A Meeting of Minds: How the Conceptualization of the *Mod* Shaped Interpersonal Relationships in Old English Poetry

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

Margaret Joy Heeschen

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Janet Schrunk Ericksen, Dissertation Advisor
Rebecca Krug, Co-advisor

2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks and deep gratitude are owed first and foremost to my advisor, Dr. Janet Ericksen, who took time out of her work as Chancellor to guide me through the perilous journey of completing a dissertation. Likewise, I am thankful for my committee members, Drs. Becky Krug, Brian Goldberg, and Lianna Farber for their support and encouragement.

I am also indebted to Drs. Heather Holcombe, Lydia Garver, Maki Isaka, Elizabeth Teviotdale, and Jana Schulman for their wise counsel and support throughout my graduate career.

Thanks are due as well to the Center for Premodern Studies, which has been my home-away-from-home for the past eight years. The Center has supported me financially through a CLA Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship and graduate assistantship and intellectually through its diverse programming, especially the Premodern Workshop where I received invaluable feedback and camaraderie.

To my fellow graduate students Hannah Wiepke, Karen Soto, Caleb Molstad, and Jesse Stratton, thank you for your patience and companionship.

To Andrea Waldrep, for many cups of tea, hours of craft projects, and most of all, her generosity of spirit.

To my parents, Judy Gunderson and Bill Heeschen, for their boundless enthusiasm for and endless support of my medieval pursuits.

To Luke, whose love and support are woven into every word I write.

Perhaps the most indispensable thing we can do as human beings, every day of our lives, is remind ourselves and others of our complexity, fragility, finiteness, and uniqueness.

- Antonio Damasio*, Descartes' Error*

ABSTRACT

The surviving corpus of Old English poetry presents the mind (Old English *mod*) as a corporeal entity, a part of the self in and of the body. In contrast, Modern English more often conceptualizes the mind as an isolated entity—a piece of the self, tethered to the body, sometimes ephemeral, sometimes eternal, but largely insulated from the direct influence of other minds and bodies. Most modern studies of early medieval English mentality and mental states focus on the mind in isolation. Very few approaches deal with more than one mind at a time or how minds might interact with one another. This dissertation explores how the early medieval English conceptualization of the *mod* shaped literary depictions of the mental aspect of interpersonal relationships in Old English poetry. The corporeal *mod* offered opportunities for forming deep connections but also posed a danger to an individual's interior self and, by extension, the individual's community. I hypothesize the *mod*-meeting scenario to describe a cognitive process that encompasses both physical and mental interactions and is unavailable to the dualistic mind-body discourse of speakers of Modern English. Its representation in texts presents us with situations and responses that are unfamiliar to our own cognitive processes but which were intrinsic and generative in the poetry of early medieval England. Chapter One explores how the nature of the *mod* affects interpersonal relationships and social interactions. Chapter Two explores the tensions of the *mod*-meeting scenario in the Old English recasting of the foundational Christian narrative in *Genesis B*, where Eve provides a focal point for deeper exploration of the nature of the *mod* and exemplifies the positive and negative ramifications of *mod*-meetings. Chapter Three applies the *mod*-meeting framework to the interactions between an English saint and his companion servant as presented in *Guthlac B* to explore the intersection of Christian and vernacular psychologies and the role of the physical body in ameliorating grief.

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INTRODUCTION: WHEN *MOD*S MEET

The surviving corpus of Old English poetry presents the mind as a corporeal entity, a part of the self in and of the body and thus susceptible to the same external influences. In contrast, Modern English more often conceptualizes the mind as an isolated entity—a piece of the self, tethered to the body, sometimes ephemeral, sometimes eternal, but largely insulated from the direct influence of other minds. Old English poetry as a whole reflects intense interest in the mind. Antonina Harbus has suggested that in early medieval England the "mental world is of far more interest than other possible narrative concerns, such as material culture or social institutions."[1] She observes that the prominence and prevalence of mental experiences "demonstrate that psychology constitutes a definite thematic concern of these texts."[2] Lyric or elegiac poems like *The Wife's Lament* and *The Seafarer* paint complex, psychological portraits of minds in distress, while wisdom poetry like *Maxims* and *Paternal Precepts* deals with proper ways to act and think. Heroic texts like *Beowulf* are popularly thought of as poems about combat and battle, but these texts also offer meditations on how minds might interact, meet, connect, or even pose a danger to other minds when navigating complex social and political situations. In Old English poetry, the mind is presented as both vulnerable to invasion and in need of companionship. This dissertation explores how the early medieval English conceptualization of the mind shaped literary depictions of the mental aspect of interpersonal relationships. The corporeal mind offered opportunities for forming deep connections but also posed a danger to an individual's interior self and the collective knowledge of the community.

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1. Antonina Harbus, *The Life of the Mind in Old English Poetry* (Rodopi, 2002), 25.
2. Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, 3.

During the reign of Alfred the Great (871-899), Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae* was translated from Latin into Old English. The translator (whether Alfred or one of his contemporaries)[3] faced many challenging tasks, including how to translate the Latin terms *anima*, *animus*, and *mens* into the Old English terms *sawol* and *mod*. Translating such abstract concepts between languages is notoriously difficult because there are seldom (if ever) two words that perfectly share meaning. In the case of the Old English *Boethius*, each set of terms reflects a culture's conceptualization of the mind.[4] The Latin terms come from a long tradition of classical philosophy (which in turn shaped Christianity) such that each term implies a connection to rationality and choice as well as an aspect of incorporeality. In comparison, the vernacular psychology embedded in Old English understood the *mod* as a fully corporeal aspect of the self that did not persist after death. The Old English *sawol*, on the other hand, although incorporeal, was an impersonal part of the self with little to no control over the living body. Leslie Lockett suggests that the *Boethius* translator employed a complex, three-fold strategy for determining Old English word choice. In most cases, the deciding factor is whether the focus is on the state of the soul before, during, or after life, but ultimately the dialogues in the *Boethius* force the translator to make choices that clash with one or more aspects of the words *mod* and *sawol*. Where Philosophia weaves the human experience in and out of the confines of the human life

3. It is still a matter of debate if we should understand the translator to be Alfred himself or someone associated with his court. See M. R. Godden, "Did King Alfred Write Anything?" *Medium Ævum* 76 (2007), and Janet M. Bately, "Alfred as Author and Translator," in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul E. Szarmach (Brill, 2015). For a general discussion of the *Consolatio*, see Nicole Guenther Discenza, "The Old English Boethius," in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul E. Szarmach (Brill, 2015).

4. In the discussion of the Boethius translation, I paraphrase Leslie Lockett's analysis in *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (University of Toronto Press, 2011), 315-325. Lockett refers to Alfred as the translator; I leave it unspecified (see previous note).

span, the translator, working within the confines of a psychology that sees death as the divider between the mind and the soul, struggles to convey this continuity.[5]

This translation decision also underscores a deeper methodological problem of universalizing cultural constructs. The ineliminable challenge of navigating ingrained cultural constructs of the self can be found across many disciplines, from literature and linguistics to neuroscience and psychology. The concept of the "mind" is both universal and individual—that is, in its broadest sense as a part of the internal self, it exists in all human cultures and languages, yet within these no two conceptualizations of "mind" are identical. From a linguistic perspective, "mind" is an ethnopsychological personhood construct (EPC), a culture's distinct way of understanding what constitutes the self. The use of Modern English as an academic *lingua franca* can result in the unintentional positioning of English words and constructs as the baseline from which we measure all human experience.[6] When the word *mind* is used to refer to mental qualities and functions of the interior self, it necessarily brings with it certain assumptions about the EPC English *mind*. When the majority of research is conducted by English speakers, a potential result is the implicit assumption that the English *mind* of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries can serve as a standard, objective concept to be used to analyze other cultures' constructs. This is the case as much for premodern cultures as for modern cultures.

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5. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, death is repeatedly described as a separation (*gedal*) in Old English.

6. For an overview on historical and recent scholarship on Anglocentrism, see Carsten Levisen, "Biases We Live by: Anglocentrism in Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences," *Language Sciences* 76 (2019). Levisen also notes that this is not a problem only with English, but with any language that would dominate the field: "The issue is not English as such, but the distorting effects of the naturalization of Anglo metalinguistic categories in global studies of language, life, and living" (2). A possible approach to combat this Anglocentrism is the development of Natural Semantic Metalanguage. See Anna Wierzbicka, *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations* (Oxford University Press, 1992), and Anna Wierzbicka and Cliff Goddard, *Words and Meanings: Lexical Semantics Across Domains, Languages, and Cultures* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

In studying the mind in early medieval England, we can learn more by considering how modern English EPCs might affect our understanding of the qualities and functions of the mind in Old English. This dissertation, like much research on the mind, is written in English,[7] so in speaking of the "mind" it is natural to think first of the English *mind*, a concept that differs in many ways from its Old English counterpart *mod*. The mind EPC in early medieval England as indicated by the Old English *mod* differs from the Modern English *mind* in the following ways:[8]

- Where the *mind* separates the mental faculties from the physical body, the *mod* is integrated in the body.
- The *mind* is located in the head, while the *mod* is located in the chest.
- The *mind* is the seat of rational thought in comparison to the body, which is the seat of sense and feeling. The *mod* contains both intellectual and emotional content and faculties.

In these examples, the Modern English *mind* is primarily characterized by its separation from the physical body, a pervasive concept and an artifact of Cartesian mind-body dualism.[9] Many twentieth-century philosophers have pushed back against this concept of the mind, with Ryle, for instance, arguing that the modern conceptualization of the mind inherited from Descartes is

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7. While some scholars will describe this problem as one of "Western" culture, Anna Wierzbicka makes it clear that the divisions lie along both cultural *and* linguistic lines—even mind terms in other "Western" cultures will clash with the qualities denoted by English *mind*. For example, French *âme,* German *Seele*, and Russian *duša* all share some qualities with English *mind* and some with English *soul*, but to believe that any of them are directly equivalent to *mind* or *soul* would be a serious error (*Semantics, Culture, and Cognition,* 40-44).

8. These qualities are generally agreed upon by scholars of early medieval England and will be discussed in further detail in Chapter One.

9. Descartes' philosophy of the mind envisions the self to be independent from the body: "From that I knew that I was a substance, the whole essence of nature of which is to think, and that for its existence there is no need of any place, nor does it depend on any material things; so that this 'me,' that is to say, the soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from body, and is even more easy to know than is the latter; and even if body were not, the soul would not cease to be what it is" (*The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, trans. by Elizabeth Sanderson Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Dover, 1995), 101).

"false not in detail but in principle."[10] Although Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* has been called the "nail in the coffin" of Cartesian dualism,[11] the division has left lasting marks in many fields. Western medical practice more often focuses on the health of the body, relegating the health of the mind to psychology, but this division has begun to weaken as scientists gain more clarity about the connections between mental and physical health. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio argues convincingly that this division is not tenable and that Descartes' philosophy errs in "the separation of the most refined operations of mind from the structure and operation of a biological organism."[12] In the fields of linguistics and philosophy, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson write that "there is no Cartesian dualistic person, with a mind separate from and independent of the body, sharing exactly the same disembodied transcendent reason with everyone else. … Rather, the mind is inherently embodied, reason is shaped by the body, and since most thought is unconscious, the mind cannot be known simply by self-reflection."[13] Despite these developments, Cartesian dualism remains a fundamental aspect of how English speakers conceptualize the mind. As discussed further in Chapter One, the conceptual metaphors that help

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10. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Hutchinson, 1949), 16.

11. Julia Tanney, "Gilbert Ryle," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed January 5, 2025, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2022/entries/ryle/.

12. Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (G.P. Putnam, 1994), 249-250. It is also important to note that Anglo conceptualizations of the dualistic mind and body are in the minority compared to global conceptions of mind. The 2008 collection *Culture, Body, and Language* (ed. Farzad Sharifian, et al.) brings together studies on the conceptualization of the mind across a wide range of cultures and languages from Europe, East Asia, Australia, and the Middle East. This collection demonstrates the breadth of mind constructs at even the basic level of locating the mind—the abdomen (often the liver, sometimes other organs) is favored in South Asian and Polynesian cultures, the heart is common in East Asian and historical European cultures, and the head in Northern Africa and Greek-influenced cultures, including the modern Europe and the United States. While each study contained in the volume is valuable in its own right, it is the force of the studies as a whole that overwhelming demonstrates the risks of using one language (in this case, English) to describe the constructs embedded in another.

13. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (Basic Books, 1999), 5.

us concretize abstract ideas are embedded in our language. Traditional phrases like "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" play on the separation between mental and physical, implying that the mind is sealed off from the physical experience of the body.[14]

Although the duality of mind and body is to an extent embedded in the language of Modern English, it is not present in all historical versions of English, and the study of Old English literature can provide important insights into past conceptualizations. The richness of content related to the mind in Old English poetry[15] was observed in 1985 by Malcolm Godden, whose foundational study "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind" offers a series of observations about the qualities and concepts of mind found in early medieval English texts.[16] A major part of Godden's work deals with understanding the early medieval English philosophy of the mind and the intellectual traditions that led to it. In the Christian tradition, the self is composed of the body and the soul; the body is grounded in the physical world while the soul (and by extension the mind) are the incorporeal parts of a person drawn to the spiritual world. In the vernacular tradition, the mind is part of the physical body and functions as a container for emotions, thoughts, and other mental faculties.[17] Soon Ai Low has suggested that the various descriptions of the mind in early medieval English texts would be better understood as either philosophical or

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14. As we will see in Chapter Two, it is quite possible for words to have a physical effect on the body in Old English poetry.

15. Although this project focuses on the rich evidence found in Old English poetry, there remains plenty more to explore from Old English and Anglo-Latin prose and Latin poetry. Leslie Lockett's *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies* and Katherine Norcross' dissertation "The Functions of Empathy in Anglo-Saxon England" (University of Illinois, Urbana – Champaign, 2019) engage with a variety of non-poetic texts in both Old English and Latin to advance our understanding of the early medieval English mind.

16. Malcolm Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind," in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

17. Britt Mize, "The Representation of the Mind as an Enclosure in Old English Poetry," *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (2006).

common sense psychologies.[18] Lockett has developed these observations further with her in-depth study of the intersection of Latin and vernacular psychologies in early medieval England.[19] She finds that although both traditions are present in the written record, the vernacular understanding of the mind as a corporeal part of the body was likely far more widespread than the Platonic-Christian division of the body and soul.

Work on the Old English mind has also led to a range of thematic and methodological studies. Harbus' work on the mind in early medieval England spans two decades and includes numerous books and articles that address broad themes, provide detailed analysis of crucial passages, and the explore the integration of cognitive science frameworks into Old English studies.[20] Britt Mize examines the interest in mental interiority as it was integrated in Old English poetic tradition:

> There was a perception on the part of the poets, presumably shared by their audiences, that the matter of interior experience was interesting in ways that made it suitable not just for mention, or even for frequent mention, but for prominent, continual presence via the highly stylized expression of traditional alliterative verse.[21]

Mize argues from the poet's heavy attention to mentalities that the "characters" in Old English poetry "embody a state of mind."[22] They "are a narrative vehicle for a desired subjectivity, a peg

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18. Soon Ai Low, "Approaches to the Old English Vocabulary for 'Mind,'" *Studia Neophilologica* 73, no. 1 (2001): 20.

19. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*.

20. See, for example, *The Life of the Mind*; *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry* (Boydell & Brewer, 2012); "The Medieval Concept of the Self in Anglo-Saxon England," *Self and Identity* 1, no. 1 (2002).

21. Britt Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities: The Old English Poetics of Mentality* (University of Toronto Press, 2013), 9.

22. Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities*, 17.

on which the poet may hang something that matters more than they do"—namely, the state of mind the poet wishes to explore.[23] Moreover, Mize finds that in cases where Old English poetic works draw from identified source materials, the poets consistently maintain or increase the source text's interest in mentality.[24] The largest category of recent studies on the mind, however, is that of individual feelings and mental states, such as anger, grief, and fear.[25] The history of emotion studies in Old English and the medieval world is a relatively young field,[26] and it has been integral to advancing our understanding of historical mentalities.[27] Alice Jorgensen's work explores emotional practice—"ways that texts provide means to control emotions, process them, invoke them as markers of identity, and voice them as relational strategies."[28] The studies collected in Jorgensen's edited volume *Anglo-Saxon Emotions* offer a variety of methodologies for understanding the role of emotions in early medieval texts, including literary, cognitive, and linguistic approaches.[29]

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23. Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities*, 18.

24. Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities*, 19-20. Also see Mize's discussion of the *Genesis B* translator, ibid. 83 and 147-48.

25. Michiko Ogura, "Verbs of Emotion with Reflexive Constructions," in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. Christian Kay and Louise Sylvester (Brill, 2001); Małgorzata Fabiszak, *The Concept of 'Joy' in Old and Middle English: A Semantic Analysis* (Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu, 2001); Małgorzata Fabiszak, "A Semantic Analysis of FEAR, GRIEF and ANGER Words in Old English," in *A Changing World of Words: Studies in English Historical Lexicography, Lexicology and Semantics*, ed. by Javier E. Díaz Vera (Brill, 2002); Dirk Geeraerts and Caroline Gevaert, "Hearts and (Angry) Minds in Old English," in *Culture, Body, and Language: Conceptualizations of Internal Body Organs across Cultures and Languages*, ed. Farzad Sharifian, René Dirven, Ning Yu, and Susanne Niemeier (Mouton de Gruyter, 2008).

26. See Barbara Rosenwein's foundational work, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 2006).

27. I have omitted a discussion of studies of affect. Affect studies, particularly the study of affective piety, are numerous and beyond the scope of this project. In Chapter Three, I will touch briefly on affectivity.

28. Jorgensen, *Emotional Practice in Old English Literature* (Boydell & Brewer, 2024), 5.

29. Jorgensen, Alice, Frances (Frances Mary) McCormack, and Jonathan Wilcox, eds, *Anglo-Saxon Emotions: Reading the Heart in Old English Language, Literature and Culture* (Ashgate, 2015).

Most studies of mentality and mental states focus on the mind in isolation. Very few approaches deal with more than one mind at a time, or how minds might interact with one another. One such work in this minority is Eleni Ponirakis' recent study of the mind, which focuses on the role of "mental acts, rather than the mind itself," specifically how the mind functions as "an agent of action."[30] Ponirakis takes as an example the comparison of the Devil entering a sinner's mind to that of an army invading a fortress found in *Juliana*.[31] In this comparison, the mind of a believer acts as that of the fortress and the Devil breaks through the fortifications.[32] Katherine Norcross also considers interaction between minds in her dissertation on narrative empathy, which provides an extended critical inquiry of how minds can feel "with" each other in early medieval English texts. Norcross' study theorizes the possibility of narrative empathy as a tool in Old English prose and verse, both sacred and secular. *Empathy* is an anachronistic term, but Norcross acknowledges this and so draws on additional terms like co-feeling and fellow-feeling to describe the phenomenon.[33] Modern empathy, however, is predicated on Cartesian mind-body dualism and the idea that imagining—rather than directly observing or feeling—another's mind is the closest we can get to knowing another. The possibility for direct influence of one *mod* on another is therefore not possible in the Cartesian model of the mind. Common phrases in Modern English like "a meeting of the minds" or "get inside someone's head" may imply an ability to form a physical connection, but the phrases

30. Eleni Ponirakis, *Thought and Action in Old English Poetry and Prose* (De Gruyter, 2024), 6 and 2.

31. Ponirakis, 132-36.

32. Mize's also comments on this passage: "What is of primary importance, both in the Gregorian version of the soul-as-fortress motif and in *Vainglory* and *Juliana*, is that the diabolical attack targets the desiring, volitional part of the self, which for Old English poets is generally the *mod* (or some aspect of it) and not the *sawol*" ("Representation of the Mind," 81).

33. Norcross, 4-9.

remain metaphorical because the mind is conceived as a non-physical entity. The *mod*, on the other hand, is a corporeal aspect of the self, an embodiment of one's inner self integrating a range of cognitive faculties. In a social context, this creates the potential for a very different experience of community—one in which proximity to one's mind directly related to proximity to the body. The basic building block for social contexts is the relationship between two individuals. Early medieval English world-ordering themes and motifs occur throughout Old English poetry, and at the root of many of these is the dyad:

> Anglo-Saxon wisdom poetry and gnomic verse have long been noted for their investment in order and structure. Poetic devices such as comparison and contrast, similarity and opposition, duality of thinking … a reliance on lists and numbering, and binary forms such as cause and effect and logical pairings … all figure prominently in a genre often identified as "inherently structural" in nature.[34]

Structurally, the poetic meter is built on the joining of half-lines by alliteration to create a full line. Thematically, objects and concepts often appear in the formulaic *X ond Y* half-lines, or as the two elements in a maxim. The pair-ordering found in early medieval England should not be assumed to be related to the kind of binary duality popularized by postmodern literary criticism; early medieval English duals often function cooperatively, not contrastively. Whereas duals like dark/light represent opposed pairs, the two parts of the *X ond Y* formula of Old English poetry complement each other. Just as dualities and paired relationships serve as fundamental

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34. Stacy S. Klein, "Parenting and Childhood in *The Fortunes of Men*," in *Childhood & Adolescence in Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*, ed. Winfried Rudolf and Susan Irvine (University of Toronto Press, 2018), 100-101. Here Klein also cites Nigel Barley, "Structure in the Cotton Gnomes," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78, no. 3 (1977): 245, and Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (University of Toronto Press, 1988), 48.

organizing principles for understanding the world, the dynamic between two *mod*s forms a basic structure for organizing communities and social spaces.

In the following chapters, I explore how the conceptualization of the mind in Old English poetry provides a framework of expectations for interpersonal relationships. Chapter One explores how the nature of the *mod* affects interpersonal relationships and social interactions. I propose the *mod*-meeting scenario—a literary situation in which two individuals' *mod*s interact in a way that encompasses both the corporeal and incorporeal. I review various conceptualizations of the *mod* and survey a range of Old English narrative poetry (*The Wanderer*, *Beowulf, Vainglory,* and *Paternal Precepts*) to understand how these texts represent expectations for interpersonal relationships. Although dating the composition of Old English texts is challenging to say the least, the surviving manuscripts which contain these poems were created within at most a century of each other and so can be taken to indicate a literary commonplace, if not necessarily a more broadly indicated cultural commonplace.[35] These texts all refer to the issue of mental accessibility and its benefits and drawbacks. *The Wanderer* depicts a man attempting to "bind" his mind while simultaneously longing for companionship. In *Beowulf*, forming mental connections is of utmost importance to the well-being of Hrothgar and Hygelac. Wisdom poems like *Vainglory* and *Paternal Precepts* warn against letting one's mind

35. *The Wanderer, Vainglory,* and *Paternal Precepts* are found in the Exeter Book, which dates to the late tenth century. The *Beowulf* manuscript (or Nowell Codex), dates to ca. 1000. The poems studied in Chapters Two and Three also date to the same period: *Guthlac B* is in the Exeter Book and *Genesis B* is found in the Junius manuscript, also late tenth century. See Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, A*nglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (University of Toronto Press, 2014), entries 257 (Exeter), 640 (Junius), and 399 (Beowulf).

be influenced by another. Conflicting messages about mental control reflect a deep anxiety about navigating between the desire for and danger of community.

The *mod*-meeting scenario in Old English poetry provides a framework for understanding the simultaneous desire for companionship and a wariness of forming connections. Chapter Two explores the tensions of the *mod*-meeting scenario in *Genesis B*, where within the foundational Christian narrative Eve provides a focal point for deeper exploration of the nature of the *mod* and exemplifies the positive and negative ramifications of *mod*-meetings. I argue that this retelling of the biblical Genesis is not just about the fall of the individual but the way that one individual's fall impacts the community as a whole. Paired relationships are present throughout the narrative as it survives and the poem reflects deep interest in the risks and benefits of forming them. Eve can be understood not only in her gendered role as a woman but also in her social role as a companion to Adam. Her "weak mind" has been traditionally interpreted as a negative quality connected to her gender, but it can also be understood as a direct result of her role as a companion and her desire to form community. When Eve's *mod* is invaded by the Devil he does not simply persuade her to take action rhetorically; he physically controls her perception of the world. Eve falls because of her community-oriented conscience, yet community is simultaneously held up as desirable. As in Chapter One, the dangers of companionship are not necessarily a reason for isolation, rather they are a risk that must be attended to and considered during the course of socialization.

Chapter Three applies the *mod*-meeting framework to *Guthlac B*, with its more contemporaneous setting for early medieval readers, to explore the intersection of Christian and vernacular psychologies and the role of the physical body in ameliorating grief. In this poem, *mod*-meeting serves as a psychological groundwork for Guthlac to guide his servant to a more

Christian method of dealing with grief. Guthlac is a fitting focus for exploring the intersections of vernacular and Christian psychology because he straddles the sacred and secular worlds and embodies values from both. His *Vita* is one of the first in England written for a king rather than a religious community, and he himself is a former pagan and nobleman with a detailed lineage up until his conversion at the age of twenty-four. Despite his eremitic lifestyle, he deeply values companionship. Where narratives about other eremitic saints, both continental and insular like Anthony and Cuthbert, depict them as seeking out and reveling in isolation, Guthlac's temptations occur during and because of isolation. Like Guthlac, the servant fears isolation which drives his grief. Although previous scholarship has interpreted the servant's grief as an antithesis to Guthlac's sanctity, reading the character of the servant in *Guthlac B* alongside the characters in the *Vita* suggests that the servant will be able to find comfort in the body of Christ. Guthlac blends vernacular psychology of the *mod* with Christian theology of the body to comfort his mourning friend.

This dissertation as a whole explores how the conceptualization of the mind evidenced in Old English poetry shapes expectations for and interactions in interpersonal relationships and community dynamics, and the analysis in the pages that follow makes clear that the corporeal status of the *mod* created a way of "co-feeling" with someone that is fundamentally different from the culturally modern conceptions of a non-physical mind in the Western academic tradition. In the vernacular psychology of early medieval England, for one mind to share something with another is more than a metaphorical meeting—it creates a connection that is both physical and mental. *Mod*-meeting is then effectively a kind of cognitive process between two individuals that cannot exist in the environs of dualistic body-mind discourse. Its representation

in texts presents us with situations and responses that are unfamiliar to our own cognitive processes but which were intrinsic and generative in the poetry of early medieval England.

CHAPTER ONE: THE *MOD*-MEETING SCENARIO

Nis nu cwicra nana
þe ic him modsefan minne durre
sweotule asecgan. Ic to soþe wat
þæt biþ in eorle indryhten þeaw,
þæt he his ferðlocan fæste binde,
healde his hordcofan, hycge swa he wille. (9b-14)
(No one is now living to whom I dare openly express my mind. I know it as true that it is a noble custom among lords, that one should bind fast his mind-enclosure, hold his treasure-chamber, think as he will.)[36]

In these often-cited lines from *The Wanderer*, the "eard-stapa" (earth-walker) reflects on two possible reactions to his loneliness. First, he longs for a companion to whom he may "sweotule" (openly) express his heart, and second, he recognizes that the customary course of action for someone in his position would be to "bind" or "hold" his mind. The speaker goes on to outline his attempt to bind his mind but almost immediately returns to lamenting his isolation. He longs to find "þone þe in meoduhealle min mine wisse, / oþþe mec freondleasne frefran wolde" (one who in the mead-hall might know me or would comfort friendless me, 27-28). Some scholars have read this poem in the context of Christian Stoicism, suggesting that the speaker's

36. *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 3 (Columbia University Press, 1936), 134-137. All references to *The Wanderer* are from this edition. All translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.

"mind-binding" is an attempt to conceal or repress his emotional state.[37] As Robin Norris observes, however, though the speaker says one should bind his mind, he proceeds to *un*bind his mind to the reader for the remainder of the poem.[38] I suggest that this irony is a result of the speaker feeling a simultaneous desire for and wariness of forming emotional connections with others. This trope is common in Old English poetry—the narrator of *The Seafarer*, for instance, both longs for and suffers from isolation—but scholarship often seeks to interpret the text in the context of the desire for or the danger of rather than focusing on the tension between the two. In this chapter, I consider the two sides of the problem in tandem and hypothesize the *mod*-meeting scenario as represented in Old English poetry. I define this as a cognitive process that occurs when two individuals who are speaking together are able to exact physical influence on one another (often but not necessarily a willful influence) without a physical connection.

Conceptualizing the Mind

Attempts to define a culture's understanding of the boundaries, qualities, and functions of the human mind are more likely to be persuasive if approached with an awareness of one's inherent beliefs about the mind. As discussed in the Introduction, the Modern English word *mind*

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37. See F. N. M. Diekstra, "*The Wanderer* 65b-72: The Passions of the Mind and the Cardinal Virtues," *Neophilologus* 55 (1971): 73-88; Thomas D. Hill, "The Unchanging Hero: A Stoic Maxim in *The Wanderer* and Its Contexts," *Studies in Philology* 101, no. 3 (2004): 233–49; and Daniel Anlezark, "From Elegy to Lyric: Changing Emotion in Early English Poetry," in *Understanding Emotions in Early Europe*, ed. Michael Champion and Andrew Lynch (Brepols, 2015). For other interpretations of the binding practices in *The Wanderer*, see Megan Cavell, *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies: The Poetics of Human Experience in Old English Literature* (University of Toronto Press, 2016): 227-230; Francis Leneghan, "Preparing the Mind for Prayer: *The Wanderer*, *Hesychasm* and *Theosis*," *Neophilologus* 100 (2015): 121-142; and Alice Jorgensen, *Emotional Practice in Old English Literature* (Boydell & Brewer, 2024), 1-28.

38. Robin Norris, "Sad Men in *Beowulf,*" in *Dating Beowulf: Studies in Intimacy*, ed. Daniel C. Remeiner and Erica Weaver (Manchester University Press, 2020), 211. Leslie Lockett points out a similar potential misreading in the relationship between Beowulf and Hrothgar. Hrothgar is said to control his emotions, but at the same time he openly embraces Beowulf. In both scenarios, we should not conflate "control" with "conceal" (*Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 83).

refers to an ethnopsychological personhood construct (EPC) that is specific to its cultural milieu. Other cultures and other languages can have very different understandings of the mind and its functions. In English, the *mind* is the seat of thinking functions located in the brain while emotions and feelings are more commonly associated with the *heart*, but this is not present in all or even the majority of modern cultures and languages. In Kuuk Thaayorre, emotions are located primarily in the *ngeengk* (belly).[39] In Basque, emotions are connected with several organs, including the heart, liver, stomach, and intestines.[40] In Chinese, the *xin* (heart) is responsible for cognition.[41] In the modern, academic English in which this dissertation is written, the concept of the mind derives from Cartesian mind-body dualism, in which the rational, nonphysical mind is fully separable from the feeling, physical body. This conceptualization differs significantly from what we know of the mind as it was understood in early medieval England.

Unlike these examples from modern languages, the understanding of the mind in Old English is primarily studied using the written documents that remain. Early medieval English philosophical descriptions of human psychology are few and far between, found only occasionally in religious treatises.[42] The majority of references to the mind and its functions

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39. Kuuk Thaayorre is an endangered Australian aboriginal language. Alice Gaby, "Gut Feelings: Locating Intellect, Emotion and Life Force in the Thaayorre Body," in Sharifian, *Culture, Body, and Language*.

40. Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano, "Guts, Heart and Liver: The Conceptualization of Internal Organs in Basque," in Sharifian, *Culture, Body, and Language*.

41. Ning Yu, "The Chinese Heart as the Central Faculty of Cognition," in Sharifian, *Culture, Body, and Language*.

42. Examples include Alcuin's *De ratione animae*, the Old English *Soliloquies*, and Ælfric's Christmas homily in *The Lives of Saints*. Additional sources include texts that were read and copied in early medieval England, such as patristic and early Christian texts by Augustine, John Cassian, Gregory the Great, and Isidore. See Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies* for a detailed discussion.

come from poetry, which seems to have an inherent interest in exploring the mind.[43] Scholars have also made use of a range of poetic and prose sources to develop an understanding of the early medieval English mind. Godden draws a loose linguistic distinction between classical (specifically Anglo-Latin) and vernacular understandings of the mind.[44] Soon-Ai Low develops this classification further by borrowing the categories common sense psychology (CSP) and scientific psychology (SP) from modern psychology. In this system, CSP "is interested in explaining the particular" while SP "attempts to explain and predict generally."[45] Lockett further develops this division, using the terms "discursive" and "narrative" respectively to distinguish between those texts "whose express purpose is to present generalizations about the nature of human minds and human souls" and those which convey "information about an individual mind or soul in order to explain a particular psychological event that occurs in the course of a larger narrative."[46] In this chapter and throughout the dissertation as a whole, I will focus on the common sense and narrative psychologies represented in Old English poetry to explore various mental states and gain insight into views that may have been held more generally by the early medieval English.

Previous research on the Old English mind or *mod* has identified key characteristics of the *mod* and its role in the context of the whole self.[47] In Old English, the *mod* is a corporeal

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43. Soon Ai Low counts 2720 total occurrences of *mod* (1980 in prose, 416 in verse, and 262 in glosses) not including compounds. See Low, "The Anglo-Saxon Mind: Metaphor and Common Sense Psychology in Old English Literature," PhD diss. (University of Toronto, 1998), 47.

44. Malcolm R. Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind," in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge University Press: 1985).

45. Low, "The Anglo-Saxon Mind," 36, quoting Kathleen V. Wilkes, "The Relationship between Scientific Psychology and Common Sense Psychology," in *Folk Psychology and the Philosophy of Mind,* ed. Scott M. Christensen and Dale R. Turner (L. Erlbaum, 1993), 171.

46. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies,* 19.

47. For recent, detailed overview and discussion, see Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 110-227.

aspect of the self, integrated with the body and containing knowledge, reason, feeling, and emotion. It is one of four components that make up the human, the other three being the body, the life-force, and the soul.[48] The life-force—called variously *feorh*, *ealdor*, and *lif*—is what imbues the body with life.[49] The soul (*sawol*) dwells within the body during life, but it does not influence the person's choices (most importantly whether or not to sin). The *mod* is located within the body, and it dies when the body dies. The *mod* governs intellectual thought as well as emotion. The most common term used to denote the mind is *mod*, but the terms *hyge*, *sefa*, and *ferhð* appear as well and will be read more or less interchangeably with *mod* for the purposes of this dissertation.[50]

The Old English *mod* is most often conceptualized as a container, as seen in the following terms: *breostcofa* (chest chamber), *breostloca* (chest enclosure), *ferhðcleofa* (mind room), *ferhðcofa* (mind chamber), *ferhðloca* (mind enclosure), *modhord* (mind treasure), and *gewitloca* (intelligence enclosure).[51] Throughout the poetic corpus, knowledge and emotions are described

48. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 17-18. In Lockett's analysis of the early medieval English mind, she addresses the philosophical traditions which display bi-, tri-, and quadri-partite anthropologies present in the texts available in early medieval England. Early Christian writers debated bi- and tri-partite anthropologies while vernacular sources, particular narrative and lyric, seem to espouse this quadripartite system. Lockett's distinctions draw in part on Michael Phillips' philological dissertation on mind-words ("Heart, Mind, and Soul in Old English: A Semantic Study," PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1985). Philips groups words for the mind into three categories: heart, mind, and soul.

49. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies,* 17-18.

50. *Mod* is the most common of the four (see note 43). *Hyge*, *sefa*, and *ferhð,* on the other hand, are found almost exclusively in poetry. See Low, "The Anglo-Saxon Mind," and Roberta Frank, "Poetic words in late Old English prose," in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English*, ed. M. R. Godden, D. Gray, and T. Hoad (Oxford, 1994)). Most scholars agree that the terms can be grouped together (Godden, 289; Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 34-35; Low, "The Anglo-Saxon Mind," 20), but others have argued that each term denotes a different mental faculty, for example Phillips, "Heart, Mind, and Soul," and Richard North, *Pagan Words and Christian Meanings* (Rodopi, 1991).

51. This list provides a sample of the containment imagery; it is far from exhaustive. I have translated each half of the compounded terms literally to highlight the aspects of containment.

as being located, stored, placed in, or retrieved from some kind of container. When Beowulf speaks to the Danes on the beach, for example, he "wordhord onleac" (unlocked his word-hoard, 259b) and before his death, he speaks from his "breosthord" (breast-hoard, 2792a).[52] These descriptions of the mind in Old English poetry often appear highly figurative and metaphorical to a modern reader. While some Old English metaphors may be deliberate, carefully constructed artistic choices made by a poet, others are so deeply enmeshed with language, culture, and cognition that the imagery is understood more literally than metaphorically. To understand to what extent these Old English descriptions of the mind may have been literal or metaphorical, many scholars turn to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). How we understand the role of any given instance of a metaphor depends in part on what kind of metaphor we identify it as. Broadly speaking, metaphors are descriptive figures of speech created for "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another."[53] Conceptual metaphors, however, are more specifically concerned with explaining experiences—they are a way of "understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)."[54] They structure our cognition and inform how we think about the functions and qualities of abstract concepts.

Conceptual metaphors are not merely "a matter of words" but integral to the way that we think and act.[55] For example, modern English uses phrases such as "your claims are

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52. R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, eds., *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 4th ed. (University of Toronto Press, 2008). All references to *Beowulf* are from this edition. Diacritics and editorial markings have been removed for ease of readability.

53. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.

54. Zoltán Kövecses, *Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1.

55. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 3.

indefensible" and "he shot down all of my ideas" to describe how people approach and understand an argument. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that phrases like these are part of the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR.[56] This metaphor is conceptual because it "is one that we live by in this culture; it structures the actions we perform in arguing."[57] In the case of the ARGUMENT IS WAR conceptual metaphor, "this is the *ordinary* way of having an argument," and "[t]he language of argument is not poetic, fanciful, or rhetorical; it is literal."[58] The abstract concept of an ARGUMENT is made sense of through its similarities to the more concrete phenomenon of WAR. The relationship governs not only how we speak about arguments, but how we conceive of them—how we approach them, use or interact with them, and how we expect them to behave. ARGUMENT IS WAR entails that arguments are antagonistic and divisive, that the participants either win or lose, and that one side will always come out on top.

Multiple conceptual metaphors can also be applied to the same abstract idea, and authors may draw on different metaphors depending on what they want to say. For example, another conceptual metaphor for the target domain ARGUMENT is ARGUMENT IS CONSTRUCTION, from which we get phrases like "the argument has a solid foundation" and "I will build on her argument." Both conceptual metaphors are valid and available to authors. Many target domains can be understood through multiple conceptual metaphors. LIFE IS A JOURNEY makes us think about life differently than LIFE IS A THEATER PLAY. The two realities we construct from these metaphors highlight different aspects of the complicated idea of LIFE. Neither reality is right or wrong, or more literal or more concrete. Rather, an author selects which conceptual metaphor to

56. I summarize one of Lakoff and Johnson's examples from *Metaphors,* 3-5. Using small caps is the typographical convention for indicating conceptual metaphors.

57. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 4.

58. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 5.

draw on in order to highlight different aspects of LIFE. If LIFE is challenging, it might be because the path is treacherous in the JOURNEY metaphor or the actors are aware of their artifice in the THEATER PLAY metaphor. Availability of a range of conceptual metaphors, however, does not mean that every metaphor is conceptual. To return to the ARGUMENT concept, Lakoff and Johnson consider the framework ARGUMENT IS DANCE which is not common in English.[59] Under this conceptual metaphor, our attitudes toward arguments could change drastically—arguments would not need to conclude with a winner and loser and the two participants in an argument might be viewed as working together or collaborating to create something they couldn't achieve as individuals. An individual author could use this metaphor artistically in a text, but it would not be considered conceptual in English because it does not dictate how we conceive of arguments.

CMT has been productively applied to many descriptions of mental states and functions in Old English poetry to explain apparent inconsistencies and discrepancies. Matto, for example, uses THE MIND IS A CONTAINER to explain how the act of crying can be interpreted in a range of scenarios.[60] In *Guthlac B*, Guthlac announces his imminent death to his servant. As sorrow in the servant grows, he "onbæru / habban ne meahte" (could not hold [his anger], 1054a-55b) and his sorrows overflow from his mind in the form of tears.[61] In contrast, the eponymous hero of *Elene* cries when she is "gefylled" (filled, 1134b) with the glory of God.[62] Tears are a physical sign of internal mental fullness, whether that fullness comes from sorrow or joy.[63] The speaker in

59. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 5.

60. Michael Matto, "Containing Minds: Mind, Metaphor, and Cognition in Old English Literature," PhD diss. (New York University, 1998).

61. *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 3 (Routledge, 1936), 49-88. All references to *Guthlac B* are from this edition.

62. *The Vercelli Book,* ed. George Philip Krapp, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 2 (Columbia University Press, 1932), 66-102. All references to *Elene* are from this edition.

63. Matto, "Containing Minds," 60.

Judgment Day II commands his eyes to cry when he is reflecting on his sins. In this act of compunction, tears are not necessarily the result of fullness, but a deliberate expelling of sins and guilt.[64] In each example, the containment metaphor remains constant, "but the purposes to which the writers put their metaphors varied widely."[65] Harbus has applied CMT to understand the apparently contradictory metaphor in *The Seafarer* where the mind is described as both bound and wandering. The narrator says that "min hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan" (my mind wanders over the chest enclosure, 58) but later states that one must "stieran" (steer) a mind and "staþelum healdan" (hold [it] in place, 109).[66] Harbus has postulated that the problem of the wandering mind in *The Seafarer* is not inconsistent with an enclosed mind, but the intersection of several conceptual metaphors including THE MIND IS A CONTAINER and THE MIND IS A WANDERING ENTITY within the larger significance of maritime imagery.[67] The poet draws on a common stock of maritime images, and the ship stands in as representative of an entity that is both an enclosure (a boat containing goods and people) as well as something that wanders (a boat under sail).[68]

Mize pushes THE MIND IS A CONTAINER metaphor further by discussing the properties of "containment and exclusion" that reveal beliefs about permeability, privacy, and interiority.[69] Taking the mind's permeability into account, he theorizes four ways that a mind can interact with the information inside and outside of it. The mind can hold or release its own contents, and it can

64. Matto, "Containing Minds," 62.
65. Matto, "Containing Minds," 63.
66. *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 3 (Routledge, 1936), 143-147. All references to *The Seafarer* are from this edition.
67. Antonina Harbus, "The Maritime Imagination and the Paradoxical Mind in Old English Poetry," *Anglo-Saxon England* 39 (2010).
68. Harbus, "The Maritime Imagination," 41.
69. Mize, "Enclosure," 72.

repel and admit external information.[70] The mind plays an active role in determining what can and cannot enter it. This has far-reaching implications for interpretations of morality, especially in religious contexts. Ultimately, "the moral value attached to permeability is not fixed, instead remaining eligible for determination by the poets for thematic purposes."[71] Mize cites the speaker of *The Wanderer* (quoted above), who states that it is a "noble custom among lords, that one should bind fast his mind-enclosure," and Juliana, who keeps "Christes lof / in ferðlocan fæste biwunden" (the love of Christ bound tightly in her mind enclosure, 233b-34a).[72] The danger of mental permeability is evidenced further in *Juliana* when the captured devil says that if he meets a warrior who is "hygesnottor" (wise-minded, 386a) and "beald in gebede" (brave in prayer, 388a), he will be forced to retreat (383-390) and "secan oþerne ellenleasran" (seek another less courageous one, 394). A morally weak mind in this case is one that is admitting too much or the wrong kind of information from other minds, and it can be exploited and corrupted.[73]

CMT is not the only way to understand the prevalence of containment imagery in Old English poetry. Lockett argues that such descriptions, though artistic and evocative, may in fact be better understood as literal representations of a physiological understanding of the mind. Lakoff and Johnson maintain that a significant source for conceptual metaphors—particularly metaphors that appear across many cultures—stems from the physical experience of the human

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70. Mize, "Enclosure," 73.

71. Mize, "Enclosure," 73.

72. *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 3 (Routledge, 1936), 113-133. All references to *Juliana* are from this edition. Mize notes these and other examples on pages 73-74.

73. As we will see in examples from *Paternal Precepts*, however, this does not mean that one should refuse to admit any influence on their mind. Minds are expected to share wisdom, meaning that wiser minds must release their contents and learning minds must admit new information.

body.[74] Our verticality, for example, may influence the metaphor GOOD IS UP in phrases such as "things are looking up."[75] Our bodies also feel the physical effects of emotional states; shame and embarrassment are often associated with flushing, and fear and anxiety result in a quickening of the pulse. In a subset of its imagery of containment, Old English also often uses imagery of fluids and temperature to describe mental states. A *mod* in distress often burns, as when the minds of Christ's followers "beorn" (540a) in *Christ II*,[76] while a calm *mod* grows cold, as when Beowulf predicts that Hrothgar's mind will "colran wurðaþ" (grow cooler, 282b). Minds can also "well" or "swell" as when Beowulf's mind becomes "gebolgen" (swollen, 1539b) before his fight with Grendel's mother or when Cain's "hygewælm asteah" (mind-wave rose up, 980b) before he murdered Abel in *Genesis A*.[77]

This variation on the container model, which Lockett refers to as the "hydraulic model,"[78] captures the embodied experience of feeling internal heat and pressure during times of anger and stress. She defines the hydraulic model as

> a loose psycho-physiological pattern, in which psychological disturbances are associated with dynamic changes of pressure and temperature in the chest cavity. These physical changes resemble the behaviour of a fluid in a closed container, which expands and

74. This concept, called embodied realism, is explored in later works from Lakoff and Johnson. See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, "Why Cognitive Linguistics Requires Embodied Realism," *Cognitive Linguistics* 13 (2002); and Mark Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* (University of Chicago Press, 2007).

75. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 16.

76. *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 3 (Routledge, 1936), 3-49. All references to *Christ II* are from this edition.

77. *The Junius Manuscript*, ed. George Philip Krapp, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 1 (Routledge, 1931), 3-87. All references to *Genesis A* are from this edition.

78. Lockett borrows the term "hydraulic model" from the fields of linguistics, psychology, philosophy to distinguish her approach from the CMT "container model" that is more often used by scholars of Old English literature (*Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 5).

> presses outward against the walls of the container when heated, threatening either to boil over or to burst the container if too much heat is applied. When the moment of intense emotion or distress passes, the contents of the chest cavity cool off and are no longer subject to excess pressure, just as if a heat source were removed from a container of boiling liquid.[79]

The basis of CMT is the presence of cross-domain mapping, in which an abstract target domain is understood through comparison to a concrete source domain.[80] Lockett challenges previous applications of CMT to early medieval English conceptualization of the mind by pointing out the possibility that if the "user of that concept acknowledged no substantial distinction between the source domain and the target domain, the cognitive process by which he formed that concept is not really cross-domain mapping, and the resulting concept is not metaphorical."[81] It is possible that over time the source and target domains might be differentiated when "some cultural influence triggers a new recognition that the abstract contents of the target domain are not accurately described by the experientially constrained features of the source domain."[82] Lockett argues that people in early medieval England simply did not distinguish between the domains of MIND and CONTAINER or MIND and FLUID. For them, the mind literally was a container, and often a container filled with liquid.

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79. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 5.

80. Kövecses, 2.

81. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 168. Here Lockett addresses a problem raised by Soon Ai Low: "it may be a mistake to think of Old English melting minds as being metaphorical, because they may reflect actual belief about physiological processes. This is a real problem in using metaphor theory for the investigation of cross-cultural concepts, because we may wrongly perceive conceptual incongruities where non actually exist, or vice versa. It is clearly not, however, a problem with the cognitive approach as a whole, since one of the main objectives of George Lakoff's work has been to demonstrate cultural relativity in categorizations of reality. Our problem is one of insufficient data, not one of inadequate methodology" ("The Anglo-Saxon Mind," 184).

82. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 168.

The conceptual metaphor THE MIND IS A CONTAINER is not unfamiliar to modern audiences—it is still in use today in phrases such as "file it away" and "cram for the exam." We regularly conceive and speak of our minds as having the qualities of containers. From this, we expect our minds to function like containers—that things can go in and out of them, or that they have limited capacity. We might sift through old memories or let something go in one ear and out the other. Sometimes a thought gets stuck in our mind, or we have been exposed to so many new ideas that our brain overflows. Although THE MIND IS A CONTAINER conceptual metaphor exists in both Modern and Old English, it seems much more obviously metaphorical in the modern context, and thus we can easily unconsciously assume it to be universal. Because modern academic discourse often tacitly assumes Cartesian mind-body dualism, we intuitively think that the mind cannot be a literal container. The mind is entirely abstract, existing nebulously as a part of the brain. It is the seat of rationality, separate from the sensuous body. In Old English, however, the mind is physically located within the body—the mind and body are inseparable from one another.

Lockett makes a strong case for the hydraulic model as a literal representation of a physiological state, and she maintains "that only a small fraction of Anglo-Saxon authors used the hydraulic model as a conceptual metaphor."[83] She also stresses that the degree to which a metaphor is perceived as conceptual or literal is a spectrum and that different individuals could have easily had different understandings on the mind.[84] It is unlikely we will be able to identify exactly where on the spectrum of metaphoricity any given reference to containment imagery

83. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 111.
84. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 167-172.

might fall, but it seems probable that the vast majority of them were either literal or part of the early transition from literal to metaphorical.

In the second half of this chapter, I move into textual analysis of four poems, *Beowulf*, *Vainglory*, *The Wanderer*, and *Paternal Precepts*, each of which displays containment imagery as well as a complex social impact of such imagery. The following discussion of the mind in *Beowulf* demonstrates how a more literal interpretation of the container-like qualities of the *mod* plays a crucial role in the social relationships between Beowulf, Hygelac, and Hrothgar.

The *Mod* in Old English Poetry

Beowulf's relationships with Hygelac and Hrothgar illustrate the benefits of a close mental connection between lord and thane. Although it is natural for many readers to focus on Beowulf's physical strength—the poem does draw significant attention to it in many places—his mental qualities form at least as significant a part of his heroic identity. Hrothgar praises Beowulf for being both "mægenes strang ond on mode frod" (strong in might and wise in mind, 1844). Beowulf is also "wis" (wise, 1845a) and speaks insightfully about the emotions that arise from complex socio-political situations, including the pitfalls of peace-weaving and the inconsolable sorrow of King Hrethel. Beowulf avoids conflict and seeks peaceful outcomes where possible, as when he speaks with the coastguard and Wulfgar upon his arrival in Denmark (see below), or when "he geheold tela / fiftig wintra" (held [his kingdom] well for fifty years, 2208a-9b).

In addition to his wisdom and insight, Beowulf also provides mental stability in his relationships with his lords, Hygelac and Hrothgar. Both kings experience excessive heat and "welling," which is only ameliorated by Beowulf's presence. When Beowulf returns to his homeland, Hygelac says, "Ic ðæs modceare / sorhwylmum seað" (I seethed with sorrow-waves

for the mind-care of this [your absence], 1992b-93a). Hygelac's concern for Beowulf and his warriors' safety takes the form of an abundance of heat, such that it risks overflowing his *mod*. Hygelac's use of the past tense implies that Beowulf's physical presence soothes his agitated *mod*.

Beowulf's interactions with Hrothgar demonstrate the hero's soothing effect more overtly. When Beowulf first lands in Denmark, he explains to the coastguard the reason he has come to their shores:

> Ic þæs Hroðgar mæg
> þurh rumne sefan ræd gelæran
> hu he frod ond god feond oferswyðeþ—
> gyf him edwenden æfre scolde
> bealuwa bisigu, bot eft cuman—
> ond þa cearwylmas colran wurðaþ;
> oððe a syþðan earfoðþrage,
> þreanyd þolað þenden þær wunað
> on heahstede husa selest. (277b-285)
>
> (I can give Hrothgar counsel concerning this with [my] roomy mind: how he, wise and good, will overcome the enemy, if a reversal, aid for the cares of afflictions, should ever come to him again, and those care-waves grow cool; otherwise ever after he will suffer distress, sore affliction, as long as that best of houses remains there on the high place.)

Beowulf's explanation highlights the importance of Hrothgar's mental condition and, more importantly, Beowulf's ability to remedy it. Beowulf uses his "roomy mind" in such a way that

Hrothgar's "care-waves grow cool."[85] Hrothgar's mental agitation is expressed through the language of containment, temperature, and pressure. Later, when Beowulf is preparing to leave, Hrothgar experiences welling up of sorrow:

> Wæs him se man to þon leof
> þæt he þone breostwylm forberan ne mehte,
> ac him on hreþre hygebendum fæst
> æfter deorum men dyrne langað
> born wið blode. (1876b-1880a)
> (That man was so dear to him that he could not contain the breast-wave, but firm with mind-bands in his heart, a secret longing burned in his blood for the dear man.)

Hrothgar himself is not associated with any "roomy" adjectives until after Beowulf has offered his "roomy mind" and defeated the Grendel-kin terrorizing Heorot. Hrothgar is described as "rumheort" (roomy-hearted, 2110b) when Beowulf relays his adventures to Hygelac. The "roominess" seems to spread, as if by placing a roomy mind adjacent to an overwhelmed mind, the latter's contents are able to pour out in such a way that the former can absorb them. In the context of Mize's work on the permeability of mental containers, the relationships between Beowulf and his lords suggest a kind of tacit agreement on mutually beneficial permeability. There is no suggestion that Beowulf is forcibly emptying Hrothgar's heated thoughts or that Hrothgar is forcing his thoughts into Beowulf's mind. Rather, the proximity of Beowulf's "roomy" mind reduces the pressurized emotion in Hrothgar's mind.

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85. The "roomy" quality of Beowulf's mind is reiterated when he is described as "rum-heort" (roomy-hearted, 1799a) after destroying Grendel's mother.

The role of the *mod* in these passages is noteworthy not only for its use of containment imagery but also because the *mod*s do not function in isolation. The container and hydraulic models describe the inner workings of the mind and have been used primarily to theorize the concept of the mind and the functions of individual minds in practice. The permeability of containment discussed by Mize, however, hints at the potential interactions between minds, and the examples from *Beowulf* suggest that one person's *mod* may more directly influence another. When two people are in close proximity, the material in one person's *mod* can well up, overflow, and enter into the other person's *mod*. To a modern audience, this phenomenon would seem to be entirely metaphorical. The corporeal aspect of the *mod*, however, suggests the possibility that one *mod* might exert a similarly corporeal influence over another *mod*. I refer to this phenomenon as the *mod*-meeting scenario—a cognitive process in which one person has physical influence over another person without making physical contact with them. This process, thus far identified only in Old English poetry, occurs between two people who are speaking with and in close physical proximity to each other and allows for the conceptualization of interpersonal relationships as physical sites of both opportunity and danger.

Cognitive processes are all the ways that we acquire, process, and store information from the external world. This encompasses a wide variety of functions, including our abilities to imagine possibilities, create language, and store and retrieve memories. Early medieval cognition was likely similar to our own in many ways. Like us, the early medieval English perceived, imagined, reasoned, believed, felt, and dreamed. Because of this similarity, it is easy for modern readers to make assumptions that may not align with the thinking of those who created and consumed the texts that survive. Antonina Harbus explains that it is our ability to recognize shared cognitive processes in Old English poetry that allows these old texts to remain intelligible

today.[86] What she does not address, however, is the possibility that embedded within these poems are cognitive processes which we do *not* share.

Cognitive functions in historical societies can often be inferred because of the many ways that cognition is embodied. Early cognitive science assumed that cognition was a purely biological function and therefore universal in all humans, but recent research suggests that cultural aspects play a major role in shaping cognition.[87] Like the work of linguists on the dominance of English EPCs discussed in the Introduction, cultural psychologists also argue that the dominance of English-speaking academics and sample populations fuels an unconscious assumption that the psychology of the Western, academic, English-speaking world is universal.[88] Because cognition seems to be at least partially culturally determined, it is likely to be un- or mis-identified in a culture as far removed from our own as that of early medieval England. Unlike research into other modern cultural conceptions of the mind, the work of studying the early medieval English *mod* is mediated through a record written in languages that are a

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86. Harbus, *Cognitive Approaches*, 1.

87. For various summaries of this issue, see A. Bender and S. Beller, "Cognition is … Fundamentally Cultural," *Behavioral Science* 3 (2013); Karen Cerulo, Vanina Leschziner, and Hana Shepherd, "Rethinking Culture and Cognition," *Annual Review of Sociology* 47 (2021): 63–85; and Angela Gutchess and Suparna Rajaram, "Consideration of Culture in Cognition: How We Can Enrich Methodology and Theory," *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 30 (2022): 914-931. Bender and Beller state that "the cultural diversity of cognition is one of the most controversial topics in cognitive psychology (and perhaps cognitive science more broadly)" (47-48). An opinion article in *Nature* highlights the growing body of evidence of cultural influence on cognition, but also pushes back on the idea that the mind is separate from the body: Shihui Han and Georg Northoff, "Culture-Sensitive Neural Substrates of Human Cognition: A Transcultural Neuroimaging Approach," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 9 (2008): 646–654.

88. In 2010, Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan argued that the practice of having Western academics conduct research on educated, Western populations created a false sense of universality in cognitive studies ("The Weirdest People in the World?" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33, no. 2-3 (2010): 61-83). As a result, they argue, we don't actually know that much about how culture might influence cognition. For example, it is possible that cultural attitudes toward mentality may influence the development of cognitive processes, as in Penelope G. Vinden, "Junín Quechua Children's Understanding of the Mind," *Child Development* 67, no. 4 (1996): 1707-16.

thousand years removed from our own. A foundational problem to studying the mind, then, is to understand historical philosophies and conceptualizations of the mind and how modern scholars can identify them.

We have only narrative representations of human cognition and mental faculties in a language that, like the context, is at once familiar and distant. This interpretive tension underscores the cognitive tensions present in the literature. The manifold depictions of memory, reading, learning, imagining, and feeling yield a large pool of data from which to extrapolate an understanding, as scholars have been doing, of how the early medieval English thought about and represented their minds even if we do not have direct access to them. I suggest that the qualities of the *mod* discussed above may result in a different kind of cognitive processing of interpersonal communications—one in which one *mod* could influence not only another *mod*, but ultimately another body in a way that the English *mind* could not achieve. Examples from Old English poetry reveal a psycho-physiological conceptualization of the mind that includes the idea that a mind may benefit or endanger the other minds with which it interacts.

Whereas the relationship between Beowulf and Hrothgar demonstrates the soothing effects of a mental connection on an overheated and over-"whelmed" mind, *Vainglory* highlights the dangers posed by such a connection. In this understudied poem, an unnamed narrator recounts the wisdom told to him by a "frod wita" (wise sage, 1a) about how to differentiate between the humble-minded "godes agen bearn" (God's own child, 6b) and the prideful "feondes bearn" (fiend's child, 47b).[89] The contrasting qualities of the proud and humble men are closely aligned with their mental states and how they influence others around them. Mind and heart

89. *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 3 (Routledge, 1936), 147-49. All references to *Vainglory* are from this edition.

words appear often throughout the text, including “breostsefan” (chest-mind, 19a), “modsefan” (mind-mind, 21b), “oferhygdo” (over-mind, 23b), and the very first qualities assigned to the fiend’s child and God’s child are that the former is “oferhygdo” (over-mind, proud, 23b), while the latter is “eaðmod” (easy-minded, 68b).

To illustrate the differences between the proud and humble minds, the poet imagines a feast in a hall full of “wigsmiþas” (war smiths, 14a) sharing memories of battle. The scene highlights the importance of knowledge-sharing, when the warriors

> sittaþ æt symble, soðgied wrecað,
> wordum wrixlað, witan fundiaþ
> hwylc æscstede inne in ræcede
> mid werum wunige, þonne win hweteð
> beornes breostsefan. (15-19a)
> (Sit at the feast, speak true tales, weave words, want to know which battle endures within men when wine whets a man’s breast-mind.)

The mead hall is a space of social gathering, but also a place where communal knowledge is shared and rehearsed. The men share their *mod*s with each other—their knowledge, memories, thoughts, and feelings. As the men recount battles, however, the narrator explains that a separation appears between the child of God and the child of the fiend: “Swa beoþ modsefan / dalum gedæled” (Thus are minds separated into parts, 21a-22b). From this point, the narrator turns to describing the hostile qualities of the fiend’s child and how he spreads the evil contents of his *mod* to others in the hall. Whereas Hrothgar’s *mod* is safely managed by Beowulf’s “roomy” *mod*, this thane’s mental state is poised to have an adverse effect on those around him. The mind of the fiend’s child wells up within him—“þrinteð him in innan / ungemedemad mod”

(the unmeasured *mod* rises within him, 24a-25b)—and overflows, endangering the minds of all the other men in the hall. He "wrenceþ" (twists) and "blenceþ" (deceives) and lets loose his "hyge-gar" (mind-spear) and "sceoteþ" (shoots) arrows while surrounded by his comrades (33-35).

The poet further demonstrates the danger posed by the fiend's child by adapting the conceptual metaphor THE MIND IS A CONTAINER to the more artistic metaphor of the mind as a fortress. The fiend's child

> læteð inwit-flan
> brecan þone burgweal, þe him bebead meotud
> þæt he þæt wigsteal wergan sceolde
> siteþ symbelwlonc, searwum læteð
> wine gewæged word ut faran,
> þræfte þringan þrymme gebyrmed,
> æfæstum onæled, oferhygda ful,
> niþum nearowrencum. (37b-44a)
> (Allows the evil shaft to breach the city wall that the Lord entrusted to him, that he should defend that rampart. He sits proud in feasting, weighed down by wine, lets loose artful words, leavened by glory, presses with quarrel, ignited with envy, full of pride, with evil tricks.)

As Mize has argued, the containment metaphor entails the possibility of mental permeability and a person's responsibility to regulate what goes in and out of their mind. Having control over the permeability of one's mind is necessary to prevent the influence of evil, and comparing the mind to a fortress reinforces the danger that the fiend's child poses to the other warriors. The fortress

simultaneously refers to the fortress of the individual mind as well as the collective minds in the community. Breaching the fortress of one's mind becomes symbolically associated with breaching the fortress that protects everyone inside of it. By letting the fiend into one's own mind, he is also letting the fiend into the minds of those around him. Moreover, this is all done without the knowledge of the other men, suggesting that if a warrior trusts the fiend's child, he allows him to influence his *mod*, which will lead that warrior to evil whether or not he intends it.

The poet lingers on this extended description of the fiend's child and commits only fifteen lines to the description of how to recognize God's child. Brief though it may be, the description of the child of God highlights gentleness and the fostering of peaceful relationships among people:

> Đonne bið þam oþrum ungelice
> se þe her on eorþan eaðmod leofað,
> ond wiþ gesibbra gehwone simle healdeð
> freode on folce ond his feond lufað. (67-70)
> (Then it is not like[90] this for the other, will not be this for the other one, he who humble-minded lives here on earth and always holds peace with each of (his) kinsmen among the people and loves his enemies.)

This person, unlike the child of the fiend, seeks peace with all people, including those who have harmed him. He is characterized primarily by his "humble" mind. Here *mod* appears with *eað,* a term meaning easy, smooth, humble, gentle, and friendly. The effect is similar to that of

90. This would perhaps more appropriately be translated as "different" as other translators have it, but I want to retain the "like." *Ungelice* has a particular valence that emphasizes change and opposition, as observed in Janet Schrunk Ericksen, "Lands of Unlikeness in *Genesis B*," *Studies in Philology* 93, no. 1 (1996): 1-20.

Beowulf's descriptors—the most admirable way for a warrior to behave is in seeking peace and fostering relationships, with a particular mindset that connects with others.

These examples from *Beowulf* and *Vainglory* demonstrate that *mod*-meeting is a process by which one *mod* can permeate another. In *Beowulf*, Hrothgar's *mod* is cooled and calmed by the presence of Beowulf's "roomy" *mod*, as if the excess space were able to relieve the pressure. In *Vainglory*, the differentiation between the thanes is apparent in their actions, but the source of their actions lies in their *mod*s. Like invading forces through a breached wall, the *mod* influenced by evil wells up and flows toward the other *mod*s around it with hostility. More admirable is the one who possesses a *mod* like Beowulf's—one that is cool, calm, and focused on maintaining peaceful relations. Because the Old English *mod* bridges the mind and body, *mod*-meeting has both psychological and the physiological effects. *Mod*-meeting is then effectively a result of social interaction that cannot exist in the environs of dualistic body-mind discourse. Its representation in texts will present us with situations and responses that are unfamiliar to our own cognitive processes.

Given the great risks involved in *mod*-meeting, many texts also depict a wariness about forming social bonds without careful consideration. In *Vainglory*, the narrator guides the reader through the text offering interpretation, suggestion, and advice about recognizing the *mod*s of others and protecting one's own *mod* against destructive influence. In the beginning of the poem, the narrator states that he has learned how to "ongitan … godes agen bearn" (perceive God's own son, 6) and "þone wacran … / witan" (know the weaker one, 7a-8b). His subsequent descriptions of the two are intended to provide examples of actions which the audience can observe to distinguish them: "Wite þe be þissum, / gif þu eaðmodne eorl gemete" (Know by

these [descriptions], if you meet a humble-minded man, 77a-78). The narrator closes with this advice:

> Forþon we sculon a hycgende hælo rædes
> gemunan in mode mæla gehylcum
> þone selestan sigora waldend. (82-84)
> (Therefore we, thinking always of the plan of salvation, must remember in mind of the best lord of victories at all times.)

He reassures the audience that if they are wary of prideful men and keep their *mod* fixed on God, they will be able to avoid the temptations of the fiend's child and keep their *mod*s safe. The actions of the fiend's child hint at the potential negative outcomes of trusting the wrong person, which in turn have implications for the fates of the other warriors who have inadvertently or unintentionally allowed him to influence their *mod*s. The fiend's child acts in a way that "þenceð þæt his wise welhwam þince / eal unforcuþ" (he thinks that seems entirely reputable to each, 30-31a), but he betrays the trust of his fellow thanes who are unaware that the fiend's influence is already within the city walls, weakening them from the inside. The deception of the fiend's child in *Vainglory* suggests that the *mod* must be vigilant not only when it is confronting an obvious evil but in any situation where a *mod*-meeting is possible, even among well-known table companions.

While *Vainglory* offers a warning to those who would not diligently guard their minds, *Beowulf* demonstrates that there are many benefits to be gained from creating community through *mod*-meeting. Value is added to life through friendship and love, support networks foster communal and individual resilience, and communication increases shared knowledge. An awareness of this positive outcome of *mod*-meeting enriches our understanding of certain scenes

in Old English poetry. For example, the scene of Beowulf's arrival in Denmark is often read with an emphasis on the Geats as foreigners whom the coastguard views as a threat. In *The Cultural World of* Beowulf, John Hill describes the world of Beowulf as "riven with danger, defensiveness, requirements of honour, customary law, and evolving intentions."[91] His legalistic reading of Beowulf's arrival highlights the aggression of the coastguard as he challenges the Geats upon their arrival. In the later *Narrative Pulse of* Beowulf, Hill acknowledges that "Beowulf's arrival on the beach is especially electric – potentially promising, potentially threatening," but he also states that "[b]asic friendliness is not yet called for."[92] Hill does acknowledge the complexity of the situation and the crucial role that trust plays in it: "Appearances can be deceiving; trust can be badly placed" and "Expectations can be bitterly, grievously belied by subsequent revelations and events."[93] Fabienne Michelet describes the process as a "rite[] of incorporation."[94] Her reading of the scene in the context of hospitality practice does not reflect an inherently aggressive or violent assumption about the scene, but it still stresses the difference and foreign-ness of the visitor.

This arrival scene, however, could also be read as a situation in which the potential benefits of the strangers to the community outweigh the risks. Hrothgar's rule is in danger of collapsing without outside help, yet the Danes cannot immediately welcome Beowulf into the court. The relationship between Beowulf and Hrothgar begins only after Beowulf has come through what is essentially a multi-layer screening process. When the Geats first land on the

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91. John M. Hill, *The Cultural World in* Beowulf *(*University of Toronto Press, 1995)*,* 148.

92. John M. Hill, *The Narrative Pulse of* Beowulf*: Arrivals and Departures* (University of Toronto Press, 2016), 5 and 22.

93. Hill, Narrative Pulse, 23.

94. Fabienne L. Michelet, "Hospitality, Hostility, and Peacemaking in *Beowulf*," *Philological Quarterly* 94, no. 1-2 (2015): 30.

Danish shores, the coastguard approaches them and demands to know who they are and why they have come. Once Beowulf explains that they have come to aid the Danes in their struggle against Grendel and to support Hrothgar in his time of strife, the coastguard leads them to Heorot. Here, the men are stopped before entering the hall by Wulfgar, who again questions their intentions. The Geats are left outside as Wulfgar enters the hall to relay Beowulf's answer to Hrothgar himself. Once Hrothgar hears who Beowulf is, he comments on the political ties between the Geatish and Danish royal families and grants Wulfgar permission to let the Geats enter the hall. Throughout this process, the Danes are carefully assessing Beowulf and his men to ensure he does not pose a threat to their people or leader. The coastguard and Wulfgar must both judge him to not be a threat, and Hrothgar, even then not speaking to Beowulf directly, gives the final word to allow him entrance into the hall.[95]

There is certainly wariness here—the coastguard even says that he must keep watch against invaders and spies. However, at each step, the Danes consistently judge Beowulf's presence in the hall to be worth the risk. The Geats are indeed possibly a danger to the Danes, but only possibly; the Danes, especially Hrothgar, have great need for help and so are willing to test the outsiders as potential helpers. Hrothgar's weakness and the Danes inability to supply their own help raise the stakes further—aid from strangers is both more desirable and more dangerous. If we readers focus only on the threat of the Geats, we will miss half the picture. This series of scenes enacts and externalizes the process of *mod*-meeting in that there is a driving desire to form connection that must be carefully tempered to lessen the risk of disaster. The goal

95. Even at this point the testing is not complete—later that evening Unferth will question Beowulf to find out if he is really as capable as he claims. It is also worth noting that even while remaining cautious, the coastguard and Wulfgar both praise Beowulf's good bearing and mind.

is not to keep people out, but to let the right people—and the potential support their minds can provide—in. In assuming that the fear of foreigners takes precedence, we lose sight of the characters' efforts to form connections. In emphasizing the physical threat, like Hill, or the foreigner-turned-guest, as Michelet, we overlook the Danes' willingness and interest in forming relationships with outsiders.

The instances of *mod*-meeting in *Beowulf* and *Vainglory* demonstrate the positive and negative outcomes of forming mental connections and how an application of this framework assists in our understanding of the poems. It is also necessary to acknowledge that the tensions within *mod*-meeting are not easily resolved. *The Wanderer* and *Paternal Precepts* further demonstrate the complexities of navigating the desire for and risk of forming connections. They do not resolve this tension but hold space for both inclinations simultaneously. The result is not a decisive choice of community or isolation, but a meditation on the struggles faced by the individual as he decides how to act. *The Wanderer* explores this tension within an individual while *Paternal Precepts* considers the effect of the individual's choices in the context of a larger community.

This chapter began with the lines from *The Wanderer* that illustrate the speaker's longing for connection while acknowledging that it is "right" for him to control his mind. A return to this passage and its context now reveals an iterative, internal debate as the narrator weighs his desire for connection with his awareness of the need to protect his mind. The opening lines establish the fate of the speaker—he is "an-haga" (lone-dweller, 1a) who must "wadan wræclastas" (wander the paths of exile, 5a) now that he has suffered the loss of his "winemæga" (friend-kin, 7b). The first half of the poem details his current state of loneliness and longing for companionship, and the second half (beginning with "forþon" (therefore) in line 57) offers a philosophical approach

to finding comfort in his own mind and through his faith in God. Although both halves of the poem are of interest for studying the *mod*, I focus on the first half, in which the speaker is caught between competing desires and attempts to reconcile the conflicting need to protect his mind, to hold it fast, alongside his desire for companionship and understanding.

The opening speech demonstrates the inescapable tension between the longing for companionship and the advice to bind the mind. First, the speaker identifies his loneliness:

> Oft ic sceolde ana uhtna gehwylce
> mine ceare cwiþan. Nis nu cwicra nan
> þe ic him modsefan minne durre
> sweotule asecgan. (8-11a)
> (Often alone, in the dark before dawn, I lament my sorrow. No one is now living to whom I dare openly express my mind.)

In these lines, we glimpse the pain, sorrow, and loneliness felt by those who have lost their companions. Taken in isolation, this passage clearly indicates the desire and possibly even a need for an individual to be able to form mental connections with others. However, the deep emotional yearning for connection in this passage is immediately countered by the subsequent lines in which the narrator acknowledges that someone in his situation is expected to bind his mind shut:

> Ic to soþe wat
> þæt biþ in eorle indryhten þeaw,
> þæt he his ferðlocan fæste binde,
> healde his hordcofan, hycge swa he wille. (11b-14)

(I know it as true that it is a noble custom among lords, that one should bind fast his mind-enclosure, hold his treasure-chamber, think as he will.)

The narrator speaks for several more lines, explaining that mind "binding" is necessary for those who seek to perform great deeds:

Ne mæg werig mod wyrde wiðstondan,
ne se hreo hyge helpe gefremman.
Forðon domgeorne dreorigne oft
in hyra breostcofan bindað fæste. (15-18)

(The weary mind cannot withstand fate, nor the disturbed mind give aid. Therefore the glorious, justice-eager ones often bind fast their breast-chambers.)

The speaker appears not to take this advice; instead, he reflects on his past experience in isolation without a lord or hall. He laments that he longed to find "þone þe in meoduhealle min mine wisse, / oþþe mec freondleasne frefran wolde" (the one in the mead-hall would know my mind or would console friendless me, 27-28). The speaker's thoughts are cyclical—first, he expresses a desire for connection, then he reminds himself that it is necessary to protect one's mind, and finally he returns to his underlying desire to form connection. This sequence emphasizes that forming connections was desirable, even if doing so went against the general wisdom to protect one's mind from outside influence.

Where *The Wanderer* focuses on the individual's experience with the tension of *mod*-meeting, *Paternal Precepts* considers how the individual's struggle connects to the community.

Paternal Precepts[96] belongs to the genre of wisdom poetry, much like the Decalogue and Proverbs in the Judeo-Christian tradition and *Maxims* and *Hávamál* in the Germanic tradition. In addition to providing advice, instruction, and knowledge, wisdom poetry is often an example of world-ordering and the human ability to create order out of chaos through language. The gnomic wisdom of *Paternal Precepts* comprises ten pieces of advice spoken by a "frod fæder" (wise father, 1a) to his child. The advice ranges from commands to trust one's teachers to warnings about forming liaisons with foreign women, but above all it is a poem inciting the son to live virtuously in accordance with Christian teaching. Hansen argues that in addition to providing practical advice, the text is "less concerned with specific injunction" and more interested in "affirming relationship" between the father and his son.[97] There is an inherent level of trust between father and son brought about by the father's natural authority, but, as I will argue below, the father's authority is undercut by the tension between the positive and negative effects that *mod*-meeting introduces to the practice of knowledge-sharing.

One of the key themes in *Paternal Precepts* is the role of the *mod* in both teaching and learning. *Mod* is addressed throughout the poem with the four words that indicate the mind (*mod, hyge, sefa, ferð*) appearing sixteen times in this 94-line poem. The poet also uses several words that refer to the chest (the seat of the mind) and words that mean or refer to thoughts. The father's authority derives from his *mod*—he is described as a "modsnottor mon" (mind-wise man, 2a), and his advice is taken from his "breostgehygdum" (chest-thoughts, 22a). A significant

96. This poem is also known simply as *Precepts.* Eric Stanley, however, notes the importance of specifying that they are *paternal* precepts, as will become relevant in the analysis ("Exeter Book: *Paternal Precepts*—An Edition, with Translation, and Comments," *Anglia* 136, no. 2 (2018): 277).

97. Hansen, 47.

part of this message involves the son learning how to protect and develop his *mod*. According to Precept Six,[98] the son must learn

> hwæt sy god oþþe yfel,
> ond toscead simle scearpe mode
> in sefan þinum ond þe a þæt selle geceos. (45a-47)
> (What is good and evil and always separate (them) with a sharp mind in your understanding and always choose the better for you.)

It is imperative that the son make good choices and protect his *mod* lest he become corrupted like those with weak minds in *Vainglory* and *Juliana*. By learning from his father's wisdom and developing his *mod*, the son will be able to avoid the pitfalls of sin and temptation.

In addition to the poem's general preoccupation with fostering minds, the frame narrative of the father teaching his son provides an opportunity to reflect on the complicating role of individual *mod*-meeting in the communal context of wisdom-sharing. Old English poetry has many references to wisdom and knowledge sharing practices. Phrases like "þe us secgað bec" (as books tell us, 68b) in *Battle of Brunanburh*[99] and "swa ic gehyrde" (as I have heard, 12a) in the *Journey Charm*[100] give us a glimpse into how knowledge was received and transferred, and how sourcing provided credibility. The cultural prerogative to share wisdom is made explicit in the first lines of *Maxims I*:

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98. The poem is comprised of ten iterations of a father giving advice to his son. Precept One is not numbered as such, but every subsequent Precept begins with an indication of what number it is. I will refer to them by their numbers, so the precept spoken the "ðriddan syþe" (third time, 21) will be referred to as Precept Three.

99. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 6 (Columbia University Press, 1942), 16-20.

100. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 6 (Columbia University Press, 1942), 126-28.

Frige mec frodum wordum! Ne læt þinne ferð onhælne,
degol þæt þu deopost cunne! Nelle ic þe min dyrne gesecgan,
gif þu me þinne hygecræft hylest ond þine heortan geþohtas.
Gleawe men sceolon gieddum wrixlan. (1-4a)
(Ask me with wise words! Do not keep your mind hidden, that deepest secret which you know! I won't tell you my secret if you conceal from me your mind-craft and the thoughts of your heart. Wise men must exchange songs.)[101]

The speaker expects that the listener will reciprocate by sharing their knowledge, threatening to withhold his own information in exchange. In *Paternal Precepts*, the father does his part to share wisdom when he educates his son, and he also encourages him to be open to the wisdom of his teachers. What *Paternal Precepts* demonstrates that *Maxims* does not make explicit, however, is that it is not good to share *all* wisdom from *all* sources. Understanding the danger inherent in *mod*-meeting highlights the calculated risks that are taken by participating in communal knowledge-sharing. Although *Paternal Precepts* does not speak directly to the corporeal aspects of *mod*-meeting, the text highlights the expectation and need to share one's mind with others while simultaneously questioning the effectiveness and safety of forming such a connection.

The first four Precepts deal broadly with themes of whose wisdom the son can trust, and each new precept introduces a new layer of complication to what initially seems like clear, straight-forward advice. Precept One instructs the son to be mindful of God, to live well, to love his "fæder ond modor" (father and mother, 9a) and "maga gewylcne" (each kinsmen, 10a), assuming that they love God as well. Additionally, he is to respect his elders and teachers, "þa

101. Note the similarity in diction of line 4a to *Vainglory* 15-16: "soð-gied wrecað, / wordum wrixlað" (speak true tales, weave words).

þec geornast to gode trymmen" (those who most eagerly guide you toward good, 14). Precept Two is shorter, commanding the son not to commit any evil. Exceptions to Precept One begin to arise when the father warns that if the son should "geþafa" (permit, 18a) sin in a "freonde" (friend, 17b) or "mæge" (kin, 18a), he risks God's wrath as a "gewita" (accomplice, 19a). Precept Three continues in this vein, instructing the son "Ne gewuna wyrsa widan feore / ængum eahta" (do not associate with a worse one as long as life lasts for any reason, 23-24b). Finally, Precept Four instructs the son "Ne aswic sundorwine" (do not abandon a dear friend, 29a). Taken separately, the first four Precepts advise the son on how to live well in clear, unambiguous commands. However, when read in succession, potential contradictions arise—what if someone in the groups of people the son should trust turns out to have an evil intent? Subsequent Precepts direct the son to learn to trust his own judgment, as in the example from Precept Six (quoted above) in which the son must distinguish between good and evil in his own mind. This responsibility further suggests that it is essentially the son's choice if, when, and to what extent he will take the advice of the precepts or not—to judge if they are (or his "father" is) a trustworthy source of information.

This is in part highlighted by the overall conceit of the poem as wisdom passed from father to son. Gnomic poetry often comes from a voice of authority, like the voice of God delivering the law to Moses, or the cosmographical wisdom poem *Vafþruðnismál*, spoken by the gods.[102] Other gnomic texts, like *Maxims*, rely on an unidentified narrator whose anonymity reinforces their authority; the fact that the statements stand alone reinforces their ultimate truth. The authority of the wisdom in *Paternal Precepts*, however, is neither anonymous nor

102. See Hansen, 45-46.

supernatural. The text's authority ultimately rests not on a distant authority but on the father-son relationship. There is not a clear consensus on whether or not the father and son should be viewed as archetypes with the father representing eternal, omniscient authority (like the Christian God) handing down wisdom to the dutifully obedient son. Instead, the text emphasizes that the father's authority ultimately rests on the social bond that forms between father and son and the fallibility that accompanies human social relationships.[103]

The social bond between father and son is also dependent on temporality. If the father and son are viewed as archetypal, then the poem may be understood as a timeless source of timeless wisdom. If they are viewed as "real" people, however, they will be subject to the passage of time. The advice is given at different numbered *siþas* (occasions), and the way that it is divided into installments suggests that the transmission of wisdom from the old wise one to the beloved young one takes time and is thought of as an ongoing experience rather than a single initiatory event.[104] Some scholars suggest that the Precepts are ordered according to theme and demonstrate "concern with relations of similarity and opposition."[105] Others, like Howe, consider the idea that the poem "corresponds roughly to the order of human life; both follow the common, three-fold division of youth, maturity and old age."[106] These apparently thematic groupings may in fact be representative of the changing needs and priorities in the son's life—for example, you would not instruct an adult to obey his parents, or a child to avoid foreign women.[107] An adult

103. Some texts do include a father-son relationship element, like Solomon's advice to his son in *Proverbs*. In this particular case, I would suggest that the naming of the father grounds the text in an historical authority that the anonymous father and son in *Paternal Precepts* lack.

104. Hansen, 46.

105. Hansen, 53.

106. Nicholas Howe, *The Old English Catalogue Poems* (Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1985), 145.

107. Howe, 145.

son is supposed to be a rational, moral individual and as such must be the final moral judge of his own actions in a way that a child cannot be. I suggest that the father's advice to the son is not bestowed at one time but given over the course of the son growing up. The incorporation of temporal change into the poem's structure ultimately destabilizes the speaker's authority; like a real father's authority over his son, it develops and changes over the course of both of their lives. The presence of this instability suggests that the wisdom being imparted is vulnerable to human fallibility. In turn, the risks of a single instance of *mod*-meeting become amplified through each interaction because harmful or dangerous ideas can quickly spread throughout a community.

In addition to the content of the *Paternal Precepts* adapting to the son's age, the descriptions of the son reflect the father's changing attitudes toward his progeny. The father's decline is also implicit in the son's need to depend on his own judgment more. Each Precept begins with a variation on the phrase "the wise father gave advice to his son." Sometimes the father is "frod" (wise, 1a), sometimes he is "þoncsnottor" (wise in thought, 21b). Most often he teaches (*læran*) his son, but he also speaks (*secgan*) to him, greets him (*gegrettan*), and admonishes him (*monian*). The terms used to indicate the son in the ten precept introductions are as follows:[108] "freobearn" (noble child, 1b), "sunu" (son, 15a), "bearn" (child, 22b), "magan" (kin, 28a), "bearn" (33b), "bearn" (44b), "sunu" (52b), "mago" (60a), "eaforan" (heir, 66b), and "eaforan" (77b). *Sunu*, *bearn*, and *maga* are all terms that refer to familial relationships. *Eafora*, while it can refer to a son or child, emphasizes the person's role as inheritor or successor. Moreover, the father, consistently described in terms of wisdom, is only in the last Precept

108. Each narration is different, so it is difficult to say how much connection we can reasonably draw between each precept and its introduction or to what extent the narrations simply display a *variatio delectat* that, like apposition, shows many facets of a situation. However, the words used to denote the son do, I think, reveal the father's changing perceptions of the situation and the son's changing needs.

described as “tornsorgna ful” (full of bitter-sorrows, 76b). The description of sorrows occurs simultaneously with the descriptions of the son switching from those of the familial to the social as the son begins to take his place in society and the father sees him not as a youth but as his own successor. Precept Seven says that “Seldan snottor gum sorgleas blissað” (a wise man seldom rejoices sorrowless, 54), implying that wisdom is gained over time through the experience of sorrows. It is only in the final Precept that the father, although described as wise throughout the poem, finally has experienced both the wisdom and sorrow of old age.

The aging of both the speaker (father) and his audience (son) suggests that the wisdom of gnomic poetry does not come from infallible and immutable sources. It is passed on through imperfect humans and relies on each individual’s own attempt to distinguish between what is right and what wrong. The sources of such wisdom are other people—other fallible beings who can lie, deceive, and be deceived. *Paternal Precepts* advises the audience to trust their own minds and not let others influence them, but the poem is itself an influence from another’s mind. The text is about the tension between needing to protect your mind while also needing connection with others both for emotional support and for education. The son needs to rely on his father’s wisdom as he develops his own mind, but the father counsels him to learn to use his own mind to judge. The tension found in *mod*-meeting is similar to the tension in *Paternal Precepts* between the advice and how it is delivered. The father must give wisdom and the son must accept it, but to do that the son must trust the father before he (the son) can trust himself to make the right decisions as his father instructs.

Paternal Precepts in particular highlights the influence other minds have on one’s understanding of the world and the importance of one’s community. *Mod*-meeting is in many ways an intimate act—it occurs primarily between two individuals and can be simultaneously

intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physiological. This effect can also be isolating because there is no way to garner an alternative perspective during the scenario. In *Beowulf,* for example, Hrothgar is protected from the one-on-one conversation with Beowulf until the Danes are certain that the Geats are not a threat. In *Paternal Precepts*, the son relies upon his father for guidance, yet the anonymity of the father and son suggests that the process is also iterative—the son may someday become a father and pass knowledge on to his own son. From this perspective, the influence that a *mod* has is not only on one other *mod*, but potentially on the entire community as knowledge is passed from one *mod* to another. Although the effects ripple throughout the community, it is the source of the knowledge—the pairing between two individuals—that forms the basis of social relationships and sustains wisdom.

The *mod*-meeting scenario is one in which the conflicting need for and fear of connection is explored. The examples from wisdom and lyric poetry demonstrate that building a community of minds is perceived as necessary but also dangerous. The preceding discussions also demonstrate a cultural willingness to share with others intellectually, even in the face of potential danger to one's self. To judge from these examples, the *mod*-meeting scenario would have been, for an early medieval English audience, a familiar way of representing and understanding interpersonal relationships. In the following chapters, I show how *mod*-meeting has far-reaching consequences for not only the individual but also the community. Furthermore, multiple pairs may form in a series, creating chains of influence in which each link is dependent upon the previous. Each instance of *mod*-meeting is an opportunity for a *mod* to be helped or hindered, healed or corrupted, and a chain of hurtful *mod*-meeting can doom every participant in it. In *Genesis B* and *Guthlac B* the chains of knowledge created by the compounding of multiple *mod*-

meeting scenarios are vital to understanding complex narrative instances that deal with the problems of mental connection.

CHAPTER TWO: *MOD* AND COMMUNITY IN *GENESIS B*

The Old English poem *Genesis B* recounts the Fall of Man—how Satan persuades Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and how, in so doing, she dooms humanity to a life of pain, suffering, and, ultimately, death. The story of the Fall contains many regrettable "firsts"—the first sin, the first deception, and the first temptation—but it is also the story of the first community and the first act of trust. Eve's creation marks the moment when "human" becomes "humanity," and Eve's temptation is the first test of this newly created community. *Genesis B* is a poem about the development of interpersonal relationships, the trust necessary to build them, and the consequences of those relationships, both for individuals and for the community as a whole. The poem spends a substantial amount of time detailing the inner workings of its characters' minds, walking the reader through Satan's corruption of humanity one step at a time, from its inception in Satan's mind, through the actions of his Devil[109] to Eve, and finally from Eve to Adam. This Old English retelling of the biblical Genesis 3 is a study in the effect that one *mod* can have on another, and how one instance of *mod*-meeting—the processes by which one mind influences another—can have far-reaching and long-lasting effects. A lapse in judgment or a moment of misplaced trust may be all that stands between a community and its spiritual destruction. Yet, *Genesis B* does not read as an injunction against community or even a blanket condemnation of Eve's actions. In fact, many scholars have noted that the text is to some extent sympathetic toward Eve. The narrator directly states that the Devil deceives Eve with lies and persuades her

109. In *Genesis B*, God's angel Lucifer is renamed "Satan" after he defies God and is sent to Hell. Satan does not go to the Garden to tempt Adam and Eve, instead using an unnamed devil as a proxy. I will use the names "Lucifer," "Satan," and "the Devil" to distinguish between the unfallen angel (Lucifer), the fallen angel (Satan), and the fallen angel's servant (the Devil).

that eating the apple will protect Adam from God's wrath. An analysis of Eve's social function in her interactions with Satan's Devil and Adam reveals a deep interest in the mechanics of building trust and forming interpersonal relationships and the effect on a community. Endowed with the ability and desire to form relationships and connections with others, Eve becomes the key link in the chain of interactions that spreads Satan's evil desires to Adam. Her receptivity to other minds represents the human capacity and need to form communities while acknowledging the grave risks that come with it.

As with most other Old English poems, we are limited in our knowledge of the date and authorship of *Genesis B*. The text of *Genesis B* is a small section within the much longer *Genesis A* poem, both of which survive together as an integrated Old English Genesis narrative in the Junius 11 manuscript.[110] Scholars differentiate *Genesis B* from the surrounding material of *Genesis A* because this part of the text is an interpolation of an Old Saxon *Genesis* poem.[111] *Genesis B* is a translation and adaptation from Old Saxon into Old English and is located in a manuscript created for an early medieval English audience—likely monastic or noble.[112] As in so

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110. A. N. Doane dates the manuscript to the first quarter of the eleventh century based on handwriting (*The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon* Genesis B *and the Old Saxon Vatican* Genesis (University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 35). Leslie Lockett date the manuscript to 960-990 in "An Integrated Re-examination of the Dating of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11," *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (2002): 141–73.

111. For many years, scholars believed the Old English *Genesis A* was a single poem and knew it simply as *Genesis*. Careful metrical analysis by Eduard Sievers in 1875, however, suggested that lines 235-851 (now known as *Genesis B*) were not originally written in Old English but most likely in Old Saxon. The hypothesis was confirmed in 1894 when a fragment of an Old Saxon poem that included twenty-six overlapping lines with *Genesis B* was discovered in Palatinus Latinus 1447 in the Vatican Library. How the text arrived in early medieval England is and will remain a mystery, but some scholars postulate that the text arrived in England via Carolingian courts (Doane, 52-53). Also see dating and composition theories based on metrical analysis in Seiichi Suzuki, *The Miniatures and Meters of the Old English* Genesis, *MS Junius 11*, vol. 2 (Walter de Gruyter, 2023).

112. Given the cost of manuscript production and the ambitious illustration program in Junius, the manuscript was most likely intended for a monastery or wealthy layperson. For an overview of

many cases with Old English poetic texts, the poem's obscure compositional history renders audience-focused scholarship more fruitful than author-focused scholarship. In this chapter, I will consider potential readings of *Genesis B*'s Eve by an audience whose understanding of the mind derived from the mind-body complex and *mod*-meeting framework and who was surrounded by social structures, whether of the court or the monastery.

Genesis B expands on the events of the biblical Genesis 3 in which Adam and Eve break God's injunction against eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, and it also recounts the apocryphal story of the Fall of the angels. Although the Latin Vulgate formed the basis of religious knowledge in the early Middle Ages, both canonical and apocryphal stories were told and retold through a wide range of media and genres, including epic poems, manuscript illustrations and illuminations, prose narratives, sculpture and engraving, homilies, and textual commentaries.[113] All of the various medieval retellings of the Genesis story possess some measure of difference from the biblical Genesis. In *Genesis B*, those differences are numerous, beginning with a drastic divergence from the biblical story when God gives his command not to eat the fruit to both Adam *and* Eve at the same time, placing the first Man and Woman on equal footing. After God gives Adam and Eve the command, the narrator recounts the apocryphal Fall

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scholarship concerning place of creation and audience of Junius 11, see Janet Schrunk Ericksen, *Reading Old English Biblical Poetry* (University of Toronto Press, 2021), 147-149.

113. Other Old English accounts of such events include *Exodus*, *Daniel,* and *Christ and Satan*. In Old Saxon, *The Heliand*, recounts events of the New Testament in the idiom of the Germanic warband. Rosemary Woolf compares *Genesis B* to the Anglo-Norman *Mystère d'Adam* (1146-75) as evidence of a Frankish tradition of Genesis retellings in "The Fall of Man in *Genesis B* and the *Mystère d'Adam*," in *Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur*, ed. Stanley B. Greenfield (Russell & Russell, 1973). In Early Middle High German, the *Wiener Genesis*, *Vorauer Genesis*, *Anegenge,* and others recount the events of the Fall. For discussion of the portrayals of Eve in these sources, see Katherine DeVane Brown, "Antifeminism or Exegesis? Reinterpreting Eve's *wacgeþoht* in *Genesis B*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 115, no. 2 (2016). Also see Brian Murdoch, *The Fall of Man in the Early Middle High German Biblical Epic: The* Wiener Genesis*, the* Vorauer Genesis *and the* Anegenge (Kümmerle, 1972).

of the Angels. God has created Lucifer with greater "modgeþohte" (mind-thought, 253a)[114] than the other angels, and it is Lucifer's pride in himself that leads to his and the other angels' rebellion against God. The angels fall for three days into Hell where Lucifer is renamed Satan and bound in chains.[115] Satan's influence on Eve also undergoes dramatic revision in *Genesis B*. Because he cannot move, Satan asks one of his fallen angels (now devils) to travel to earth and corrupt Adam and Eve so that the human race will fall and then serve the devils in Hell. When Satan's Devil arrives on earth, he attempts to convince Adam that he is a messenger from God and that God has changed his mind and wants Adam and Eve to eat the apple.[116] This tactic fails, and the Devil turns his attention to Eve. The Devil attempts to persuade her to eat the fruit by framing it as an effort to save Adam from God's wrath. Eve is eventually persuaded and eats the apple. She then experiences a vision of the heavenly kingdom that she believes comes from eating the fruit.[117] In truth, the vision is given to Eve by the Devil; he places the vision into her mind so that she will believe that he is a messenger from God and, in turn, be more persuasive herself. Indeed, Eve uses this vision and the Devil's words as evidence to persuade Adam to eat

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114. *The Junius Manuscript,* ed. George Philip Krapp, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 1 (Columbia University Press, 1931), 1-88. All *Genesis B* references are to this edition.

115. Although the legend of the angels' rebellion is apocryphal, Doane points out that Satan's binding in hell is an important deviation: in the Bible, Satan is not depicted as bound until the Harrowing of Hell takes place (135). However, Peter Dendle observes that Satan's precise location and status of being bound are not consistently clear in early medieval England; some accounts depict Satan wandering the earth during the sixth age (Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (University of Toronto Press, 2016), 3).

116. This scene is a drastic change from the Biblical Genesis in which the serpent speaks only to Eve. This disrupts Augustinian understanding of the passage in which Adam receives the command from God and Eve receives temptations from the Devil. However, there are other vernacular Biblical narratives like the *Mystere d'Adam* in which the Devil approaches Adam first.

117. Eve's vision is another major addition to the Biblical account. She is able to see over vast lands to what she believes is Heaven with God enthroned surrounded by angels. John F. Vickrey notes that this motif is more likely to be associated with Judgment, so that what Eve thinks she is seeing as the present may actually be a vision of the future on the day that all sinning humans, the result of her action, will be judged (see Vickrey, "The Vision of Eve in *Genesis B*," *Speculum* 44, no. 1 (1969): 90).

the apple. Once they have both eaten, however, the Devil removes the vision and they perceive what they have done. Like the Biblical Genesis, Adam and Eve realize their wrongdoing and attempt to hide themselves, but the *Genesis B* poet also includes long speeches from Adam about his remorse and longing to do penance.[118] The *Genesis B* text ends and *Genesis A* picks up with God searching for them in the Garden.

Genesis B is a retelling that is deeply interested in how interpersonal relationships shaped the Fall and the ramifications for fallen humanity. The persuasion, trust, and deceit that are present in the biblical Fall are portrayed in *Genesis B* as the result of communication between individuals. At the core of the story are the pairs of characters and the transference of ideas from one to another. In the biblical Genesis, there are two lines of communication: one from God to Adam, in which God forbids Adam from eating the fruit, and the other from the serpent to Eve, in which the serpent persuades Eve to eat the fruit. In *Genesis B*, these lines of communication are revised. First, God speaks directly to both Adam and Eve when he tells them not to eat the fruit. Then, Satan is not able to directly speak to Adam or Eve because he has been physically bound, so he sends his Devil to persuade them. The Devil first attempts to communicate with Adam, who rebukes him. The Devil then turns to Eve, who is receptive to his arguments and follows his instructions. Finally, Eve persuades Adam to eat. Each conversation takes place

118. Augustine argues that the problem with Adam and Eve is that they were arrogant—when God confronted them, they blamed each other or the serpent for their sin rather than acknowledging the error and asking for forgiveness. Alexander Sager suggests that this radical revision is "de-mythologized into a story of the present moment" by depicting Adam and Eve as "ordinary sinners … able to repent and gain the forgiveness of their lord" ("After the Apple: Repentance in *Genesis B* and Its Continental Context," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 112, no. 3 (2013): 308). It is also interesting to note that when the poem shifts back to *Genesis A*, Adam and Eve, like their Biblical counterparts, put the blame for their sin on others.

between two individuals (with the exception of God speaking to both Adam and Eve) with one individual having been persuaded by someone before.

In these exchanges, sharing of thoughts tends to occur in the context of two—the mind that gives and the mind that receives. This is an extension of the primacy of the pair as a method of world-ordering found throughout Old English literature. Structurally, the poetic meter is built on the joining of half-lines by alliteration to create a full line. Thematically, objects and concepts often appear in the formulaic half-line *X ond Y* half-lines, or as the two elements in a maxim. The importance of pairings in early medieval English world-ordering can also be seen in the presence of the dual pronoun system. Modern English pronouns take two numbers—singular and plural. Old English, however, retained a third number called the dual which appeared in the first and second person and was only used in direct speech to indicate two individuals. Although our understanding of the dual is limited by scarcity of evidence,[119] it is very likely that the system was used to highlight the significance of the two-person relationship. The dual can only be used with groups of two, but groups of two can also be referred to using plural pronouns.[120] In some cases, the dual refers to romantic love, but it is also used to indicate a range of two-person relationships, including: a celibate married couple in the Old English *Life of Malchus*, Christ and the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood*, Beowulf and Breca, Beowulf and Grendel, the Soul and the

119. For more on the development, use, and decline of the dual, see Lisa M. C. Weston, "Untimely Intimacies: Thinking Literacy with the Old English Dual Pronouns," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 52 (2022).

120. It is unclear when and why the dual was used and at what point it died out in different regions of England, and when (if at all) it had a more impactful rhetorical use than simply indicating two as opposed to three or more. Eric Stanley also considers other issues at stake with the dual: it can only be used in direct speech and its use varied regionally ("Paradise Lost of the Old English Dual," in *The Endless Knot: Essays on Old and Middle English in Honor of Marie Borroff*, ed. M. Teresa Tavormina and R. F. Yeager (Boydell and Brewer, 1995)).

Body in *Soul and Body*, Saint Guthlac and his servant in *Guthlac B*, and Saints Peter and Paul in the Blickling Passion. Dual pronouns, Amy Clark argues, are "not used simply to represent the bonds between individuals, but to *create* them in a literary context."[121] In addition, dual pronouns only appear in direct discourse, so their use is part of greater social structuring in which the speaker is both constructing and observing a paired relationship.

The extensive use of the dual pronoun system in *Genesis B* further supports the particular importance of the relationship between two individuals. The use of the dual is exceptionally high in *Genesis B*—in the 617 lines of text, there are forty-three uses of the dual (there are only 163 uses of the dual in the entire Old English poetic corpus). This is partially due to content—*Genesis B* is a text about the first (and only) two humans—but the referents of the dual are not limited to Adam and Eve. Dual pronouns also refer to the Devil and Satan, Satan and Adam, and the Devil and Eve, suggesting that the poem has a particular interest in the relationships formed between two individuals. Stanley suggests that using the dual pronoun adds an "emotive" quality in that it "accentuate[s] the closeness of whoever is speaking to the person addressed."[122]

In the midst of these complicated interactions between pairs is the transference of ideas, which, in a *mod*-meeting framework, have the opportunity to produce beneficial or destructive results. As discussed in Chapter One, the *mod*-body complex offers the opportunity for one individual's mind to have an both a mental and physical effect on another. The *mod*-as-container conceptualization encompasses the qualities of containment and exclusion and the potential permeability of the container. The "container" may withhold information, usually to social

121. Clark, "As Though 'Wit' Never Were: The Dual Pronoun as Interpretive Crux in *The Wife's Lament*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 121, no. 3 (2022): 324.

122. Stanley, "Paradise Lost," 14.

detriment, or it may stop the passage of new information into the mind. In some instances, sharing between minds is beneficial, as when Beowulf calms Hrothgar's anxious *mod*, or when wisdom is shared in *Maxims*. It is equally possible, however, that these moments of *mod*-meeting have negative consequences. In *Vainglory*, the thane must be careful not to let his mind be invaded by evil thoughts or let another man's negative emotions spill over into his mind.

The issues of speech and corruption are forefront in *Genesis B*. Here, we find perhaps the most important *mod*-meeting in human history: the moment when the Devil influences Eve's *mod* and persuades her to eat the apple. The act of eating the apple is symbolic of allowing foreign material to enter the body. Because the *mod* is part of the body in early medieval English psychology, this applies to ideas as well as objects. In eating the fruit, Adam and Eve choose to allow something from their exterior become a part of their interior. The apple is allowed to pass through the barrier of the body and becomes incorporated into Adam and Eve's selves.[123] Speech and ideas, however, are not physical in the same way that the apple is physical. Speech cannot be seen, touched, or isolated, yet it is created by the physical body and is received through hearing by another body. Hoek notes that speech "propels interior thoughts into the exterior realm where they become part of the substance of human discourse."[124] It is this aspect of speech that makes it particularly difficult to manage in the context of protecting a community from the influence of an idea. Speech is exchanged several times throughout the text, from Satan to the fallen angels,

123. This process is reflected in later conceptualizations of Satan's influence on sinners. See also Eric Jager, *The Tempter's Voice: Language and the Fall in Medieval Literature* (Cornell University Press, 1993). Jager examines the extent to which Satan (or devils) was able to act on humans from the inside and the outside.

124. Michelle Hoek, "Violence and Ideological Inversion in the Old English *Soul's Address to the Body*," *Exemplaria* 10, no. 2 (1998): 280.

from the Devil to Eve, and finally from Eve to Adam, and each of these acts reflects a different aspect of the process of speech crossing into the body-mind complex.

The corporeality of speech is highlighted by Satan's physical restraint in Hell. Lucifer/Satan's power is entirely in his mind, and even when he is bound in Hell, it is his speech which allows him to continue to influence others and corrupt mankind. When God creates the angels, he gives them "gewit" (250b), which translates as intelligence, though it is not usually used to suggest the mind in the same way as *mod*, *hyge*, *ferhð,* and *sefa*. Lucifer, however, is distinguished not just because he was created "swa gesæliglice" (so blessedly, 252a), but because he was "swa mihtigne on his modgeþohte" (so powerful in his mind-thought, 253a). It is Lucifer's mind which is mentioned again and again as he grows prideful and arrogant and no longer accepts subordination to God: "Ne meahte he æt his hige findan / þæt he gode wolde geongerdome / þeodne þeowian" (He could not find it in his mind that he would serve the Lord God in subjection, 266b-68a). He is "se engel ofermodes" (the angel of arrogance, 272a) who leads his followers in revolt against God. When they are cast into Hell it is "þurh heora miclan mod and þurh miht godes / and þurh ofermetto ealra swiðost" (through their great mod and the power of God, and through their pride, the greatest of all, 336-7). When the moment of the angels' Fall comes, it is Lucifer's mind and words, not physical acts of violence, that cause him to be banished.

Although Lucifer, now renamed Satan, and his angels have been ejected from heaven for their sins of the mind, they are tormented physically. Satan himself (although apparently not the others) is physically chained. In a series of speeches, Satan laments his restraints, reiterating the ways in which he is bound and unable to move:

Wa la, ahte ic minra handa geweald
and moste ane tid ute weorðan,
wesan ane winterstunde, þonne ic mid þys weorde—
Ac licgað me ymbe iren-benda,
rideð racentan sal. I eom rices leas;
habbað me swa hearde helle clommas
fæste befangen. …
… Me habbað hringa gespong,
sliðhearda sal siðes amyrred,
afyrred me min feðe; fet synt gebundene,
handa gehæfte. Synt þissa heldora
wegas forworhte, swa ic mid wihte ne mæg
of þissum lioðobendun. Licgað me ymbe
heardes irenes hate geslægene
grindlas greate. (368-88)

(Alas, had I the power of my hands and might come to be outside one time, for one winter's hour, then I with this troop—! But iron-bands lie around me, a rope of chain restrains me. I am powerless; hell-fetters hold me hard, grasped tightly. … A clasp of rings, a cruelly hard rope has hindered my journey, deprived me of my power of walking; my feet are bound, hands chained. The ways of these hell-doors are blocked, so I may not go by any means from these limb-bonds. Great bars of hard iron forged with heat lie around me.)

Over and over, Satan refers to the physical restraints on his body, yet the cause of his rebellion, and the way that his underling will soon corrupt Adam and Eve, is through mind and speech, and Satan uses speech to persuade one of his followers to engage in that corruption on his behalf. The extent to which the mind-as-container model of the *mod* is metaphorical becomes crucial to the defense of the mind against untrue or unsafe ideas. Satan's bound body underscores the power of words in creating connections between minds—a dangerous body, like Satan's, can be bound, but this does not stop a mind from spreading its evil ideas.

Satan's speech incites the actions of his Devil, who then uses speech to persuade Eve to eat the apple. When Eve is persuaded by the Devil to eat, she is not merely persuaded through reason—she is also physically corrupted by the Devil. The reader is left to ponder to what extent the influence is mental or physical. When the Devil speaks with Eve, Eve's mind is violently invaded by the Devil:

> Lædde hie swa mid ligenum and mid listum speon
> idese on þæt unriht, oðþæt hire on innan ongan
> weallan wyrmes geþeaht, (hæfde hire wacran hige
> metod gemearcod), þæt heo hire mod ongan
> lætan æfter þam larum. (588-92b)
> (He led her on with lies and deceived that woman with cunning in that error until the worm's[125] thought began to well up within her, (the lord had made a weaker mind for her), so that she began to let her mind go to that counsel.)

125. It is not clear whether we should understand "wyrm" to mean that the Devil has taken the shape of the serpent, or if he is still in his guise as a messenger angel. I am inclined to think that this is a result of the narrator's omniscience; he signals to the audience that this is the moment of the temptation which in the biblical Genesis takes place between Eve and the serpent. I translate it as worm because the

As noted in Chapter One, "weallan" is a common description of rising emotion in a body. It is often associated with violent, negative emotions, like anger. In this case, however, it is not Eve's emotion which rises in her, but the thoughts placed within her by the Devil. More importantly, this process takes place not after Eve has eaten the apple, but before she does so during the Devil's speech. It is unclear if Eve is even aware of the presence of these ideas inside her; she does not "let her mind go to that counsel" until after "the worm's thought began to well up within her." Like the threat of the evil *mod* in *Vainglory*, the tainted thought has already crossed the border into Eve's mind and is at work within her before she even realizes it. The Devil invades Eve through language, yet still has a corporeal effect on her *mod*. The Devil's speech has a physical, visceral effect and enables him to control Eve's body without coming into physical contact with her. This passage reveals a massive threat—that the corporeal body may be transgressed and invaded by incorporeal means. Satan's bondage suggests that the poet is already drawn to exploring ways to restrain evil, but physical restraints are not enough to keep a mind from spreading its influence. The concept of an integrated body-mind complex becomes crucial at this point. The Devil's influence is transmitted via speech—literally, his ability to form ideas into articulated sounds that travel from his mouth to "enter" through the ears of the listener.

The corporeal ramifications of this mind invasion become more pronounced after Eve eats the apple. In the following scenes, the Devil is able to control and manipulate Eve's physical senses. The Devil claims that after eating the apple, Adam and Eve will be able to see "swa wide ofer woruld ealle" (so widely over all the earth, 565), and the moment after Eve eats, the Devil is able to control her vision. He "swicode ymb þa sawle þe hire ær þa siene onlah" (deceived the

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term retains some of the wriggly, serpentine associations while also being a derogatory term for someone who is dishonest.

soul, he who had loaned her the vision, 607). Glenn Davis notes that in the biblical Genesis, it's generally understood as a metaphorical eye opening, but in *Genesis B* it is far more literal, and there is an entire additional speech in which Eve describes her vision to Adam.[126] In the biblical Genesis, the change in sense happens when the apple is eaten and Eve gains knowledge of good and evil. In *Genesis B*, the Devil is changing her senses after the apple so "Eve mistakes the perception afforded her by the Tempter's magic for that originating from the apple."[127] Davis observes that the changes wrought by the devil are far more visceral than in the biblical Genesis: "The Tempter does not simply reveal to Eve a false vision to convince her that she chose correctly. Instead, he actually corrupts her existing senses."[128] One explanation for this change is the unity of the mind-body complex. The mind exists within and as part of the body, so any influence gained over the mind is akin to influence over the body.

Eve's speech to Adam does not contain any of the violent invasion of speech, yet, in the context of social relationships and *mod*-meeting, this transference of intangible ideas from one mind to another is made doubly dangerous to the community by the inherent trust between its members. Adam's decision to eat the apple requires a change in his *mod* effected through speech, but it does not require so violent an invasion as Eve's. Eve argues that "His hyldo is unc betere / to gewinnanne þonne his wiðermedo" (It is better for us two to win his [God's] favor than his antagonism, 659b-60) and that "[u]nc is his hyldo þearf" (his favor is necessary for us two,

126. Glenn M. Davis, "Changing Senses in Genesis B," *Philological Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (2001): 113. Also see Ericksen, "Lands of Unlikeness in *Genesis B*."

127. Davis, 119.

128. Davis, 120. Davis' observation is part of a larger argument explaining why Eve is not able to understand the clues that the Devil is deceiving her: "The reason for the Tempter's careful construction of Eve's senses of sight and touch become clear in his second exchange with Eve. He needs her to ascribe the origin of her new senses to the apple so that she can then in good faith bring the same promise of enhanced perception to Adam" (121).

664).[129] After Eve's speech, the narrator tells the audience that "[h]io spræc him þicce to and speon hine ealne dæg / on þa dimman dæd" (she spoke to him without ceasing and all day urged him toward that dark deed, 684-5a). She speaks to Adam "ful þiclice, oð þam þegne ongan / his hige hweorfan" (without ceasing, until the thane began to change his mind, 705-6b). When Adam eats the fruit, "hit him on innan com, / hran æt heortan" (it entered into him, touched his heart, 723b-24). Eve's speech persuades him in his mind to take action with his body, but that action in turn has a physical effect on his body and, like Eve, the apple—and its corruption—settle within his chest.

Eve's persuasion lies at the heart of these exchanges; she marks the transition of evil from the community of the fallen angels into the community of humans. In order for "evil" to cross this barrier, it requires a human who will be receptive to other minds, other ideas. Exactly how and why Eve fills this role has been the subject of much scholarly inquiry into the poem. The Eve of Genesis and the Eve of *Genesis B* differ from each other in several key aspects. The *Genesis B* Eve hears God's command not to eat the fruit directly, she experiences a vision of God enthroned, and the narrator expresses apparent sympathy for her. The Devil of *Genesis B*

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129. Eve's speech bears many similarities to the practice of peace-weaving, the act of marrying a daughter of an important house to an enemy's son to ensure future peace. Like the peace-weaving queens of *Beowulf*, Eve's concern is for the health of the community as a whole—to mend rifts in relationships and find a path by which all parties can coexist. A full analysis of the implications of *mod*-meeting on peace-weaving is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it is worth observing again how Eve's actions naturally suggest the role of peace-weaver, a function with both social and gendered dimensions that would have been familiar to an early medieval English audience. The figure of the peace-weaving woman, found across early Germanic literary traditions, is a clearly gendered role that can only be performed by a woman. In *Beowulf*, Hrothgar's daughter Freawaru takes on the role of a peace-weaver in her marriage to Ingeld. Uniting the two families through marriage will (hopefully) bring peace between the Heatho-Bards and the Danes. In this case, peace-weaving is a gender-specific subset of the social functions that build connections and relationships between communities, akin to men's oath-swearing and fostering. *Mod*-meeting, however, can be seen in male-male relationships, as when Beowulf and Hrothgar experience *mod*-meeting or the thane in *The Wanderer* longs for mental connection with fellow warriors.

weaves lies and threats so that Eve's actions appear motivated not so much by pride as by loyalty and love for Adam. The narrator notes several times that she was "forlæd mid ligenum" (misled by lies, 630a) and that she acted "þurh holdne hyge" (with a loyal heart, 708a). The Devil's speech manipulates her by appealing to her love for Adam.

Much of the early scholarship on the Eve of *Genesis B* involved reading her in the patristic, allegorical framework of the Fall in which Adam, Eve, and Satan (or the Devil) are understood as Reason, Sense, and Desire. In this system, Eve has the role of the physical body and its sensory interests. Davis explains that "[i]n this model, the chain of seduction leading to the Fall … represents the subversion of the divinely established hierarchy of Reason over Sense."[130] Eve's relation to the senses in *Genesis B* has been noted by several scholars,[131] and it is clear that it plays a significant role in this retelling. In the poem, Eve is demonstrably connected to senses through her experience of tasting the fruit and the vision which the Devil shows her of God enthroned. While applying this allegorical, patristic reading to *Genesis B* can be fruitful, it is important to remember that mental functions such as reason and sense are only two of the many cognitive functions carried out by the *mod* in the vernacular psychology of early medieval England. The divide between Reason and Sense results in statements about the differences between Adam and Eve such as Anlezark's: "Adam is more than simply obedient, and uses his observation and reason to reject the devil's attack. The devil turns to Eve, appealing

130. Davis, 114. Ericksen also addresses the issue of subverted hierarchy, adding that Eve's fault is that she "allows appeals to her own authority to take precedence over a hierarchically based and gendered prudence" (*Reading Old English Biblical Poetry,* 91).

131. See for example Woolf, "The Fall of Man"; Vickrey, "The Vision of Eve in *Genesis B*"; Thomas D. Hill, "Pilate's Visionary Wife and the Innocence of Eve: An Old Saxon Source for the Old English *Genesis B*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 101, no. 2 (2002); and Susan Burchmore, "Traditional Exegesis and the Question of Guilt in the Old English *Genesis B*," *Traditio* 41 (1985).

not to her reason, but to her emotions of fear and love."[132] When we say that the Devil appeals to Eve's "emotions" as opposed to Adam's "reason," we ignore the overlapping emotive and rational aspects of cognition in early medieval England. Eve's decisions are guided by her reception of other minds and her understanding of the importance of community, an idea which may have resonated with audiences who lived in the complex social environments of courts and monasteries.

Patristic frameworks give rise to the gendered reading of the biblical Adam and Eve as emblematic of Man and Woman. This generally stems from Augustine's reading of the Fall, in which he argues that Eve sins out of pride, but Adam sins out of loyalty to his wife.[133] Davis summarizes the effect thus:

> Augustine distinguishes Eve's motive for disobeying God's command from Adam's, and by ascribing the greater evil to Eve, constructs a hierarchical relationship between Eve and Adam that surfaces in his writings more generally as the expression of man's superiority over woman.[134]

This interpretation of the biblical Fall was common in the Middle Ages, resulting in what Anlezark calls the "casual antifeminism [that] is characteristic of much medieval literature."[135] Anne Klinck concludes that Eve's "love[] and innocence" makes her a "more powerful temptress."[136] Doane's commentary describes Eve as "nagging" when she tries to persuade

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132. Daniel Anlezark, "Old English Biblical and Devotional Poetry," in *A Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. Corinne Saunders (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 107.

133. Davis cites Book 11 of Augustine's *De Genesis ad litteram* and Book 14 of *De Civitate Dei*.

134. Davis, 114.

135. Anlezark, "Old English Biblical and Devotional Poetry," 108.

136. Anne L. Klinck, "Female Characterisation in Old English Poetry and the Growth of Psychological Realism: *Genesis B* and *Christ I*," *Neophilologus* 63, no. 4 (1979): 601.

Adam to eat.[137] Brown, however, rejects this tendency, describing the application of this patristic view as a "relic of the nineteenth century" that "continues to be promoted and debated in the twenty-first century."[138] Her analysis of several continental Biblical narratives suggests "that there was no single understanding of Eve's character that dominated medieval thought" nor was there a uniform or an "unambiguously critical" assessment of Eve.[139] Susannah Mintz notes that *speon* is the "only word in the poem to convey directly the kind of sexualized behavior crucial for renouncing Eve as 'temptress.'"[140] This is the third-person, singular, preterite of one of two verbs: either *spanon* or *spannan*. *Spanon* means to allure or seduce, but *spannan* means to link or fasten. Mintz concludes that "What is usually interpreted as Eve's protracted 'seduction,' then, also suggests a day-long effort to maintain her attachment to Adam, to remain joined as wife, companion, loyal peaceweaver."[141] Gillian Overing identifies Eve with the figure of the peace-weaver, a woman who is married off to an enemy family with the hope that the union will bring peace between the peoples.[142] She points out that peace weavers are doomed to fail and that "female failure … is built into the system, where woman's primary social role is essentially untenable, predicated on absence and paradox."[143]

Yet, even attempts to push back against antifeminist readings foreground gender roles. Mintz and Overing both seek to establish female subjectivity and language for Eve, but in so doing they reinforce the primacy of Eve's gender role. Gender roles and social roles are often

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137. Doane, 152.
138. Brown, "Antifeminism or Exegesis?" 143.
139. Brown, "Antifeminism or Exegesis?" 161.
140. Mintz, "Words Devilish and Divine: Eve as Speaker in *Genesis B*," *Neophilologus* 81, no. 4 (1997): 615-616.
141. Mintz, 616.
142. Overing, 48.
143. Overing, 48.

deeply intertwined, but repeatedly foregrounding one (whether intentionally or incidentally) can obscure insights that the other might provide. In Old Norse, scholars have traditionally understood many derogatory labels like *blauðr* (weak), *úmagi* (helpless), and *níð* (libel) to have a gendered component based on biological sex. Carol Clover, however, has demonstrated that these terms "worked not so much at the level of the body, but at the level of social relations."[144] She argues that these statuses are better understood as indicating distinctions between "strong and weak, powerful and powerless or disempowered, swordworthy and unswordworthy, honored and unhonored or dishonored, winners and losers."[145] Like the Scandinavian societies studied by Clover, the early medieval English communities that might have produced and received *Genesis B* also contained complex networks of social roles and responsibilities. An early medieval audience familiar with the social relationships in noble and monastic communities might well have responded to the attention to social interactions evident in Old English texts.

Understanding Eve from the perspective of her social role can produce new readings of *Genesis B* as it might have been received by its early medieval audience. Such a reading can be gleaned from the description of Eve's "weak" mind. After the Devil speaks to Eve, the narrator implies that the Devil is able to succeed in persuading Eve because "hæfde hire wacran hige / metod gemearcod" (the lord had made a weaker mind for her, 590b-1a). Later, the narrator recounts the corruption, stating that the "wifes wac geþoht" (woman's weak mind, 649a) began to believe the Devil's lies. Many scholars have regarded these descriptions of Eve as evidence of "medieval misogyny or antifeminism," and many others have implicitly understood the phrases

144. Clover, "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe," *Speculum* 68, no. 2 (1993): 379.

145. Clover, 380.

as "negative comments on female intelligence."[146] This is in part because scholarship often implies that the compared parties in the "weaker" use are between Eve and Adam. Although this is a tenable reading, Alain Renoir notes that in the "wacran" comparison Adam has not been referred to for forty-four lines.[147] He suggests instead that the comparison is between the human intelligence of Eve and the divine or supernatural intelligence of the Devil. Brown agrees, arguing that references to the hydraulic model of concerning Eve's mind should be understood as a form of exegesis to explain the gap between human and divine minds: "The poet includes this information, not as misogynistic commentary on Eve's feminine nature, but simply as an explanation of accepted 'scientific' fact about human thought processes, which serves to contrast human and divine rationality."[148] Satan and the Devil, although perhaps no longer "divine," were originally created as divine beings with "gewit" and "mod" granted to them by God.

Approaching the concept of a "weak mind" from a psycho-social framework, however, suggests that Eve's actions are a result of her priority to form and maintain relationships. Previous analyses have interpreted the weakness as related to intellect—one's ability to reason, recognize, or interpret a situation. The weakness in question, however, could also be understood as a reference to the structural qualities of the *mod* conceptualized as a container. As discussed in Chapter One, Mize argues that the mind-as-container has an aspect of permeability that it can

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146. Brown, 141.

147. Alain Renoir, "Eve's I.Q. Rating: Two Sexist Views of *Genesis B*," in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature,* ed. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Indiana University Press, 1990): 269. A possible refutation to Renoir's reading is that it is a comparison to Adam because the poet has added the scene of Adam being tempted first. As I will suggest, however, this does not negate the social reading of Eve's "weak" mind.

148. Brown, 152. Brown observes additional comparisons between descriptions of Eve and Satan: both are bright and shining, and Eve's weak mind could be contrasted with Satan's "strong mind" given to him by God (145-146).

control in order to retain or share its contents and repel or accept external input. Words that are rooted in *wac* (including adjectives, nouns, and compounds) have a range of meanings relating to moral, mental, and physical strength, as well as pliancy and flexibility.[149] Assessing the meaning of "weakness" here is challenging because of roughly two dozen uses of *wac* the poetic corpus, only these two instances in *Genesis B* refer to the mind. Words denoting strength, stability, and security, however, are much more common and clearly more favorable than a "weak" mind. Words of strength and security like *heard, fæst, strong*, and *staþol* can be found in many descriptions of minds resisting evil influence, particularly in saints' lives. In *Andreas*, for example, the titular protagonist "mod staþolige" (affixes his mind, 82b) using the verb form of *staþol* (pillar, column).[150] In *Guthlac B*, Guthlac's body grows weak as he approaches death, but his "mod swiþe heard" (very hard mind, 977b) stays strong in his faith in God.

Binding one's mind also appears when minds are trying to stop *mod*-meeting from happening or resist the desire to form a connection during times of isolation. The use of binding terminology in these scenarios can invoke "construction and architectural stability."[151] As discussed in Chapter One, the narrator of *The Wanderer* struggles with longing for his lord and companions who are lost. His mind is conflicted between his desire for their company and mental connection and the harsh reality of his isolation. He laments: "Swa ic modsefan minne sceolde … feterum sælan" (So I must bind my mind with fetters, 19-21) in response to the memories of his companions welling up in his mind. Binding imagery is invoked, implying that

149. For example, *leoþu-wac* (pliant), *wac-scipe* (remissness), *wac-lic* (paltry), and *wund-wac* (injured).

150. *The Vercelli Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 2 (Columbia University Press, 1932): 3-51. All references to *Andreas* are to this edition.

151. Cavell, 224.

his mind needs to be controlled to deal with the grief he feels.[152] In *Beowulf*, Hrothgar must similarly bind his mind at a time of sorrow when he longs for companionship. After Beowulf has slain the Grendel-kin, he prepares to sail for his homeland. When the moment comes for them to part, Hrothgar is deeply affected:

> Wæs him se man to þon leof
> þæt he þone breostwylm forberan ne mehte,
> ac him on hreþre hygebendum fæst
> æfter deorum men dyrne langað
> born wið blode. (1876a-1880a)
> (That man was so dear to him that he could not contain the breast-wave, but firm with mind-bands in his heart, a secret longing burned in his blood for the dear man.)

As discussed in Chapter One, after Beowulf's mental "roominess" provided relief for Hrothgar's turbulent mind, Hrothgar now faces the prospect of parting from this mind that has become so intricately laced with his own. As Lockett says, it is "as if the mind-tethers were muscles that could be flexed at will to keep words and tears from escaping from the breast."[153] Mental weakness need not be limited to the faculties of reason. It can also manifest in the metaphorical construction of the mind-container. If the weakness in Eve's mind is understood as a kind of weakness in the structural integrity of her *mod*-container or an indication of the pliancy of such a

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152. A similar situation arises in *The Seafarer* when the narrator describes the isolation he feels traveling at sea and his longing to be with companions on the land. He says that "Stieran mon sceal strongum mode" (A man must steer with a strong mind, 109a). See Harbus, "The Maritime Imagination" for analysis of the mind in *The Seafarer*. Note as well that the same line can be found in *Maxims I*: "Styran sceal mon strongum mode" (50a).

153. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 83.

container, the problem is not in her cognitive abilities (or, not solely in them) but in her ability to regulate them during social interactions.

In the case of Eve's "weak" mind, incorporating a psycho-social framework suggests that the reasons for Eve's actions are because of her receptivity to and awareness of other minds. The story of the Fall is not only about the origin of sin and the threat of temptation—it is about the creation of the first community and the first instance of one human *mod* connecting with another and all the benefits and dangers that brings. To understand how the Old English-speaking audience of *Genesis B* might have reacted to the text, it is also necessary to view the cognitive situation of *Genesis B* through the lens of vernacular psychology. Omitting this aspect of Eve's psychology denies her the purpose for which she was created and her role in the story and in the history of humanity. Eve is created for the purpose of companionship—to make *mod*-meeting possible and to offer comfort and community to Adam, whose mind exists in isolation until Eve is created. The opportunity for *mod*-meeting, however, brings with it risks. The *mod* is not only the seat of thought and feeling—it is also a seat of moral choice, and the choices one makes with the *mod* have ramifications for the soul.

Eve's role as companion is evidenced in many ways in *Genesis B*. Like her counterpart in the biblical Genesis, Eve is created as a companion for Adam. At the beginning of *Genesis B*, Eve has already been created by God and the couple stands "somod on sande" (together on land, 242a) where they both receive God's command against eating the fruit. Although we do not witness Eve's creation because of a lacuna, we later learn that Adam had requested Eve as a companion: "Nu me mæg hreowan þæt ic bæd heofnes God, / waldend þone godan, þæt he þe her worhte to me / of liðum minum" (Now I may regret that I asked the God of heaven, the good lord, that he create you here for me from my limbs, 816-818a). But Eve's role as companion is

not limited to her relationship with Adam. Eve is also connected to the Devil in that she "wæs him on helpe handweorc Godes / to forlæranne" (was a help to him to mislead the handiwork of God, 702-3).

In *Genesis B*, Eve is willing to entertain the Devil's argument and seek reconciliation between him and Adam. Eve places a high value on fostering relationships between individuals, and it is her prioritization of community over individual which leads to her corruption. In the first temptation scene, Satan's Devil approaches Adam. The Devil claims to be a messenger from God who has come to tell Adam that God wants him and Eve to eat the apple, explaining that in doing so they will become more beautiful and radiant.[154] Adam refuses, and the Devil turns to Eve and begins the second temptation. This time, the Devil threatens that Eve and Adam will be in trouble for not fulfilling God's (supposed) command and explains that Eve must eat the fruit so that she can then demonstrate to Adam that they are supposed to eat it. The Devil also assures her if she helps him now, he will not tell God about Adam's earlier disobedience. He implores that Eve "Gehyge on þinum breostum þæt þu inc bam twam meaht / wite bewarigan, swa ic þe wisie" (Think in your heart that you might ward off punishment for the two of you as I instruct you, 562-3). It is this appeal to the benefit not only to herself but also to Adam, and the reassurance that if she acts Adam will not be punished for previous disobedience, that leads Eve to accept the apple. Unlike the biblical Eve, the Eve of *Genesis B* acts less out of pride and more out of concern for her companion and their shared welfare.

Eve's role as companion is also highlighted by the dense use of dual pronouns. In the 43 uses of the dual in *Genesis B*, 33 uses refer to Eve—more than any other character. These

154. Renoir notes the "clunkiness" of this speech—that the Devil is lying and not making a very good case (264).

instances include God speaking to Adam and Eve, the Devil speaking about Adam and Eve to Eve, and Adam speaking to Eve. In the remaining ten, nine are used by the Devil referring to himself and Satan and one is used by Satan referring to himself and Adam. The number of references to Eve highlight her role as companion; she is, by nature, one half of a dyad, whether alongside Adam or the Devil. The Devil also seems to intentionally use the second-person dual to manipulate Eve. Throughout the Devil's speech, he acknowledges Eve's bond with Adam by using the dual consistently until he switches to the first person dual "wit" saying that he (the Devil) and Eve will be able to "an sped sprecað" (speak successfully, 575a) to Adam together. Renoir suggests that the devil uses the pronouns in this way "to bring home the never-stated argument that, just as association with Adam must be equated with a morally repugnant situation [God's anger] and emotionally terrifying prospects, so association with the Tempter must be equated with a morally attractive situation and emotionally reassuring prospects [God's favor]."[155] Stanley suggests that using the dual pronoun adds an "emotive" quality in that it "accentuate[s] the closeness of whoever is speaking to the person addressed."[156] Hall argues that the Devil uses dual pronouns to "drive a wedge" between Adam and Eve and to "urg[e Eve] to overrule [Adam] and to take the decision making authority for the two of them upon herself."[157] The Devil manipulates Eve's desire to maintain her connection with Adam for his own ends. Thus, Eve works to maintain the status quo by accepting a new bond with the Devil in order to preserve her bond with Adam and Adam's bond with God. What she does not and cannot know,

155. Renoir, 268.
156. Stanley, 14.
157. J. R. Hall, "Duality and the Dual Pronoun in *Genesis B*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 17, no. 2 (1981): 141-42.

however, is that it is this desire to preserve social relationships that will ultimately damage her bond with Adam and the pair's relationship with God.

From a social perspective, the Fall of Man occurs because Eve's mind is attuned to social interactions. Her interest in community building and social cohesion makes her more willing to trust, and it is this openness to other minds which allows her own to be fully and viscerally corrupted by the Devil. This single point of entry does not merely corrupt Eve or even just Adam and Eve—it becomes a part of the community of humanity and will persist through the generations. As discussed in Chapter One, the problem of a corrupted mind spreading its evil to other minds is a serious one, and steps must be taken by individuals to protect their minds from this influence. Because *Genesis B* recounts the first act of mental corruption, its characters lack the accumulated wisdom present in other Old English poems such as *Vainglory* and *Paternal Precepts*. Nevertheless, while indicating the dangers and repercussions of trust, the text does not point to mental isolation as the answer. Instead, it encourages the audience to acknowledge and accept this human trait, recognizing that relationships and *mod*-meetings in particular are valuable, even essential, but, as the father tells his son in *Precepts*, such interactions must still be undertaken with caution.

Despite his desire for a companion, Adam wavers in his devotion to Eve when he is confronted with the ramifications of their actions. After Adam eats the apple, the Devil removes the vision of Heaven he has given Eve, and Adam and Eve realize that they have truly fallen from grace. Adam chastises Eve for listening to the Devil and he laments that the two of them have broken God's commandment. After expounding on the physical strife they will endure—hail, frost, heat, and lack of food—he expresses regret for his relationship with Eve:

To hwon sculon wit weorðan nu?

Nu me mæg hreowan þæt ic bæd heofnes god,

waldend þone godan, þæt he þe her worhte to me

of liðum minum, nu þu me forlæred hæfst

on mines herran hete. (815b-19a)

(To what end will we now come? Now I may regret that I asked the God of heaven, the good lord, that he create you here for me from my limbs, now that you have led me into the hate of my lord.)

Adam's use of the dual pronoun highlights that Eve's actions have brought this about for the both of them, while his next speech is dominated by the use of the first person singular:

ac ic to þam grunde genge, gif ic godes meahte

willan gewyrcean. Nis me on worulde niod

æniges þegnscipes, nu ic mines þeodnes hafa

hyldo forworhte, þæt ic hie habban ne mæg. (834-37)

(But I would go to the ground if I might do God's will. There is no need of service for me in the world, now that I have undone the favor of my lord so that I cannot have it.)

Adam recognizes that Eve is the reason that both of them have fallen, and his attention quickly turns from acknowledging the situation they share to focusing on his own individual experience and what he would be willing to do to redeem himself in the eyes of God. Here he shares an affinity with Satan, whose speeches to the fallen angels similarly rely on the first-person singular pronoun. Adam's focus has shifted to himself, and he reacts to the situation by wishing that he did not belong to the community. Adam's desire for independence from Eve does not last long. Following his "I"-laden speech, he immediately returns to using the dual pronoun: "Ac wit þus

baru ne magon bu tu ætsomne / wesan to wuhte" (But we two may not be thus naked together at all, 838-39a), and the narrator's description of Adam and Eve in the forest notes that while they "sæton onsundran" (sat apart, 842a), they also "on gebed feollon bu tu ætsomne / morgena gehwilce" (fell to prayers together each morning, 847-48a). Although a rift has grown between the two, they are still marked as a community, and one which can be strengthened through shared acts of faith.

The community that is created in the relationship between Adam and Eve is not the only example of a being longing for companionship. The Devil's response to Adam eating the apple provides insight on how he views his relationship with Satan. Although he has not returned to the abyss at this point, his speech is clearly directed to Satan in his use of first-person dual pronouns. When Satan first describes his fallen state to the angels who fell with him, he addresses the entire group of fallen angels. The Devil, however, recounts the fall using the dual pronoun to refer to himself and Satan:

> Unc wearð God yrre
> forþon wit him noldon on heofonrice
> hnigan mid heafdum halgum drihtne
> þurh geongordom. (740b-43a)
>
> (God became angry with us two because we would not bow our heads to him, the holy Lord in the heavenly kingdom through subjection.)

The use of the dual here indicates that the Devil may perceive his relationship with Satan as more intimate than Satan does. Moreover, as the Devil continues to speak, it becomes clear that he feels a mental closeness with Satan akin to *mod*-meeting. After the Fall, he states:

Forþon is min mod gehæled,

hyge ymb heortan gerume, ealle synt uncre hearmas gewrecene

laðes þæt wit lange þoledon. (758b-60a)

(Therefore my mind is healed, my mind roomy around my heart, all of the harms of us two are avenged for the evil that we two long suffered.)

The Devil's description of his mind suggests that an act of *mod*-meeting has happened through his description of a relieved, roomy mind, as when Beowulf soothed Hrothgar's mind. In addition, the Devil takes Satan's cares upon him as his own and feels relief from the same physical pain that Satan describes himself suffering from at the beginning of the text. There is no evidence, however, that Satan feels similarly about the Devil. In all of his speeches addressed to the fallen angels, he uses the dual pronoun only once and that is to describe the antagonistic relationship he sees between himself and Adam. Any relationship between the Devil and Satan seems to be decidedly one-sided.

Of the five named characters in *Genesis B*—Adam, Eve, Satan, the Devil, and God—Satan is the only one who acts without care for a community. Even God himself continues to create communities and companions despite the repeated failure of those communities. God first creates the angels, beings who are intelligent and will worship him. He also creates Satan—a being with an even greater *mod* than the other angels, someone who could theoretically create a community with God himself. As observed in the relationship between Beowulf and Hrothgar in Chapter One, *mod*-meeting is not restricted to social (or celestial) equals; it may be feasible for God to find companionship in a being that is less powerful than himself. Unfortunately, Lucifer's

mod is too great and he rebels against God. God then creates Adam and Eve.[158] Satan's poisonous *mod* infects humanity through Eve and again God's created community falls apart. Try as he might, God struggles to create a successful community for himself. The God in *Genesis B*—as he often is in Old English poetry—is somewhere between "a lord" and "the Lord." He is often depicted using the language of the warband, and this occasionally leads him to demonstrate very human characteristics. In *Genesis B*, God, like men, is in possession of a *mod* and has the ability to grow angry. For example, when Lucifer rebels, "wearð se mihtiga gebolgen" (the mighty one grew enraged, 299b). This God is not a distant being watching numbly from afar—he is invested in his creations, and time and again he chooses to create community, even when it has failed in the past. If God himself has firsthand experience of the betrayal of a broken trust, then it is all the more significant that, upon observing Adam alone, he again chooses the risk of community over isolation and creates Eve.

Eve's portrayal in *Genesis B* may focus on her guilt—sympathetic though the narrator appears to be—but it is also unquestionably about social interactions and acknowledging that the source of humanity's evils lies in our deep need for connection and companionship. Communities are created throughout the text, held together by at least one individual's care for another. Whether it is Eve trying to help Adam or the Devil rejoicing in his perceived relationship with Satan, community endures. Eve's sin is not forgiven or made right, but it is acknowledged as a part of the human experience, without which humanity would neither have fallen nor survived.

158. The timelines for these acts of creation are unclear in *Genesis B*. Based on Genesis, the angels should have been created and fallen first; the description of the angels seems to be told in a flashback in the poem.

CHAPTER THREE: BODY, *MOD*, AND GRIEF IN *GUTHLAC B*

Loss and its accompanying grief feel omnipresent in Old English literature, whether the grief is for a loss of person or place, past actions, unfulfilled potential in humanity, or the transience of the world. The poems we know as the elegies lament the personal losses of a speaker without lord, home, companionship, or love. A bitter, regretful grief seeps from the *Soul and Body* poems, mourning a missed opportunity for salvation. The narrative voice in *Beowulf* laments a society doomed to cycles of growing power and prosperity followed by trauma and destruction. *Guthlac B,* however*,* is one of the few texts where we watch grief develop before and progress through the event of loss. The poet depicts the slow, agonizing separation of Guthlac's soul and body over the course of his illness while at the same time tracing his servant's descent into grief as he slowly realizes first that his master is ill and then that the disease will take his life. Whereas most expressions of grief are temporally distanced from the narrative moment, the audience of *Guthlac B* witnesses firsthand the experience of grief before, during, and after the moment of death. The psycho-physiological transference of mental states that occurs in *mod*-meeting may explain the pain felt as a result of loss, but it alone cannot assuage grief. In Chapter One, *mod*-meeting is shown to create chains of influence in which one mind influences another. In Chapter Two, influence becomes transference, with Satan's *mod* influencing Eve by way of the Devil. In this chapter, the qualities of transference become those of substitution—one person may take the place of another and still carry out their psychological or affective function. In *Guthlac B*, this substitution functions as a method of assuaging grief as it blends with Christian doctrine. The cognitive process of *mod*-meeting forms a base on which the poet leads the audience to Christian philosophy of the body as a method of managing grief.

Saint Guthlac (674-714) was an English saint who lived for much of his life as a hermit in the fens of Crowland. Here he performed many miracles—his most famous miracle being the cleansing of an ancient burial mound inhabited by demons. As a local saint, Guthlac was well-loved by the English and his memory long-lived—texts about his life and miracles were written (and illustrated) throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period.[159] He is recorded in several instances in Old English and Anglo-Latin—Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, an Old English translation of the Latin *Vita*, Vercelli sermon XXIII, and the two Guthlac poems of the Exeter Book—*Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*.[160] *Guthlac B* recounts the last days of the saint's life in his hermitage in Crowland where he lives in isolation with a fellow monk who acts as his servant and student. The poem is an expanded retelling of chapter 50 of Felix's *Vita*. The first fifty lines of the poem tell the story of the Fall of Man and how death came to humanity. The poet then briefly recounts Guthlac's life and miracles, including how he always offered help and comfort to those who needed it and describing his miracle of ridding the fens of demons.

The rest of the poem expands on the interactions between Guthlac and his servant in the last week leading up to the saint's death. The *Vita* describes two brief conversations between Guthlac and the servant (named Beccel in Felix's *Vita*, but unnamed in *Guthlac B*)—first when Guthlac tells Beccel about his illness, and later when Beccel asks about Guthlac's mysterious visitor (Saint Bartholomew in the *Vita*, unnamed in *Guthlac B*). The *Guthlac B*-poet elaborates

159. See Jane Roberts and Alan Thacker, eds., *Guthlac: Crowland's Saint* (Shaun Tyas, 2020) for a range of essays on the Guthlac tradition. A later medieval source of note is the thirteenth-century illustrated Guthlac Roll. A number of churches dedicated to Guthlac still stand today, for example, St. Guthlac's Church in Market Deeping.

160. For a discussion of the thematic relationship between *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*, see Benjamin D. Weber, "A Harmony of Contrasts: The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 114, no. 2 (2015).

on their speeches and presents a detailed, nuanced conversation between the two men as the servant mourns Guthlac's impending death. When Guthlac first realizes he is sick and likely dying, he keeps his mind "fæste trymede" (firmly fixed, 960b) and praises God, though his body is wracked with the pains of his illness.[161] When his servant finds him, he is "hefig æt heortan" (heavy at heart, 1009a) to see his master in such pain, and the servant asks him how the illness will end. Guthlac replies that he will die and predicts the day. Guthlac attempts to comfort the servant saying that he is "georne" (eager, 1084a) to be with the Lord in Heaven. During his illness, Guthlac continues to instruct the servant in the ways of being a good Christian. On the day before Guthlac's predicted death, the servant confronts him, asking once again for comfort, and Guthlac obliges. Guthlac then asks the servant to visit his sister after his death, and the servant agrees. The servant goes on to ask Guthlac about the conversations he has overheard Guthlac having with a stranger in the mornings and evenings. Guthlac reveals that this visitor is a "gæst haligne" (holy spirit, 1241b) sent by God (in Felix's *Vita* he is identified as Saint Bartholomew) to guide and comfort Guthlac. Finally, Guthlac pledges to the servant that "nelle ic lætan þe / æfre unrotne æfter ealdorlege / meðne modseocne minre geweorðan" (I will not let you ever become sad, weary, sick at heart after my fated death, 1259b-1261). Guthlac speaks to the servant for a final time on the day of his death, announcing that the time has come for him to depart. The servant leaves to tell Guthlac's sister of his death and laments for his master and teacher. The rest of the poem is lost.

Scholarship on the relationship between Guthlac and his servant often seeks to make sense of the servant's turbulent mental state as he awaits Guthlac's impending death. The

161. *The Exeter Book,* ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 3 (Columbia University Press, 1936), 49-88. All references to *Guthlac B* are to this edition.

servant's unwillingness to take comfort in Guthlac's reassurances that death is a joyful occasion preceding the union of the soul with God has been understood by scholars as an example of the servant's inability to separate the corporeal world from the spiritual. Many scholars explain this as the poet contrasting the saintly Guthlac who views death as a step on the path of the soul uniting with God with the servant who continues to mourn despite Guthlac's reassurance. Daniel Calder argues that the servant "does not understand the paradox that for Guthlac to be bereft of life is to possess life."[162] Robert Bjork suggests that the contrast between the attitudes of Guthlac and the servant toward Guthlac's impending death leads the audience to "grieve for the 'living' Beccel, who in his lack of a perfect faith paradoxically suffers the pangs of a more significant weakness—his humanity and attendant mutability."[163] Frederick M. Biggs reads the poem in the context of its introductory section about the Fall, which suggests that prelapsarian Adam and Eve need not have died, but might have gone to heaven, as the poet puts it, "leomu lic somud ond lifes gaest" (limbs, body, and soul of life together, 838).[164] In this context, "the poet uses the saint's servant to personify the temporary state of the body after the departure of its master, the soul, and the saint's sister to represent the hope of the final reunification of the body and soul at the end of time."[165] Others take a more sympathetic stance toward the mourning servant, like Phyllis Brown, who suggests that he "exemplifies the availability of salvation to all Christians including those who fall short of Guthlac's sanctity."[166] Brown also suggests that the lost ending

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162. Daniel Calder, "Theme and Strategy in *Guthlac B*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 8, no. 3 (1972): 241.

163. Robert Bjork, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives* (University of Toronto Press, 1985), 90.

164. Frederick M. Biggs, "Unities in the Old English *Guthlac B*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 89, no. 2 (1990): 155.

165. Biggs, 155.

166. Phyllis Brown, "Beccel and the Theme of Death in *Guðlac B*," *Mediævalia* 19 (1996): 275.

might demonstrate the servant has learned from Guthlac and will pass the teaching on to Guthlac's sister.[167]

Mental states play a key part in the poem and the relationship between Guthlac and the servant as well. In Harbus' analysis of the preoccupation with mentality in Old English poetry, she observes that "the medium of poetic hagiography was a vehicle for the exploration of the ideal Christian mind," in particular "the essential difference between saintly intelligence and the well-intentioned but incomplete mental and spiritual development of the ordinary person."[168] Soon Ai Low's analysis of mental cultivation in *Guthlac B* argues that "the contrast between the [servant's] vulnerable, care-laden mind and the unruffled serenity of Guthlac's is a deliberate effect of the poet's," suggesting that Guthlac has better control over his mind than the servant.[169] In addition to mental strength, some scholars have also analyzed the qualities of the friendship that exists between Guthlac and the servant. Zacharias Thundy argues that the relationship between Guthlac and his servant is best characterized in the context of monasticism as opposed to the traditional *comitatus* model others have used based on the lord/thane language of the text.[170] Robin Norris applies Augustinian theory of use and enjoyment to *Guthlac B* to explore the nature of friendship in Christian communities pointing out that, while Augustine's *Confessiones* does include criticism of earthly friendships, Augustine states in *De doctrina christiana* that "we must experience friendship and love—even love of the self—for the sake of

167. Brown, "Beccel and the Theme of Death," 278.
168. Antonina Harbus, *The Life of the Mind,* 89 and 111.
169. Soon Ai Low, "Mental Cultivation in *Guthlac B*," *Neophilologus* 81 (1997): 632.
170. Zacharias Thundy, "St. Guthlac and Spiritual Friendship," *The American Benedictine Review* 36 (1985), 143.

God."[171] Norris argues that the servant "has abused charity by loving Guthlac not in God but by seeking blessedness in the company of the holy man and despairing over the concomitant loss of both."[172]

Entangled in these discussions is also the issue of genre and how it guides our understanding of the text. *Guthlac B* hovers between the hagiographic and elegiac traditions. In the former, the text is understood as didactic, guiding the audience toward a deeper understanding of sanctity by providing exemplars on which to model their own behavior. In the latter, the audience is invited to reflect on their own experiences with isolation and loss and to seek comfort in the constancy of change. Harbus argues that "the poem's didactic force derives from the emotional vulnerability of [the servant], who … provides a fine negative exemplum from which Guthlac can be distinguished."[173] Counterposed with this is the prominent elegiac tradition, in which the servant as survivor functions as the sympathetic character meant for the audience to identify with. Stephen Powell finds that the servant's grief is "tremendous without being selfish or anti-Christian" because "the poem's earthly frame of reference is thoroughly and sympathetically treated by the poet."[174] Margaret Bridges also notes the unique combination of generic qualities by observing that the servant, *in addition* to Guthlac, serves as a protagonist.[175] She suggests that "the genre's didactic invitation to imitation and elevation is here passed over in favour of a more complex cluster of ideas of which the witness is as much the centre as is the

171. Norris, "The Augustinian Theory of Use and Enjoyment in *Guthlac A* and *B*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 104, no. 2 (2003): 165.

172. Norris, "Augustinian Theory of Use," 174.

173. Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, 112.

174. Stephen Powell, "The Journey Forth: Elegiac Consolation in *Guthlac B*," *English Studies* 79, no. 6 (1998): 495.

175. Margaret Bridges, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry* (Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1984), 52.

Saint himself."[176] In this case, "expressions for the disciple's mournfulness are, so to speak, removed from the hagiographical perspective that condemns them and revalued by their occurrence in Anglo-Saxon poetic context."[177] In order to reconcile the elegiac and hagiographical traditions present in the text, we must consider the servant to be a positive exemplum and further explore how the poem manages his emotional distress and models a path forward through grief for the audience.

In many of the interpretations discussed above, it is tempting to reconcile tensions between secular and Christian traditions by associating Guthlac with the Christian and the servant with the secular. Guthlac is the protagonist of the hagiographical section while the servant becomes the focus during the elegiac section. Where Guthlac is focused on his spiritual life after death, the servant malingers in the mundane. There is a tension between these characters as Guthlac encourages the servant to shift his perspective to a more spiritual outlook and the servant remains unable to see past the earthly loss of his friend and mentor. The characters, like the text—and, indeed, like most Old English texts—however, resist simple classification. As in the analysis of *Genesis B* in the previous chapter, it is tempting to seek out a solution based on this apparent division of ideologies, to hypothesize an early English audience that unanimously sided with Guthlac or the servant. As in *Genesis B*, the urge must be resisted, for *Guthlac B*, like *Genesis B*, invites the reader to consider two states at once and to focus not on their differences but on their similarities.

Saint Guthlac is a figure particularly well-suited to bridging ideological gaps. There are many times during his life where he demonstrates qualities associated with potentially

176. Bridges, 52.
177. Bridges, 166.

contradictory ideologies, particularly with regard to his religious community and spiritual relationships. The character of Guthlac as he is represented in both the *Vita* and *Guthlac B* is himself a combination of traits from vernacular and Christian traditions. In Felix's *Vita,*[178] Guthlac, despite having the hallmarks of sanctity in childhood creates a warband and ravages the countryside. Guthlac's decision to enter the Church is made one night when he is contemplating death, after which he disbands his warband and gives back a third of what he took. Guthlac enters a monastery where he studies for two years before deciding to follow the example of the desert fathers and live alone in the wilderness. He moves to an isolated marshland where he does spiritual "battle" with the demons and devils who try to corrupt him. There he is visited by Saint Bartholomew, who continues to support and encourage Guthlac throughout his life. As he grows in his sanctity, Guthlac performs many of the typical miracles found in *vitae*, including healing the sick, lame, and possessed; knowing others' secret actions and thoughts; having visions; and predicting the future. In the tradition of other saints, he predicts the time of his death and leaves instruction for his burial. Several miracles also occur after his death, including his spirit visiting Æthelbald,[179] the future ruler of Mercia; the discovery of Guthlac's uncorrupted corpse at translation; and occurrences of healing miracles at his grave.

Guthlac practices eremitic monasticism, which emphasizes isolation in the wilderness, in comparison to cenobitic monasticism, which involved establishment of monasteries where monks lived and worked communally. The Benedictine Reform of the tenth century solidified and regularized cenobitic monastic practices in England, but before this time, there seems to

178. It is generally accepted that the *Vita* was a source for the *Guthlac B* poet. See *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, ed. Jane Roberts (Clarendon Press, 1979).

179. Not to be confused with Ælfwald of East Anglia, for whom Felix composed the *Vita.*

have been more flexibility in how monks (and saints) practiced their faith and developed their sanctity. The sanctity of Guthlac falls at an interesting crossroads here—the *Vita*, written in the early eighth century, is much earlier than this reform, but *Guthlac B* was likely composed in the ninth century or later (*terminus ad quem* is the creation of the Exeter book in the early eleventh century).[180] Bridges suggests the possibility of atypical sanctity in the way that *Guthlac B* "temper[s] the dogmatic optimism" of most hagiography.[181] The poet "elaborates on the disciple's grief-stricken attitude, which all sympathetic witnesses may be presumed to share but which is generally played down in favour of the dogmatic perspective calling for the Saint's death as an occasion for celebration."[182]

Scholars such as Scott DeGregorio and Niamh Kehoe have also suggested that changing expectations of sanctity in early medieval England led to the blend, particularly by comparing earlier texts with Ælfric's late tenth-century compilations of saints' lives. In an analysis of the *Legend of Saint Andrew*, DeGregorio concludes that Ælfric "was working with a conception of sanctity notably different from that of his fellow Anglo-Saxon hagiographers."[183] Ælfric favored depicting saints that were "constant, unchangeable, and assured in their resolve and faith … their narratives are largely devoid of human interest that might distract from the doctrinal thrust of the life, as well as any features that would render the saints recognizable as individuals."[184] Kehoe

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180. For dating, see R. D. Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (University of Pennsylvania, 1992), 400-402.

181. Bridges, 50.

182. Bridges, 52.

183. Scott DeGregorio, "'Þegenlic' or 'Flæsclic': The Old English Prose Legends of St. Andrew," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 102, no. 4 (2003): 454.

184. Niamh Kehoe, "Unsaintly Composure? The Old English Saint Eustace and Models of Holiness in Early Medieval England," *The Review of English Studies* 73, no. 312 (2022): 811. Here Kehoe is also in conversation with Hugh Magennis, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Heaven: Humorous Incongruity in Old English Saints' Lives," in *Humour in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Jonathan

applies these findings to an analysis of the anonymous Old English *Life of Saint Eustace* to argue that "literary models of sainthood in this period encompassed a wider, more diverse, and more inclusive range than previously allowed."[185] Specifically, she finds that "there are hagiographic narratives from early England that present fallible or developing models of holiness without any apparent tension or sense of unease."[186] I propose that Felix's *Vita* presents a model of sanctity that falls beyond the ideal Christian saintly attitudes toward worldly connections as expressed by Ælfric during the Benedictine Reform. Rather, Guthlac presents a unique approach to sanctity that is more accepting of relationships in the secular world and has patience and flexibility with regard to an individual's journey to faith.

In many ways, Guthlac's life is comparable to those of other eremitic monks, including those whose *Vitae* informed Felix's composition such as Saints Martin, Anthony, and Cuthbert. His miracles and abilities are those of the desert fathers, but in the details, Guthlac can be seen to deeply value social connections and community bonds. As an eremitic monk, Guthlac spends much of his time alone. Some accounts of eremitic saints depict them preferring solitude. Saint Cuthbert (634-687) of Lindisfarne, for example, expresses disappointment when he is ordered to leave the wilderness and take up the role of bishop (chapter 24). Guthlac, on the other hand, enjoys and actively seeks out the company of others.[187] He is often visited by friends, whom he

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Wilcox (Boydell and Brewer Limited, 2012) and J. W. Earl, "Typology and Iconographic Style in Early Medieval Hagiography," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 8, no. 1 (1975).

185. Kehoe, 810.

186. Kehoe, 812.

187. Jennifer Lorden comments on the fine line members of religious orders must walk between caring for their brothers and sisters in Christ while remaining focused on God: "Thus even for ascetic monks (such as Guthlac) who resign all worldly affiliations, community retains the utmost importance" (*Forms of Devotion in Early English Poetry: The Poetics of Feeling* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 26). Lisa Weston also observes that "Guthlac's social bonds … model varieties of friendship, especially monastic *amicitia*, among both blood and volitional kin sometimes separated in space … but linked within one temporal moment, the span of Guthlac's life" ("Guthlac Betwixt and Between: Literacy,

welcomes warmly, and after locating where he will live in the marshes, his first act is to return to the monastery at Repton for ninety days (chapter 26). He displays none of the chagrin toward visitors (brethren or lay) that Cuthbert does (chapter 18).[188] Guthlac's sanctity is closely connected with his social relationships. Loneliness is a source of great temptation and despair for him; he maintains close ties with fellow brothers even living as a hermit, and he values his fellows in Christ not just for their reflection of godliness but for their individual qualities.

Guthlac's need for community can be seen in the pleasure he takes in interacting with his friends and visitors, but this desire is most poignant in the absence of community. Isolation causes significant struggles for Guthlac. The two defining moments in his spiritual development—his calling and his meeting with Saint Bartholomew—occur at times when he is struggling with isolation. Guthlac's decision to enter a monastery occurs not only *when* he is alone, it also seems to happen *because* he is alone. In chapter 18, his soul began to turn toward God while he "curas mortales intenta meditatione cogitaret" (contemplated mortal affairs in intense meditation, 80).[189] He imagines his own death which fills him with anxiety about the inevitable time when he will have to answer for his sins. Guthlac seeks comfort in God when he considers death, which will separate him from not only the material world but also the people in it. This may be connected to the particularly secular characteristics of Felix's *Vita* and Guthlac's life experiences. In the heroic tradition, the problem with death is that it leads to a separation

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Cross-Temporal Affiliation, and an Anglo-Saxon Anchorite," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 42, no. 1 (2016): 13).

188. All references are to Bede's Life in *Two lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

189. All quotations refer to *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge University Press, 1965). For readability, I have removed Colgrave's italics, which he uses to indicate borrowings and references to other religious texts. All translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.

from community. Before death, a warrior must ensure that his deeds are remembered in stories in order to keep his memory alive. Death leads to oblivion—a final separation of the individual from the community.

The appearance of Saint Bartholomew in the *Vita* is unique to Guthlac's story and key to understanding his willingness to place spiritual values alongside corporeal ones. Often in hagiography, spiritual visitors appear as incorporeal angels. For example, the angel who appears in the snow at the monastery to Cuthbert vanishes without leaving any evidence of his presence (chapter 7). For Guthlac, however, his visitor is not an incorporeal angel but the corporeal Saint Bartholomew, who appears repeatedly to guide and comfort Guthlac in times of trouble throughout his life. In chapter 29, Satan sends a "venenifluam desperationis sagittam" (arrow poisoned by despair, 94) into the mind of Guthlac who begins to despair that he will never be able to atone for his sins early in his life. After three days of struggle, Guthlac cries out for help from the Lord, and Saint Bartholomew appears to him. Importantly, it is not a vision, but the actual saint come to Guthlac's aid. Guthlac "palam splendentis caelicolae cognovit vultum" (openly recognized the countenance of the resplendent sky-dweller, 96), and, upon seeing the Saint, his fears were diminished and his heart lightened. Saint Bartholomew remains with Guthlac, offering him comfort, guidance, and teaching, and promising that he will come to his aid in the future as well. The narrator comments that the Devil was never able to use despair as a weapon against Guthlac again. As we see during his trial in the wilderness, he is not able to overcome the temptation to abandon his mission until Saint Bartholomew arrives to support him (chapter 29). Significantly, it is also not just a vision of the saint, but the saint himself. The narrative presents a vision as being insufficient for Guthlac to survive the temptation; he requires a physical presence of companionship. Even an eremitic saint struggles with social isolation and

requires relationships to guide him, and not just a relationship with God, a relationship with another saint—someone else who was in and of the world in a body and is now in heaven.

Felix's *Vita* presents many scenes that could be viewed as contradictory to eremitic monasticism, yet the narrative gives no indication that these moments degrade Guthlac's sanctity.[190] Rather, it likely made him a more relatable saint for readers of the text who saw in Guthlac a model of how to transition from secular to Christian lifestyles. Moreover, Guthlac maintains core tenets from his early life as a kind of warlord—he praises those around him and builds relationships with various companions. Blended ideologies are clearly present in the *Vita*, and many of them are alluded to in the abbreviated account of Guthlac's life in *Guthlac B*. In the summary of Guthlac's deeds, he is often described as healing people, both in body and mind, and offering them "helpe ond hælo" (help and healing, 890a) and "ferðþes frofre" (comfort for the mind, 923a). The poet includes his defeat of demons and establishment of his hermitage and notes that "hwilum mennisce / aras eaðmedum eft neosedon" (at times human messengers humbly sought him out, 919b-20).

But there is one apparent contradiction to Christian ideology in *Guthlac B*, and that is Guthlac's method of consoling the servant. Scholarship has primarily focused on Guthlac's first attempt to comfort the servant rather than his final words of comfort. The first exchange between Guthlac and the servant occurs when the servant discovers Guthlac in the midst of his illness and asks him what is wrong. Guthlac replies by detailing his pain and explaining that he knows his death is coming. It is also at this point that Guthlac asks the servant to bring word of his death to his sister. The servant is distraught at the thought of losing Guthlac. Guthlac comforts the servant

190. Even when Guthlac is living as a secular warlord he is only described as having a "mutate mente" (change of disposition, 81).

by explaining that he (Guthlac) is ready for the journey, that he is eager for his soul to be reunited with God:

> Ne beo þu unrot, ðeah þeos adl me
> innan æle. …
> … Min þæt leofe bearn,
> ne beo þu on sefan to seoc. Ic eom siþes fus
> upeard niman. (1064-65; 1076-78)
> (Do not be sad, though this disease burns within me. … My dear child, do not be sick in your mind. I am eager for this journey, to dwell in the land above.)

Guthlac also offers the servant comfort at the end of the discussion of the heavenly visitor, saying:

> Leofast monna, nu ic for lufan þinre,
> ond geferscype þæt wit fyrn mid unc
> longe læstan, nelle ic lætan þe
> æfre unrotne æfter ealdorlege
> meðne modseocne minre geweorðan,
> soden sorgwælmum. A ic sibbe wiþ þe
> healdan wille. (1257-1263a)
> (Dearest of men, now because of your love and the companionship that we two once had between us two for a long time, I will not let you ever become sad, weary, sick at heart, boiled by sorrow-waves after my fated death. I will always hold friendship with you.)

In the first speech, Guthlac's words are reminiscent of those of many saints—they are eager to leave the mundane and find eternal life with their Lord. The second, however, sets aside the

former attempts to teach the servant how to approach death through Christian example, offering him a comfort that is rooted not in the love of God, but in the love of a man and the suggestion that Guthlac the man will persist "always" and be a source of comfort beyond the grave.[191] It seems to give in to the servant's preoccupation with the earthly body.

The role of friendships such as Guthlac and the servant's in a monastic setting is complex. Love and care for others is part of Christian doctrine, but it should not supplant one's love for God. Augustine placed high value on his friendships and relationships, but he also wrote that it was necessary that friendships be first and foremost an extension of one's love of God. Taken alone, Guthlac's final injunction to the servant hints at a disordered love—a raising of a single man over God. I suggest, however, that in the context of *Guthlac B*'s preoccupation with the nature of the body and soul and the vernacular conceptualization of the mind, this response highlights the similarities between vernacular and Christian psychologies rather than the differences. It is this quality that helps Guthlac acknowledge the servant's earthly concerns and guide him toward a Christian interpretation of the spirit and body during his time of grief.

Guthlac's consideration of an earthly perspective on grief arises as part of the prevailing theme of the painful and unnatural separation of body and soul at the time of death. The poem

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191. Here it is also worth noting that the second speech of Guthlac's comfort is reminiscent of Jesus' final words to the Apostles in the Great Commission: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Guthlac is often compared to Christ because his illness and death occur around Easter. Calder writes: "Guthlac's death comes during the Easter octave. Maintaining the series of comparisons between Guthlac and Christ, the poet describes a world torn asunder by the saint's passing, one replete with overtones of the Crucifixion. The narrative movement is suspended as the poet turns Guthlac's death into a symbolic recreation of Christ's Passion and Resurrection. Time passes in darkness and then light breaks onto the scene; the poem has shifted from Good Friday to Easter, from Christ's Death to His Rising and from Guthlac's death to his imminent transfiguration" (239). The significance of Guthlac's Easter-tide death is also discussed in Peter Lucas, "Easter, the Death of St. Guthlac, and the Liturgy for Holy Saturday in Felix's *Vita* and the Old English *Guthlac B*," *Medium Aevum* 6, no. 1 (1992).

begins with an account of the Creation and Fall of humankind that makes it clear that in a prelapsarian state, the body and soul of man are united and inseparable. Before eating the apple, Adam will suffer "ne lifes lyre ne lices hryre" (no loss of life or destruction of body, 829) and when he dies, his "leomu lic somud ond lifes gæst" (limbs, body, and soul of life together, 838) will go to Heaven. The punishment for disobedience is the pain of death, a punishment described as a "gæstgedal" (soul separation, 862b). Death as the separation of body and soul several times throughout the poem. Guthlac anticipates the "nydgedal" (necessary separation, 934a) that is coming, and he refers to the separation of body and soul twice in his first speech to the servant.[192] The body and soul separation is particularly poignant in the twofold, Christian anthropology of the self. As noted in Chapter 1, the early medieval English generally held a fourfold understanding of the self that included, the body, mind, soul, and life-force. Early medieval Christian thinkers, however, most often divided the self into two parts, the body and soul.[193] Lockett finds that while a small number of early medieval English thinkers subscribed to the twofold division between body and soul, the fourfold division was more widespread among a range of experiences and education levels.[194] The *mod* was the part of the self that was responsible for all mental functions, emotional as well as intellectual, and in texts like *Juliana* and *Paternal Precepts* it plays a key role in resisting the temptation to sin. Guthlac's *mod* remains strong and aligned with the spiritual desires of the soul even as his body becomes sicker and sicker: "He his modsefan / wið þam færhagan fæste trymede" (He fixed his mind firmly

192. "Sawelgedales" (soul separation, 1035a); "lifgedal" (life separation, 1046a).

193. A tripartite philosophy also existed but was much less common. See Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 17-53 for a more detailed discussion.

194. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 17.

against the perils, 959b-60). The servant, however, is preoccupied with the mundane; his *mod* is attuned to his earthly cares rather than spiritual ones.

Many of the common images and phrases associated with vernacular psychology and *mod*-meeting appear in descriptions of the servant's grief. Harbus notes that like other Old English poetry, *Guthlac B* is preoccupied with the mental states of its actors and in creating this Old English retelling, the poet drastically increases the space devoted to detailing mentalities.[195] The typical characteristics of a disturbed mind—heat, swelling, and a literally "over-whelmed" state that leads to tears pouring out of the body are present in multiple descriptions of the servant's grief. When the servant realizes Guthlac is sick "he hate let / torn þoliende, tearas geotan / weallan wægdropan" (he hotly, suffering grief, let hot tears pour out, water-drops surge, 1055b-57), and when Guthlac is about to die "[t]eagor yðum weol, / hate hleordropan" (tears welled in waves, cheek-drops, 1340b-41a).[196] The servant also says "[þ]æt me sorgna is / hatost on hreþre, ær þu hyge minne / ferð afrefre" (that sorrow will be hottest in my heart until you can comfort my mind, 1019b-21a).

The servant's grief is corporeal, and his reaction to grief can be explained by the qualities of the *mod*-meeting scenario. As discussed above, many scholars have noted that the servant is more concerned with the earthly than the spiritual and that spiritual arguments do not assuage his grief. From the perspective of vernacular psychology, this makes sense—the *mod* is part of the body and it is also the part of a person that can comfort another. When the body dies, the *mod*

195. Harbus, *The Life of the Mind*, 107.

196. The servant even experiences the paradoxical cooling of the heart when in the depths of sadness: "Ongon ða hyge-geomor, / freorig ond ferðwerig" (Then he became sad-minded, chilled, heart-weary, 1156b-57a). Lockett addresses this phenomenon in *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies,* 68-69 and 104-106.

dies as well, and a person can no longer receive comfort from another's *mod*. The servant's grief is so painful because he is losing more than a friend; in a way he is losing a psycho-physiological extension of himself. Low has commented on the irony that the servant "repeatedly appeals to Guthlac for mental consolation, although it is the saint who is ill."[197] In a vernacular, early medieval conceptualization of the mind, however, the servant is also suffering physically. Whereas Guthlac takes comfort in the knowledge that when his own body and *mod* are dead his soul will be united with God, the servant faces a future in which his *mod* will persist in isolation.

Guthlac is not blind to the servant's grief, however. After explaining that he is dying, Guthlac "[o]ngeat gasta halig geomormodes / drusendne hyge" (the holy one of souls perceived the drooping mind of the sorrow-minded one, 1060-61a) and began to comfort him. Guthlac urges him not to be sad because he (Guthlac) is eager and ready for death. It is not until Guthlac's illness progresses that the servant again grows anxious and asks that his teacher might "þurh gæstes giefe godspel bodian, / secgan sigortacnum, ond his sefan trymman" (through the gift of the spirit preach the gospel, speak with convincing proofs, and console his mind, 1115-16). He later asks for Guthlac's assistance again in understanding, asking "þæt him on spellum gecyðde, / onwrige worda gongum, hu he his wisna truwade / drohtes on ðære dimman adle" (that he tell him in stories, reveal in the course of words, how he trusted in the course of life in the dark illness, 1160b-62a). The servant seeks a mental connection with Guthlac through Guthlac's speech and teachings. As long as Guthlac is able to communicate with the servant, he can be comforted. There is also a sense of urgency in the servant's words because he demands that Guthlac speak "ærðon hine deað onsægde" (before death should sacrifice him, 1162b). From

197. Low, "Mental Cultivation," 631.

his vernacular perspective, the servant sees death as the final separation after which he will not be able to contact Guthlac.

Although Guthlac has clearly outlined the correct Christian attitude toward death—that it is a joyful moment for those who have lived well and will meet the Lord—he does not dismiss the servant's grief at earthly loss. In Guthlac's final speech, when he promises to always hold friendship with the servant, he does not continue to insist that the servant take up Guthlac's Christian attitude toward death. Instead, he acknowledges the servant's earthly attachments and, instead of continuing to espouse Christian joy in the face of death, he changes course. In this moment, Guthlac models a path through the experience of grief in which Christian philosophies of the body and soul extend naturally from the servant's vernacular understanding of the mind but with less significance placed on the corporeal aspect.

Guthlac bases his response to the servant's expectation for relationships to involve both psychological and physiological connection. Vernacular psychology assumes a connection between mind and body that is not present in the twofold anthropology of the Christian body and soul. Christian philosophy lacks a concept of the mind as integrated part of the body, which means that any mental comfort Guthlac offers would require the servant to drastically alter his understanding of the mind and the self. However, that does not mean that Christian doctrine discounted the role of the body entirely.[198] Indeed, there were a number of paradigms and practices that acknowledged a connection between the body and spiritual experience in Christianity and Christian doctrine, including affective piety, Christians as the limbs or *membra*

198. Caroline Walker Bynum explores these ideas in depth in *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (Columbia University Press, 1995) and *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (University of California Press, 1987).

of Christ's body, and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In the context of these concepts, it is possible to read Guthlac's words as a model for how earthly concerns may yet be incorporated into a Christian grief, rather than an indication of the servant's spiritual failure.

Although Christian doctrine instructs believers to spurn worldly things and focus on spiritual well-being, an individual's bodily experience can still play a part in their spiritual devotion. Affective piety describes the acknowledgment and incorporation of the worshipper's physical and emotional feelings as part of their religious experience. Scholarship on affective piety is primarily concerned with the central and late Middle Ages, but recent research into affective piety in the early Middle Ages suggests that this was not an uncommon or unheard of practice in early medieval England. More recently, the affective, emotional qualities of *The Dream of the Rood* have been brought to light by Jennifer Lorden in *Forms of Devotion.* In *The Dream of the Rood*, the narrator describes a dream in which the True Cross recounts its experience at Christ's death. The anthropomorphized tree is cut down, hewn into a cross, and, as the nails are driven through Christ's wrists so they pierce the limbs of the cross. As Lorden explains, "the shared physical wounds created by the nails that pierced Christ's hands and feet, and the blood that still soaks the cross's side, allow the Cross to suffer with even this rarefied depiction of a stoic Christ."[199] Given what we know about vernacular psychology, it is entirely reasonable that early medieval English would have experienced affective piety, and the *mod*-meeting scenario would have provided a situation to explore intersection of the mental and the physical.

199. Lorden, *Forms of Devotion,* 21.

The nature of the body is of course of huge importance in Christian doctrine, especially in the context of Christ's incarnation. Biblical and patristic authors often explain that it is Christ's humanity that allows him to understand the plight of mankind. In Paul's[200] epistle to the Hebrews, he encourages them to find faith in Christ because of his mortal nature:

> Quia ergo pueri communicaverunt sanguini et carni et ipse similiter participavit hisdem ut per mortem destrueret eum qui habebat mortis imperium id est diabolum et liberaret eos qui timore mortis per totam vitam obnoxii erant servituti nusquam enim angelos adprehendit sed semen Abrahae adprehendit unde debuit per omnia fratribus similare, ut misericors fieret et fidelis pontifex ad Deum ut repropitiaret delicta populi in eo enim in quo passus est ipse temptatus potens est et eis qui temptantur auxiliari. (Hebrews 2:14-18)
>
> (Therefore because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner hath been partaker of the same: that, through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil: And might deliver them, who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude. That is, he never took upon him the nature of angels, but that of the seed of Abraham. Wherefore, it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people. For in

200. For an overview on the influence of Paul's writings in early medieval England, see Valerie Heuchan, "The Apostle Paul in Anglo-Saxon England: All Things to All Men," in *A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages*, ed. Steven Cartwright (Brill, 2013). All Bible quotes are from *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. Robert Weber (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969) and all translations are from *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*, https://www.ccel.org/ccel/challoner/douayrheims/dr.html.

> that wherein he himself hath suffered and been tempted he is able to succour them also that are tempted.)

Paul's theology of the body is present in other letters as well where he expands on the metaphor of Christians as the limbs in Christ's body. In the first letter to the Corinthians, he addresses the relationship between the body and spiritual experience in his discourse on spiritual gifts: "sicut enim corpus unum est et membra habet multa omni autem membra corporis cum sint multa unum corpus sunt ita et Christus" (For as the body is one and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body: So also is Christ, 1 Cor 12:12). Later, he explains the relationship between all Christians in Christ:

> ut non sit scisma in corpore sed id ipsum pro invicem sollicita sint membra et si quid patitur unum membrum conpatiuntur omni membra sive gloriatur unum membrum congaudent omni membra vos autem estis corpus Christi et membra de membro. (1 Cor: 12:25-27)
>
> (That there might be no schism in the body: but the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer any thing, all the members suffer with it: or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members of member.)

Katherine Norcross identifies several early English texts in Latin and Old English which rely on this doctrine, including a letter written by bishops to King Æthelbald of Mercia, archbishop Cuthbert's letter to bishop Lul, and several homilies.[201] The Old English homily Blickling 6, for

201. See Norcross, 33-56.

example, incites its lay listeners[202] to imitate Mary anointing Jesus' feet and in so doing experience "efenþrowgende" (co-suffering).[203]

One of the sources of the metaphor of Christians as limbs of the body of Christ stems from the doctrine that God made man in his image (and thus we are like him) and the paradox of the Trinity, in which God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit are all God but also distinct persons. Early Christian philosophers called this state of being *perichoresis* from Greek *peri* (around) + *choreo* (to go, to come). In medieval Latin, the term is *circumincession* from *circum* (around) + *incedere* (to step or go). Today, a useful term is "coinherence," coined by Charles Williams in the early twentieth century. Barbara Newman has recently adapted this concept to her study of selfhood in the Middle Ages.[204] The concept of coinherence or "being-within-one-another" was developed in the patristic writings of the seventh and eighth centuries, but the term only appeared in Europe in the twelfth century.[205] Although the term itself may never have appeared in early medieval English texts, that does not mean that the general concept of in-dwelling did not exist. Newman observes that although "the term is not biblical, the concept is decidedly so,"[206] and the concepts of indwelling and being-within-one-another appear

202. The intended audience for the Blickling Homilies is unknown, but because they are written in Old English, it is more likely that lay persons would be a part of the audience. Blickling 6 is specifically for Palm Sunday, and Norcross suggests that this would make it more likely that the text was intended for a "mixed audience" (40). For more on the audience of the Blickling Homilies, Norcross cites Milton McC. Gatch, "The Unknowable Audience of the Blickling Homilies," *Anglo-Saxon England* 18 (1989).

203. Norcross' translation, 39. Norcross also identifies several uses of or allusions to the metaphor in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* 2:28, 2:32, 1:19, and Supplement 25.

204. Barbara Newman, *The Permeable Self: Five Medieval Relationships* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021).

205. Newman, 5.

206. Newman, 5.

multiple times in the Gospels, including John 14:11,[207] John 17:22,[208] 1 Corinthians 15:22,[209] Romans 12:5,[210] and Ephesians 4:25.[211] The preponderance of evidence pointing to a conceptual understanding of in-dwelling in the Gospels suggests that religious writers from early medieval England would have an intuitive understanding or awareness of the idea of dwelling within another, even if they did not have a specific term to express such a relationship. Moreover, this Christian philosophy of self can be analogized with the vernacular without loss to the latter.

Christian theology of the body and vernacular *mod*-meeting come together in Guthlac's promise to "always hold friendship" with the servant. *Mod*-meeting has already been shown as a catalyst for transference of ideas and mental states throughout a community. With the incorporation of the Christian philosophy of the body and the connection of all bodies and souls through Christ, there is the possibility that not only can a person transfer an idea from one to another, they can actually fulfill the mental function of another person. The body and mind are united not only in interpersonal relationships but across all believers by the Holy Spirit.

The ability of one person to be substituted for another appears in a literal sense in the relationship between Guthlac and his sister. Guthlac's request that the servant go to his sister begins the exchange by suggesting two important concepts to the servant. Guthlac's request places the servant in the roles of both messenger and proxy. Guthlac asks the servant to speak

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207. "Non credis quia ego in Patre et Pater in me est" (Believe you not that I am in the Father and the Father in me)?

208. "Et ego claritatem quam dedisti mihi dedi eis ut sint unum sicut nos unum sumus" (And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them: that, they may be one, as we also are one).

209. "Et sicut in Adam omnes moriuntur ita et in Christo omnes vivificabuntur" (As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive).

210. "Ita multi unum corpus sumus in Christo singuli autem alter alterius membra" (So we, being many, are one body in Christ; and every one members of another).

211. "Propter quod deponentes mendacium loquimini veritatem unusquisque cum proximo suo quoniam sumus invicem membra" (Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbour. For we are members one of another).

with “wordum minum” (my words, 1183a) to his sister. That the servant is able to speak in the place of Guthlac implies that he is able to occupy the same social role as Guthlac and that he is able to bear some aspect of Guthlac’s self to his sister. Moreover, Guthlac uses the dual pronoun when he refers to his relationship with his sister indicating the close bond shared between the siblings. As discussed in Chapter Two, the use of the dual pronoun in Old English often indicated a special significance in a relationship—a particular kind of bond that connects two people on a deeper level than a simple or convenient grouping. By asking the servant to carry a message, the servant steps into the place of Guthlac, bearing the message where the dying saint cannot and taking his place in the relationship.[212] The use of the dual pronoun and a proxy messenger also hint at the possibility of maintaining deep mental and emotional attachment with others even without a physical presence. The use of a messenger allows communication to pass from one person to another without those persons occupying the same space. This undercuts the idea that the mind is entirely contained within the body. As we saw in *Genesis B*, words are one method of circumventing the corporeality of the mind and a way to make “contact” between minds without physical contact. In the case of Guthlac and his sister, however, they have avoided not only physical contact but communication of any kind. Guthlac has completely isolated himself from his sister, yet the use of the dual pronoun indicates the deep spiritual connection between the two.

In the relationship between Guthlac and the servant, the attempt to create connection is more complicated. The servant does not ask Guthlac outright for a way to connect with him after death, but, after Guthlac instructs the servant to visit his sister, the servant asks a question that at

212. Unfortunately, because the poem as it now survives cuts off during the servant’s speech to Guthlac’s sister, we cannot know how she would have reacted to Guthlac’s proxy.

first appears to be a non sequitur. After being asked to function as a messenger between the siblings, the servant immediately asks Guthlac about the "messenger" that he has heard in Guthlac's chambers at dawn and dusk. The passage is worth reviewing closely for the diction with which the servant characterizes this voice:

> Symle ic gehyrde, þonne heofones gim,
> wyncondel wera, west onhylde,
> sweglbeorht sunne setlgonges fus
> on æfentid**,** oþerne mid þec,
> þegn æt geþeahte. Ic þæs þeodnes word,
> ares uncuþes oft neosendes,
> dægwoman bitweon ond þære deorcan niht,
> meþel-cwide mæcges, ond on morgne swa,
> ongeat geomormod, gæstes spræce,
> gleawes in geardum. (1212- 1221a)
>
> (When the gem of heaven, the joy-light of men, the heaven-bright sun, eager for setting in the evening, declined in the west, often I heard another with you, a lord in counsel. I, sad-hearted, perceived the word of the lord, of the unknown messenger often visiting between daybreak and dark night, the speech of the man, and in the morning likewise, the speech of a spirit, of a wise one in the yards.)

The servant identifies this unknown person as a lord and is drawn to the fact that he speaks with Guthlac. Much like Guthlac's request for the servant to act as a messenger, this passage is also heavy with speech-words. From the perspective of hagiography, the servant's question functions to provides firsthand evidence of Guthlac's miracles. From a psychological perspective,

however, it could suggest that the servant, knowing Guthlac is nearing death, is seeking a person who has spoken with him—someone who might speak Guthlac's words as a proxy, just like the servant is asked to do for Guthlac's sister. If this messenger has indeed spoken with Guthlac, then he, like the servant, would carry a part of Guthlac—his words—inside himself.

Here it also becomes necessary to focus on the servant's character not only in *Guthlac B* but also in Felix's *Vita*. In the *Vita*, Beccel is the monk who is living with Guthlac when he dies. Beccel primarily serves as a realistic source for the details of Guthlac's death and his confession to speaking with Saint Bartholomew. In chapter 1 of the *Vita*, the narrator even notes that Beccel's account is his source for this information. It is to Beccel that Guthlac predicts his time of death and with Beccel that he makes provisions for his own burial. Unlike the character of the servant in *Guthlac B*, Beccel does not dwell on his grief overmuch. When he hears that Guthlac will die, he is "flens et gemens crebris lacrimarum rivulis maestas genas rigavit" (weeping and groaning, he watered his sad cheeks with many rivulets of tears, 154) before apparently being successfully consoled by Guthlac explaining that he is happy to join the Lord. Finally, when Guthlac does die, Beccel becomes frightened at the heavenly light and flees before carrying out the tasks Guthlac has set him. Interestingly, the character of Beccel does not appear only in the account of Guthlac's death in chapter 50. He appears first several years previously (in chapter 35) when he offers to become Guthlac's servant and student. One day, while Beccel is preparing to tonsure Guthlac, however, he becomes possessed by a devil who urges him to slay Guthlac and take his place. Guthlac realizes the devil's influence and implores Beccel to turn his mind away from the wicked thoughts the devil has placed in his head. Beccel confesses and Guthlac forgives him. Like the servant overwhelmed by sorrow in *Guthlac B*, Beccel's struggle is also located in the mind, and just as the servant demands comfort from Guthlac, so Beccel is

promised that Guthlac will help him through challenges. This response is also a reflection of the relationship between Saint Bartholomew and Guthlac, in which Bartholomew rescues Guthlac from the "poisoned arrow" of the mind and promises to support him.

Because Beccel is the character that is with Guthlac in chapter 50 of the *Vita*, scholars have often assumed that the servant of *Guthlac B* must be this same Beccel. Although some scholars suggest that the servant is meant to be an everyman character,[213] I have yet to see anyone posit a character from the *Vita* other than Beccel as a source for the servant. Where Beccel in chapter 50 mourns only briefly for Guthlac, however, Æthelbald, the exiled king, expresses deep sorrow and directionlessness when he hears of the saint's death in chapter 52. I suggest that Æthelbald is as much as source for the character of the servant as Beccel. Like Beccel, Æthelbald appears earlier in the *Vita*. In chapter 49, he appears as an exiled king whom Guthlac comforts. After hearing of Guthlac's death, Æthelbald, still living in exile, "subita arreptus maestitia ad corpus ipsius pervenit" (he, suddenly seized with grief, came to the body of him [Guthlac], 164) hoping to find comfort by the deceased holy man's intercession. He prays to Guthlac for help:

> Pater mi, tu scis miserias meas, tu semper adiutor mei fuisti, te vivente non desperabam in angustiis adfuisti mihi in periculis multis; per te invocabam dominum, et liberavit me; modo quo vertam faciem meam, unde erit auxilium mihi, aut quis consiliabitur mecum, pater optime, si me dereliqueris, quis me consolabitur? in te sperabam, nec me spes fefellit. (164)

213. For example, Sally Mussetter, "Type as Prophet in the Old English *Guthlac B,*" *Viator* 14 (1983): 55.

> (My father [Guthlac], you know my miseries, you have always been a helper to me, while you were living, I did not despair when in anguish, you stood next to me in many dangers; through you I called upon the Lord, and He freed me; where now should I turn my face, whence will help come to me, or who will give me counsel, most excellent father, if you abandon me, who will console me? In you I have hoped, and hope has not failed me.)

Æthelbald continues to mourn, "pernoctans maestam mentem huc illucque iactabat" (his sorrowing mind tossed here and there throughout the night, 164) until he is awakened by a bright light and he sees Guthlac standing before him as an angel. Guthlac comforts Æthelbald and assures him that he will soon regain his kingdom, and he is correct. In these passages, the struggles of an exiled king provide a background on which Guthlac displays his saintly powers of foresight, but, in the context of *Guthlac B*, the passage becomes a possible source for the image of a living person experiencing mental anguish as he grieves the death of a friend. In this way, the servant in *Guthlac B* is far more akin to the figure of Æthelbald than to Beccel.

Moreover, the story of Æthelbald also models a situation in which the living mourner is comforted by a visit from the deceased, a demonstration that a connection can persist between the living and the dead through Christian faith. Like the series of paired relationships that form a chain from God to Eve in *Genesis B*, individuals in the life of Guthlac are often part of a "chain" that stretches between the sacred (God) and the profane (mankind) with the saints acting as intermediaries between the two. When Guthlac is alone and in despair, he is comforted by the physical presence of Saint Bartholomew from heaven. In *Guthlac B*, his "holy messenger" is unnamed, but an audience familiar with the story of Guthlac would have immediately recognized in this character the presence of Saint Bartholomew. When Æthelbald despairs, a saint—this

time Guthlac himself—again comes to him and offers comfort. By having Guthlac appear to Æthelbald, the *Guthlac B* poet also neatly tightens the relationship between living man and deceased spiritual advisor. Guthlac begins life as a pagan and suffers doubt and insecurity in his loneliness. Saint Bartholomew's physical and ongoing visits to Guthlac are a source of comfort. When Guthlac passes from life to death, he takes up the role of Saint Bartholomew as a spiritual advisor to a distressed living person—in the *Vita*, he comforts Æthelbald, while in *Guthlac B* it is implied that he will comfort the servant.

Guthlac's description of his nightly visitor gently guides the servant and audience on a path through grief to reassurance and reinterpretation of a psychology that recognizes corporeal connection. Guthlac's distinctive final conversation with his servant situates itself in the heart of *mod*-meeting—he promises the servant that their friendship will persist beyond his death and that he (Guthlac) will protect the servant from the mental anguish of grief. In monastic and hagiographical contexts, it might be more appropriate for Guthlac to reiterate his previous statements—that death is a joyful union of his soul with God, and that he is not afraid. Audiences familiar with saints' lives in Old English might expect Guthlac to be a model of sanctity for his servant, showing him how to turn his love fully toward God and away from worldly concerns. Instead, Guthlac reassures the servant that they will still have a connection, that the servant won't really be alone after Guthlac dies. It is also important to note that in Guthlac's final words to the servant in this passage he uses the dual pronoun again, this time to refer to his and the servant's friendship. This serves as a gentle reminder that proximity does not preclude connection and reassures the servant that just as Guthlac holds a deep bond with a person he does not see or speak with, he also holds friendship with the servant.

In this concluding speech, several important ideas stand out: the deep significance of close relationships and the possibility of extending friendship beyond death. To bring these in line with monastic values and established Christian theology of the body, the poet guides the audience to an understanding of death that draws authority from the traditional psychology of the body-mind while ultimately embracing the Christian doctrine of the soul. The concept of the proxy is based on bodily substitution of one person for another. It enacts an underlying psychology in which the *mod* of one person can find connection to another via a messenger. Although Christian psychologies are structured on a body/soul division (rather than a body-mind complex), the spiritual aspect of humanity is an inherently shared feature. Coinherence expands the concept of a messenger or proxy mind to the possibility of a state of being that encompasses many. As the characters in the *Vita* progress through spiritual development, so might we conceive of coinherence as a path for those characters to not only become like each other, but to literally *be* within each other. This concept eases the pain of loss because the person's spirit is part of the larger spirit of the Christian community. Death may remove their body, but because all spirits are part of one another, they cannot be fully gone.

Guthlac reaffirms his friendship with the servant and promises to preserve him from grief, and in doing so, he at the same time guides the servant away from his grief at the corporeal loss and turns his attention to the spiritual nature of their relationship. Guthlac offers this model of friendship not because he is trying to acquiesce to the servant or to undercut the tenets of Christian faith, but because it is a way for the servant to map his grief onto a Christian topography of the self that will ultimately bring him peace. To an early medieval audience in England, this offers an acceptably Christian way of helping them process grief and believing that a connection can persist after death. Theology of the body acknowledges the importance of

corporeal experience while guiding the audience to an understanding of the spiritual unity shared among all Christians. When the audience identifies with the servant, Guthlac's vow that he will not let sorrow harm the servant and will hold friendship stands in as a comforting voice from beyond the grave for those who have suffered loss.

CONCLUSION: THE CURIOUS CONFLUENCE OF *BEOWULF* AND BATS

The *mod* in early medieval England was corporeal, cardiocentric, and contained both thinking and feeling functions. These qualities led to a conceptualization of the mind that allowed for different kinds of cognitive functions than are possible for the modern English *mind*. In this dissertation, I have hypothesized the presence of *mod*-meeting, the capacity to form a connection that is both mental and physical and that encapsulates the tension between an individual's desire to form connection and awareness of the risks posed by such a relationship. Moreover, I have suggested that this kind of cognitive function extends beyond the boundaries of an individual mind to connect at least two minds, providing insight into the significance in Old English poetry of forming interpersonal relationships. In *Genesis B*, the *mod*-meeting framework provides a context for understanding Eve's social role as a companion figure and the benefits and problems that brings. In *Guthlac B*, *mod*-meeting is a foundation on which Guthlac can build his servant's understanding of a Christian self without leaving behind his traditional vernacular psychology.

The framework and examples here present many avenues for further research in early medieval English literature and culture. A natural extension from the interpersonal relationships explored so far is a consideration of the role of the *mod* in a range of speech acts, such as swearing oaths, boasting, or making legal claims, that underpin the social and political systems of early medieval England. As discussed in Chapter One, a deep mental connection exists between Beowulf and Hrothgar to the extent that Beowulf's "roomy" mind is able to comfort Hrothgar. The relationship between the two is personal but also political, and the intimacy of their bond has the potential for widespread political impact on the Danes and Geats. Hrothgar is

so impressed with Beowulf that he wants to make him his heir, which, as Wealhtheow points out, would lead to conflict with Hrothgar's biological children. In a cultural milieu in which kinship, formalized friendship, and fostering provided important social structures, forming interpersonal relationships had far-reaching implications, not only for the individuals involved but for the community as a whole.

In many of the texts examined so far, the connection between the individuals involved in the *mod*-meeting scenario has been formed through speech: the Devil speaks to Eve, Eve speaks to Adam, and Guthlac speaks to his servant. Additional research, however, is needed to determine if *mod*-meeting applies in other forms of communication. One of the key qualities of the *mod* that enables *mod*-meeting is its corporeality. Its benefits and dangers stem from the corporeal aspect of the mind, suggesting that physical presence may be required. This leads us to consider other rhetorical situations, both within the story-world and in the larger rhetorical situation of the text. Consider the narrative conceit applied in many of the elegies in which the speaker is isolated in the story-world yet speaks to an imagined listener. Poems such as *The Wanderer* and *The Wife's Lament* feature speakers who suffer in isolation but speak as if directly addressing an audience, whether that is the implied audience hearing them or the actual audience reading their words. It remains to be seen if either such audience can bring the narrator the mental and physical comfort they desire. Literary and real-world descriptions of reading, writing, and dreaming should also be considered. The acts of reading and writing as a way of transferring knowledge also played an important role in the intellectual lives of literate early medieval English. Monastic activities such as *translatio* and *ruminatio* relied on the medium of the written word to cultivate and discipline one's mind. Reading and writing were important means of

communication, but it remains to be seen if reading someone's words would have been as affective as speaking directly to that person.

The importance of the corporeality of the *mod* can be pushed even further by considering the interiority of the nonhuman. It is clear that Old English poetry is interested in the mind, but this interest is not limited to humans. Nonhuman characters are given complex interior lives as well, and it is worth considering how this subjectification of seemingly inanimate entities might relate to the mental connections formed between humans. Britt Mize notes that material objects have complex inner experiences in many of the Riddles, which are spoken from the answer's perspective. In Riddle 35, "mail-shirts can ponder their origins in the thoughts of their hearts," while in Riddle 5 "nicked shields can be weary of battle."[214] Animals are also given speech and interiority. James Paz has published several works exploring the "voice" of non-human entities in Old English poetry.[215] In his study of birds and psychology, Paz argues "birds were represented as nonhuman thinkers who simultaneously encourage deep thinking in human beings."[216] In *The Wanderer*, for example, the narrator is reminded of his lost companions when he sees a flock of birds, but these inspired memories are not enough to comfort him. As the narrator watches the birds swim away, he comments that "Fleotendra ferð no þær fela bringeð / Cuðra cwide-giedda" (The mind(s) of the floating one(s) do not bring many songs of men, 54-

214. Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities*, 12.

215. See *Nonhuman Voices in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Material Culture* (Manchester University Press, 2017); "Thinking with Birds: Avian Song and Psychology in Old English Poetry," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 29, no. 3 (2022): 555–69; "Translating the Nonhuman Across Old and Modern English Verse," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 122, no. 3 (2023): 350–83.

216. "Thinking with Birds," 555.

55). Although they have a *ferð*, they are unable to form the connection between minds that is necessary to soothe the narrator's mind.

In addition to elucidating individual poems and scenes, *mod*-meeting may also tell us about the nature of Old English poetry more generally. Old English poetry is defined largely by its traditionality,[217] including its meter, formulaic language, and the reappearance of certain motifs and type-scenes. Mize argues that along with these, the poetry's interest in mentalities, interiorities, and subjectivities should also be understood as traditional: "Subjectivizing moments … are so rooted in Old English compositional priorities and methods as to be part and parcel of making poems in the traditional register."[218] Here, subjectivity refers to the practice of portraying a subject's interiority and state of mind, whether that subject is human or not. For example, the auroch in *The Rune Poem* is described physically *and* mentally: "[Ur] byþ anmod and oferhryned" (the auroch is single-minded and horn-crested, 4).[219] Old English poetry also often switches between different subjectivities, sometimes providing multiple perspectives in quick succession. In *Genesis B*, for example, the text variously portrays the perspectives of Adam, Eve, the Devil, Satan, and the narrator. At different points in the story, we are privy to the inner workings of each of these characters' minds. We see Satan wallowing in hell and plotting his

217. The extent to which Old English poetry may be termed oral-formulaic is debated, and it is generally accepted that while the corpus has many oral-formulaic qualities, it was not composed or performed exclusively orally and its composers were highly literate in written texts. On this topic, see John Miles Foley, *Traditional Oral Epic:* The Odyssey*,* Beowulf*, and the Serbo-Croatian Return Song* (University of California Press, 1990); Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Mark Amodio, *Writing the Oral Tradition: Oral Poetics and Literate Culture in Medieval England* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2004); Daniel Donoghue, *How the Anglo-Saxons Read Their Poems* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

218. Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities*, 6.

219. Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities*, 11.

revenge, and we witness Eve's indecision and hesitation. The Devil celebrates his successful corruption of the pair while Adam struggles to accept responsibility for what he has done.

It is the immanence[220] of subjectivities, and especially of multiple subjectivities, that makes Old English poetry a fertile form for exploring the tensions present in *mod*-meeting. As noted in Chapter Two, the *Genesis B*-poet often sympathizes with Eve, yet does not fully absolve her. I argue in Chapter Three that Guthlac's words to his servant reconcile vernacular and Christian attitudes toward the body. Old English poetry intrinsically reveals multiple experiences and highlights their similarities.[221] Matto also observes this in his review of the works of Lockett and Mize. He suggests that "the interaction of the 'vernacular' and 'classical' traditions can now be seen as productive and culturally salient, providing not only the content but the *need* for poems."[222] Old English poetry was not just useful for dealing with conflicting views, it was *necessary* to make sense of conflicting philosophies. Matto compares this to the attitudes in texts by Alcuin, Alfred, and Ælfric, analyzed by Lockett, in which the vernacular beliefs are treated as "a competing set of beliefs, to be modified, defended, or abandoned in the face of a preferred theory."[223] Old English poetry provides space for tension and difficulty, drawing attention to similarities and differences in conflicting philosophies and encouraging iterative contemplation of contrasting themes. Likewise, the *mod*-meeting scenario deals with the tension between the mental and the physical as well as the benefit and risk of forming connections. Just as Mize

220. This term was popularized in John Miles Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Indiana University Press, 1991) and refers to the inherent qualities of traditional poetry.

221. For example, the monsters in *Beowulf* are subjectivized such that they become human-like, highlighting both the monstrosity of man and the humanity of the monsters.

222. Michael Matto, "Vernacular Traditions: Exploring Anglo-Saxon Mentalities," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 115, no. 1 (2016): 105. Italics added for emphasis.

223. Matto, "Vernacular Traditions," 105.

theorizes that the interest in subjectivities is traditional, so too might be the *mod*-meeting scenario.

The prevalence of retellings of religious texts also highlights the use of Old English poetics to explore the intersections of sacred and secular ideas. The texts I have used the most in this dissertation, *Genesis B* and *Guthlac B,* are notable as retellings that are expanded and elaborated with the addition of speeches, conversations, and narrative commentary. These texts were more than translations—they were also opportunities for creation at the intersection of Christian and vernacular psychologies. These richly detailed expansions were written by someone who wanted to create something not quite like anything else contained in their inherited traditions, and, in creating them, they revealed perspectives and connections unavailable in other genres. Further research may discover that *mod*-meeting is at its clearest in Old English poetry because in a way Old English poetry *is* a form of *mod*-meeting. Both are frameworks of intimacy—Old English poetry exposes subjects' experiences to an audience, and *mod*-meeting exposes one's inner self to another with potential benefit or detriment.

To study the mind is uniquely challenging. With the advent of scientific study of the brain in the fields of psychology, neuroscience, and cognitive science, the mind might appear eminently knowable, yet there remains a great deal about our minds that we do not understand. In 2019, Wujie Zhang and Michael M. Yartsev published a study in *Cell* that examined the neural activity of adult male Egyptian fruit bats.[224] Researchers measured high frequency brain waves as the bats engaged in social behaviors such as grooming, fighting, and sniffing and

224. Wujie Zhang and Michael M. Yartsev, "Correlated Neural Activity across the Brains of Socially Interacting Bats," *Cell* 178 (2019): 413-428. A more accessible description of the research is Kara Manke, "Bats' Brains Sync when They Socialize," *UC Berkeley News,* June 20, 2019, https://news.berkeley.edu/2019/06/20/bats-brains-sync-when-they-socialize/.

discovered correlated inter-brain activity in bats that shared the same social environment. This study is part of a growing interest in "collective neuroscience"—the study of how multiple brains interact with each other.[225] Unlike traditional neuroscience, which focuses on the brain in isolation, collective neuroscience studies inter-brain relationships and synchronization across organisms.

Such analysis can provide scientific explanations for what humans have intuited for millennia. Many fields of philosophy, psychology, and medicine have begun a shift away from the isolated individualism of the Enlightenment. The growing field of collective neuroscience promises fascinating insights into the self, not only as an individual, but as a member of a group, and highlights the deep mental and emotional interdependence of human beings in communities. There is a symbiotic relationship with humanities scholarship—as we grow more aware of our own interconnectedness and the variations among cultures, we are more flexible in studying historic cultures, more able to see cognitive processes that are not our own. The phenomenon of *mod*-meeting in Old English poetry cuts through modern, Western ideas of an isolated, untouchable, rational self and reminds us that although we live in the tension between benefits and risks, isolation is not the answer.

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225. The field was born with the discovery of "mirror neurons"—patterns in brain waves that appear in an observing brain that mimic the brain waves in a person performing an action. As with many discoveries, the implications of mirror neurons are likely not as drastic as initially envisioned, yet they remain a fascinating discovery with myriad implications for social behavior. The first study was G. di Pellegrino, et al., "Understanding Motor Events: A Neurophysiological Study," *Experimental Brain Research* 91 (1992): 176-80. For a summary of the research concerning mirror neurons and brain synchrony, see Lydia Denworth, "Brain Waves Synchronize when People Interact," *Scientific American*, July 1, 2023, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/brain-waves-synchronize-when-people-interact/.

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