300. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Sedgefield, Walter J., ed. *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius'* De consolatione philosophae. 1899. Reprint, Darmstadt 1968.

Seneca. *Moral Essays*. Vol. 1. Edited and translated by John W. Basore. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1928. Reprint, 1954.

Skeat, Walter, ed. and trans. *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*. 4 vols., EETS o.s. 76, 82, 94, 114. Reprinted in 2 vols., London: Oxford University, 1967.

Spindler, Robert, ed. *Das altenglische Bussbuch*. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1934.

Strunk, William, ed. *Juliana*. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1904.

Sweet, Henry, ed. *King Alfred's West-Saxon Wersion of Gregory's Pastoral Care*. 2 vols. EETS o.s. 45, 50. 1871. Reprint, Millwood: Kraus Reprint, 1988.

Thorpe, Benjamin, ed. *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*. Vol. 2. London: Great Britain Public Records Commission, 1840.

Torkar, Roland. *Eine altenglische Übersetzung von Alcuins* De virtutibus et vitiis, *Kap. 20* (*Liebermanns* Judex)*: Untersuchungen und Textausgabe: mit einem Anhang, Die Gesetze II und V Aethelstan nach Otho B. xi und Add. 43703*. München: Fink, 1981.
———, ed. "Canons of Edgar, edited from Cambridge, University Library, MS. Ii.1.33, fols. 219v-222r," transcript edited from MS, ll. 14-16.

Tristram, Hildegard, ed. *Sex aetates mundi: Die Weltzeitalter bei den Angelsachsen und den Iren, Untersuchungen und Texte*. Heidelberg: C. Winter.

de Vogüé, Adalbert, ed. *Regulae Benedicti*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1972.

Whitelock, Dorothy, ed. *Sermo lupi ad anglos*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1976.

Woolf, Rosemary, ed. *Juliana*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966.

Wulfstan. *Canons of Edgar*. Edited by Richard Fowler. EETS o.s. 266. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Yerkes, David, ed., *The Old English Life of Machutus*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1984.

Catalogues, Bibliographies, and Handlists

Biggs, Frederick M., Thomas D. Hill, Paul E. Szarmach, and E. Gordon Whatley, eds. *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*. *SASLC* 1. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001.

Gneuss, Helmut. *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*. *MRTS* 241. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001.

Greenfield, Stanley B. and Fred C. Robinson, eds. *A Bibliography of Publications on Old English Literature to the End of 1972*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980.

Ker, Neil R. *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957; rpt. 1999.

Lapidge, Michael. "Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England." In Lapidge and Gneuss, *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, 33-89.

Muir, Bernard, comp. *The Exeter Book: A Bibliography.* Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1992.

Reynolds, L.D., ed. *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Szarmach, Paul E. "A Preliminary Handlist of Manuscripts Containing Alcuin's *Liber de Virtutibus et Vitiis.*" *Manuscripta* 25 (1981): 131-40.

Dictionaries, Thesauri, and Word-Lists

An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth. Edited and Enlarged by T. Northcote Toller. Oxford 1898. 2 vols, plus supplement. *Supplement* by T.N. Toller, Oxford 1921.

diPaolo-Healey, Antoinette, ed. *The Dictionary of Old English: Old English Corpus*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988- . Accessed through http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/o/oec at University of Michigan.

Latham, Ronald Edward, comp. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*. London : Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 1975- .

Lewis, Charlton T. and Charles Short. *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Roberts, Jane, Christian Kay and Lynne Grundy, eds. *A Thesaurus of Old English*. Vol. 1. London: King's College Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1995.

Souter, Alexander, comp. *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949.

Thesaurus Linguae Latinae. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1990- .

Secondary Sources

Abbetmeyer, Charles. "Old English Poetical Motives Derived from the Doctrine of Sin." Ph.D. diss.: University of Minnesota, 1903.

Abraham, Lenore MacGaffey. "Cynewulf's *Juliana*: A Case at Law." *Allegorica* 3 (1978): 172-89. Reprinted in Bjork, *The Cynewulf Reader*, 171-92.

Althoff, Gerd. "*Ira Regis*: Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger." In Rosenwein, *Anger's Past,* 59-74.

Anderson, Earl R. "Juliana." In *Cynewulf: Structure, Style, and Theme in His Poetry.* London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1983.

Austen, Greta. "Marvelous Peoples or Marvelous Races? Race and the Anglo-Saxon *Wonders of the East.*" In Jones and Sprunger, *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles*, 25-51.

Baker, Peter S., ed. *The Beowulf Reader*. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000.

Benson, Larry D. "The Pagan Coloring of *Beowulf.*" In *Old English Poetry: Fifteen Essays*, edited by Robert P. Creed, 193-213. Reprinted in *Contradictions from* Beowulf *to Chaucer*, edited by Larry D. Benson, 15-31. Vermont: Ashgate, 1995.

Bjork, Robert, ed. *The Cynewulf Reader*. Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England 4. New York: Routledge, 2001.
———. *The Old English Verse Saint's Lives: A Study in Direct Discourse and the Iconography of Style.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.

Bloomfield, Morton. *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Lansing: Michigan State College, 1952.

Brady, Caroline. "Warriors in *Beowulf*: An Analysis of the Nominal Compounds and an Evaluation of the Poet's Use of Them." *ASE* 11 (1983): 199-244.

Bührer-Thierry, Geneviève. "'Just Anger' or 'Vengeful Anger'? The Punishment of Blinding in the Early Medieval West." In Rosenwein, *Anger's Past*, 75-91.

Bzdyl, Donald. "Juliana: Cynewulf's Dispeller of Delusion." *NM* 86 (1985): 165-75
Calder, Daniel G. "The Art of Cynewulf's *Juliana*" *MLQ* 34 (1973): 355-71.

Carruthers, Leo. "Kingship and Heroism in *Beowulf.*" In *Heroes and Heroines in Medieval English Literature*, edited by Leo Carruthers, 19-29. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994.

Clover, Carol. "The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode." *Speculum* 55 (1980): 444-69. Reprinted in Baker, *The Beowulf Reader*, 127-54.

———. "Hildigunnr's Lament." In *Cold Counsel: Women in Old Norse Literature and Mythology*, edited by Sarah M. Anderson and Karen Swenson, 15-54. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Conner, Patrick. "On Dating Cynewulf." In Bjork, *The Cynewulf Reader*, 23-56.

Damico, Helen and John Leyerle, eds. *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honor of Jess B. Bessinger, Jr*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Press, 1993.

Damon, John Edward. "*Desecto capite perfido*: Bodily Fragmentation and Reciprocal Violence in Anglo-Saxon England." *Exemplaria* 13 (2001): 399-432.

Day, David. "*Hwanan Sio Fæhð Aras*: Defining the Feud in *Beowulf*." *Philological Quarterly* 78 (1999): 77-95.

Derolez, René. "Some Notes on the *Liber Scintillarum* and Its Old English Glosses." In *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt,* edited by James Rosier, 142-51. Mouton: The Hague, 1970.

Díaz Vera, Javier E., ed. *A Changing World of Words: Studies in English Historical Lexicology and Semantics*. New York: Rodopi, 2002.

Doubleday, James F. "The Allegory of Soul as Fortress in Old English Poetry." *Anglia* 88 (1970): 503-8.

Fabiszak, Małgorzata. "A Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF, and ANGER Worlds in Old English." In Díaz Vera, *A Changing World of Words,* 255-74.

Fell, Christine, Cecily Clark, and Elizabeth Williams. *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

Georgianna, Linda M. "King Hrethel's Sorrow and the Limits of Heroic Action in *Beowulf*." *Speculum* 62 (1987): 829-50.

Gevaert, Caroline. "The Evolution of the Lexical and Conceptual Field of ANGER in Old and Middle English." In Díaz Vera, *A Changing World of Words,* 275-99.

Glosecki, Stephen O. "Movable Beasts: The Manifold Implications of Early Germanic Animal Imagery." In *Animals in the Middle Ages*, edited by Nona C. Flores, 3-23. New York: Garland Publishing, 1996.

Godden, Malcom R. "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind." In Lapidge and Gneuss, *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, 271-98.

Halsall, Guy. "Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West: An Introductory Survey," in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, edited by Guy Halsall, 1-45. Rochester: Boydell Press, 1998.

Harbus, Antonina. *The Life of the Mind in Old English Poetry*. Costerus n.s. 143. New York: Rodopoi, 2002.

Harris, William V. *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Hermann, John. *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989.
———. "The Recurrent Motifs of Spiritual Warfare in Old English Poetry." *Annuale Mediaevale* 22 (1982): 7-35.
———. "Some Varieties of *Psychomachia* in Old English I." *ABR* 34 (1983) 74-86.
———. "Some Varieties of *Psychomachia* in Old English II: The Middle Ages." *ABR* 34 (1983) 188-222.

Hill, John M. *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

Horner, Shari. "Spiritual Truth and Sexual Violence: the Old English *Juliana*, Anglo-Saxon Nuns, and the Discourse of Female Monastic Enclosure." *Signs* 19 (1994): 658-75. [Reprinted in *The Discourse of Enclosure: Representing Women in Old English Literature*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001.]

Hourihane, Colum, ed. *Virtue and Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Hyams, Paul. *Rancor and Reconciliation in Medieval England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Irvine, Martin. "Cynewulf's Use of Psychomachia Allegory: The Latin Sources of Some Interpolated Passages." In *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*, edited by Morton Bloomfield. Cambridge: Harvard University, 1981.

Irving, Edward B. "Heroic Role-Models: Beowulf and Others." In Damico and Leyerle, *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period*, 347-72.

Jones, Timothy S. and David A. Sprunger, eds. *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002.

Kaske, Robert E. "*Sapientia et fortitudo* as the Controlling Theme of *Beowulf*." *Studies in Philology* 55 (1958): 423-57.

Katzenellenbogen, Adolf. *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century*. London: Warburg Institute, 1964. Reprinted Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989.

Kellogg, Robert L. "The Context for Epic in Later Anglo-Saxon England." In Damico and Leyerle, *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period,* 139-56.

Kendall, Calvin B. *The Metrical Grammar of Beowulf*. Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Kindrick, Robert L. "Germanic *sapientia* and the Heroic Ethos of *Beowulf*." *Medievalia* 10 (1981): 1-17.

Lapidge, Michael. "*Beowulf* and the Psychology of Terror." In Damico and Leyerle, *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period,* 373-402.
———. "Cynewulf and the *Passio S. Iulianae*." In *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving*, edited by Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe. Toronto: Toronto UP, 2003.
———. and Helmut Gneuss, eds. *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Lee, Donald W. "Lactantius and *Beowulf*." In *Studies in Linguistics in Honor of Raven I. McDavid, Jr.,* edited by Lawrence M. Davis, 397-413. University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1972.

Lionarons, Joyce Tally. "From Monster to Martyr: The Old English Legend of Saint . Christopher." In Jones and Sprunger, *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles*, 167-182.

Little, Lester K. "Anger in Monastic Curses." In Rosenwein, *Anger's Past,* 9-37. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998.

Morey, Robert. "Beowulf's Androgynous Heroism." *JEGP* 95 (1996): 486-96.

Morrison, Stephen. "Old English *Cempa* in Cynewulf's *Juliana* and the Figure of the *Miles Christi*." *ELN* 17 (1979): 81-84.

Newhauser, Richard. *The Early History of Greed: The Sin of Avarice in Early Medieval Thought and Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000.
————. *The Treatise on Virtues and Vices in Latin and the Vernacular*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1993.

Nicholson, Lewis E., ed. *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963.

Norman, Joanne S. *Metamorphoses of an Allegory*. New York: Peter Lang, 1988.

O'Brien O'Keeffe, Katherine. "*Beowulf*, Lines 702b-836: Transformations and the Limits of the Human." *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 23 (1981): 484-94.

Orchard, Andy. *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the* Beowulf-*Manuscript*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985. Reprinted, Buffalo, Toronto, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Osborn, Marijane. "The Great Feud: Scriptural History and Strife in *Beowulf*." *PMLA* 93 (1978): 973-81. Reprinted in Baker, *The Beowulf Reader*, 111-25.

Parks, Ward. "Prey Tell: How Heroes Perceive Monsters in *Beowulf*." *JEGP* 92 (1993):1-16.

Persons, Ethel Spector. "Introduction." In *Rage, Power, and Aggression*, edited by Robert A. Glick and Steven P. Roose, 1-9. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Peyroux, Catherine. "Gertrude's *furor*: Reading Anger in an Early Medieval Saint's Life." In Rosenwein, *Anger's Past*, 36-58.

Reynolds, Roger E. "The Pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo de conscientia* and the Related Canonical *Dicta sancti gregorii papae*." *Revue Bénédictine* 81 (1971): 310-17.

Rogers, H.L. "Beowulf's Three Great Fights." *Review of English Studies* 6 (1955): 339-55. Reprinted in Nicholson, *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, 233-56.
Rosenwein, Barbara, ed. *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of Emotion in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Russell, Jeffrey. *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Schneider, Claude. "Cynewulf's Devaluation of Heroic Tradition in *Juliana*." *ASE* 7 (1978): 107-18.

Schoenfeld, Edward and Jana Schulman. "Sutton Hoo: An Economic Assessment. In *Voyage to the Otherword: The Legacy of Sutton Hoo*, edited by Calvin B. Kendall and Peter S. Wells, 15-27. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1992.

Schücking, Levin L. "The Ideal of Kingship in *Beowulf*." *MHRA Bulletin* 3 (1929): 143-54. Reprinted in Nicholson, *An Anthology of* Beowulf *Criticism*, 35-49.

Solomon, Robert C. "Getting Angry: The Jamesian Theory of Emotion in Anthropology." In *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, edited by R.A. Schweder and R.A. Levine, 238-54. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Stearns, Carol Zisowitz and Peter N. Stearns. *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Steele, Felicia Jean. "*Grendel*: Another Dip into the Etymological Mere." *ELN* 40 (2003): 1-13.

Szarmach, Paul E. "The Latin Tradition of Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*, cap. xxvii-xxxv, with Special Reference to Vercelli Homily XX." *Medievalia* 12 (1989): 13-41.
——. "Alfred, Alcuin, and the Soul." In *Manuscript, Narrative Lexicon: Essays on Literary and Cultural Transmission in Honor of Whitney F. Bolton*, edited by Robert Boenig and Kathleen Davis, 127-48. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2000.
——. "Pembroke College, arts. 93-95." In *Via Crucis: Essays on Early Medieval Sources and Ideas in Memory of J.E. Cross*, ed. Thomas N. Hall, Thomas D. Hill, and Charles D. Wright, 295-325. Morgantown: West Virginia Univ. Press, 2002.

Thormann, Janet. "*Beowulf* and the Enjoyment of Violence." *Literature and Psychology* 43 (1997): 65-76.

Vickrey, John F. "*Egesan ny gymed* and the Crime of Heremod." *Modern Philology* 71 (1974): 295-300.

Wieland, Gernot, ed. *The Latin Glosses on Arator and Prudentius in Cambridge University Library ms.Gg.5.35*. Studies and Texts 61. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1983.

————. "Aldhelm's *De octo vitiis principalibus* and Prudentius' *Psychomachia*." *MÆ* 55 (1986): 85-92.

————. "The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*." *ASE* 16 (1987): 213-31.

————. "*Psychomachia* Manuscripts." *OEN* 28 (1995): B16-B19.

————. "The Origin and Development of the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* Illustrations." *ASE* 26 (1997): 169-86.

Wine, Joseph. *Figurative Language in Cynewulf: Defining Aspects of a Poetic Style. Studies in Old Germanic Languages and Literatures* 3. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

Wittig, Joseph. "Figural Narrative in Cynewulf's *Juliana*." *ASE* 4 (1974): 37-55. Reprinted in Bjork, *The Cynewulf Reader*, 147-69.

Woolf, Rosemary. "Saints' Lives," in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, edited by E.G. Stanley. Camden: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1966.

Wormald, Patrick. *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*. Vol. 1, *Legislation and Its Limits*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Youngs, Deborah and Simon Harris. "Demonizing the Night in Medieval Europe: A Temporal Monstrosity?" In *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, edited by Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, 134-54. Buffalo, Toronto, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2003.