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Vernacular Psychologies in Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English

Colin Peter Mackenzie

MA, MPhil

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English Language

School of Critical Studies

College of Arts

University of Glasgow

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Abstract

This thesis examines the vernacular psychology presented in Old Norse-Icelandic texts. It focuses on the concept *hugr*, generally rendered in English as ‘mind, soul, spirit’, and explores the conceptual relationships between emotion, cognition and the body. It argues that despite broad similarities, Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English vernacular psychology differ more than has previously been acknowledged. Furthermore, it shows that the psychology of Old Norse-Icelandic has less in common with its circumpolar neighbours than proposed by advocates of Old Norse-Icelandic shamanism.

The thesis offers a fresh interpretation of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology which does not rely on cross-cultural evidence from other Germanic or circumpolar traditions. In particular, I demonstrate that emotion and cognition were not conceived of ‘hydraulically’ as was the case in Old English, and that *hugr* was not thought to leave the body either in animal form or as a person’s breath. I show that Old Norse-Icelandic psychology differs from the Old English tradition, and argue that the Old English psychological model is a specific elaboration of the shared psychological inheritance of Germanic whose origins require further study. These differences between the two languages have implications for the study of psychological concepts in Proto-Germanic, as I argue that there are fewer semantic components which can be reliably reconstructed for the common ancestor of the North and West Germanic languages. As a whole, the thesis applies insights from cross-cultural linguistics and psychology in order to show how Old Norse-Icelandic psychological concepts differ not only from contemporary Germanic and circumpolar traditions but also from the Present Day English concepts used to describe them.

The thesis comprises four chapters and conclusion. Chapter 1 introduces the field of study and presents the methodologies and sources used. It introduces the range of cross-cultural variety in psychological concepts, and places Old Norse-Icelandic *hugr* and its Old English analogue *mōd* in a typological perspective. Chapter 2 reviews previous approaches to early Germanic psychology and introduces the major strand of research that forms the background to this study: Lockett’s (2011) proposal that Old English vernacular psychology operated in terms of a ‘hydraulic model’, where the *mōd* would literally boil and seethe within a person’s chest in response to strong emotions. Chapter 3 outlines the native Old Norse-Icelandic psychological model by examining indigenously produced vernacular texts. It looks first at the claims that *hugr* could leave the body in animal form or as a person’s breath. It then describes the relationship between emotion, cognition and the body in Old Norse-Icelandic texts and contrasts this with the Old English system. Chapter 4 examines the foreign influences which could potentially account for the differences between the Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic systems. It looks first at the imported medical traditions which were known in medieval Scandinavia at the time Old Norse-Icelandic texts were being committed to writing. Next it considers the psychology of Christian tradition from the early *Old Icelandic Homily Book* to late-fourteenth-century devotional poetry. Finally, it examines the representation of emotion and the body in the translated Anglo-Norman and Old French texts produced at the court of Hákon Hákonarson and explores how this was transposed to native romances composed in Old Norse-Icelandic. The conclusion summarises the findings of the thesis and presents a proposal for the methodology of studying medieval psychological concepts with directions for further research.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature _____

Printed name _____

Chapter 1: The Mind in Cross-Linguistic Perspective

1 Introduction

The psychological vocabulary of present day English does not cut nature at the joints. Concepts like ‘mind’ and ‘emotion’ are not natural categories which have precise equivalents in other languages or earlier stages of English. When placed in a typological perspective, the English concept ‘mind’ is as culture-bound as any other ethnopsychological construct. However, this fact is hidden by the widespread use of English as an apparently neutral metalanguage in psychology. By using English categories in this manner we lose sight of what Gergen (1991: 8) proposes as anthropology’s most important message, that “what we take to be ‘reliably known’ is more properly considered a form of folklore”.

A comparison can be drawn with the cross-cultural study of colour semantics. Carole Biggam (2012: 1) has written that “Monoglot individuals invariably believe that their own colour system is clear and obvious, and they are often mystified when confronted with an alternative system.” Despite the colour categories of English appearing intuitively basic, evidence from other languages that split up the colour spectrum differently or prioritise other visual modalities such as texture and contrast above hue, demonstrate that colour concepts are conventional rather than natural. Likewise, the English dichotomy between *mind* and *body*, and between a rational ‘mind’ and an emotional ‘heart’ is shown to be conventional by languages which conceive of the ‘mind’ as part of the body, and attribute cognition and emotion to the same part of the person.¹

Nonetheless, in spite of widespread variation most languages do possess lexical expressions referring to unseen parts of the person analogous to the English concepts ‘mind’, ‘heart’ and ‘soul’ (Goddard 2010: 83). These concepts are shaped by the dual forces of our shared neurophysiology and the cultural preoccupations of the society in which they are used (see Gaby 2008). Because of this they represent a most interesting amalgam of the universal and culture-bound which demonstrates the overwhelming influence culture can exert over our construal of the world. The purpose of this thesis is to apply these insights to the study the ‘mind’-like concepts of Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English in order to see how they compare with present day English and with each other.

¹ See for example D’Andre (1987) Quinn and Holland (1987). This cross-cultural variation is discussed in more detail below in §1.1 and §2.3.

The study of early Germanic psychology has made considerable progress in the last thirty years, with a number of articles, theses and monographs devoted to the topic, and to Anglo-Saxon mentalities in particular.² In general, these works have assumed that the cultural psychology expressed in Old English literature was significantly different from our own. However, the degree to which this cultural model of the ‘mind’ was influenced by classical traditions disseminated after England’s conversion to Christianity or survivals of pagan beliefs was the subject of debate.³ In light of this, Malcolm Godden’s (1985) article “Anglo-Saxons on the Mind” serves as a watershed in this field of study. Godden proposed that two distinct traditions of thought could be detected in Anglo-Saxon literature: a classical tradition represented by the prose writers Alcuin, Alfred and Ælfric;⁴ and a vernacular tradition “more deeply rooted in the language” (1985: 286) which he identified with the authors of *Beowulf*, *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*. This broad dichotomy has been reaffirmed and developed by Low Soon Ai (1998) and more recently Leslie Lockett (2011).

The potential for uncovering native Anglo-Saxon psychological traditions within the Christianised literature of Old English has encouraged researchers to look for analogues elsewhere in medieval Germanic culture. By virtue of its retention of many pre-Christian features, Old Norse-Icelandic evidence has been mined for evidence of “pagan” psychology. The literature of medieval Iceland in particular contains a great deal of interesting material relating to the mind. In *Skáldskaparmál* Snorri Sturluson notes that a kenning for ‘mind’ is ‘wind of the troll-women’ (Faulkes 1987b: 154); one of Óðinn’s two ravens which he sends out over the world each day is given the name Huginn ‘thought’; and in the *Prose Edda* we are told that the fleet-footed Þjálfi is outrun by Hugi ‘thought’ (Faulkes 2005: 40). Examples such as these imply a shamanistic conception of the ‘mind’ which could leave the body.

However, there has been little detailed work on Old Norse-Icelandic psychology on its own terms. The unusual features tend to be cherry-picked to cast light on proposed Germanic features in Old English texts. In general little attention is paid to the fact that the literature of medieval Iceland may represent an independent development from a common Germanic tradition rather than preserving unaltered a Proto-Germanic psychology. And

² These are discussed in Chapter 2.

³ See for example the contributions by Clemoes (1969), Doubleday (1969), Diekstra (1971) and Hultin (1977).

⁴ Alfred’s authorship of many of the texts attributed to him has since been questioned by Godden (2007). It is also worth noting that Bredehoft (2004) considers Ælfric’s ‘prose’ as poetry.

without knowing what is uniquely Old Norse and uniquely Old English we cannot be sure what features have been inherited from their common ancestor.

At this stage in the study of early Germanic psychology, the differences between the psychological models of the daughter languages are more informative than their similarities. By understanding how the Old English model differs from the Old Norse-Icelandic one we are better able to appreciate their individual construals of the world. Therefore the primary focus of this thesis is to establish the nature of the psychological model presented in Old Norse-Icelandic texts so that it can be evaluated on its own terms, rather than as a source of comparative evidence. However, in doing so this adds valuable comparative evidence to the already advanced study of Old English psychology.

1.1 The mind across languages and cultures

In order to appreciate the similarities and differences between the ethnopsychological constructs of the two languages, it is instructive to consider them in a typological perspective. Although concepts analogous to ‘mind’ are invisible and therefore liable to vary in their categorisation more than concrete concepts, we do not find completely unregulated diversity in the world’s languages. The potential variety is constrained by biological factors which guide concepts like ‘mind’, ‘heart’ and ‘soul’ into broad typological categories. Our shared biological responses to stimuli provide the building blocks which cultures use to construct their emotional and psychological categories. As Gaby (2008: 39-40) puts it:

Although biological events may in some cases inspire the conceptualization of emotion (and other non-corporeal experiences), this conceptualization is in no way predetermined by the biological events, which may be differently interpreted and described according to the cultural models resulting from the major preoccupations of the people and communities concerned.

In practice this means that we can identify broad trends throughout the world’s ethnopsychological constructs⁵ which provides a heuristic for establishing the similarities and differences between any two cultures’ vernacular psychologies.

⁵ These are discussed in detail in the contributions to Sharifian *et al.* (2008). Enfield and Wierzbicka (2002) contains a useful survey of the variation in cultural conceptualisations of the body’s relationship with emotion.

There are three general areas factors by which the ‘unseen parts of a person’ can be categorised. The first is how these concepts relate to the body: where they are located, and whether they are thought of as being a part of the body. The second is how cognitive, emotional, volitional and other attributes are assigned to these parts of the person. The third concerns the general character of the ethnopsychological constructs; that is, whether they are thought of as active or passive, if they are involved in interpersonal relations, or if they are thought to have a ‘mind of their own’.

In respect to the first area of variation ethnopsychological constructs tend to be located either in the abdomen, the thoracic cavity, or the head, with some cultures conceiving of just one locus and others many (Sharifian *et al.* 2008: 3-4). Present-Day English is relatively unusual in assigning roles to both the head and the chest. The selection of these locations is motivated by the somatic responses to emotion felt in these areas of the body such as the ‘knot in the stomach’, constriction of the chest, the beating of the heart and so on. The head is less prone to such physical responses; however, in many cases it is selected because it is the hub of a number of our major senses. Although most languages fall into one of these three categories, or a mixture of them, there are some outliers such as the Papuan language Yélî Dnye, which locates feelings in the throat (Levinson 2006: 222).⁶

This area of variation is a prime example of the interaction between culture and biology. It is uncontroversially assumed that because of our shared evolutionary heritage that all people feel the same basic, physical, responses to strong feelings. However, these are prioritised by specific cultural models which emphasise some feeling at the expense of others. Thus in abdomen-centring cultures, feelings like the knot in the stomach are considered more salient than, for example, a raised heartbeat (see Gaby 2008).

The influence of cultural preoccupations can have a profound effect on cognitive and emotional conceptualisation.⁷ For example, on the basis of Indo-European evidence it was argued by Sweetser (1990: 32-35) that the metaphorical pathway from vision to knowledge, seen in such English expressions as ‘to illuminate’, ‘shed light on’, ‘I see what you mean’, was universal. However, Evans and Wilkins (2000) have shown this to be a culture-bound pathway, not evidenced in Aboriginal

⁶ Levinson (2006: 222) notes that the throat is the only body part “which plays an important role in affect expressions”.

⁷ See for example Hinton and Hinton (2002) and Matsumoto and Hwang (2012).

languages where the cultural preoccupation with hearing at the expense of vision has led to a metaphorical pathway from the ears to knowledge.

The motivating factors in such conceptualisations are diverse and often obscure. It has been plausibly suggested that the Indonesian concept *caj* is located in the liver because of the culturally important role liver divination played in traditional religion (see Siahaan 2008, Goddard 2008a, 2001). Less thoroughly argued is that the stomach is afforded ethnopsychological status in Aboriginal cultures because of the particular reverence afforded to food in those cultures (Goddard 2008a: 74). In many cases, the traditions which originally motivated the localisation of an ethnopsychological concept to part of the body are no longer part of the culture. Like many concepts, they often become fossilised remnants of past beliefs.

This process of developing metaphoricity (to use Lockett's 2011: 110ff. term) accounts for a significant dichotomy in the ethnopsychological concepts of the world; that is, whether they are seen to be part of the body or part of the person. In everyday English the 'mind', though conventionally located in the head and brain, is thought of as being separate from the body. The same is true for the ethnopsychological 'heart', which features in the wide phraseological resources for talking about emotions and interpersonal relations. This 'heart' is considered to be similar to the physical 'heart' in that it is thought to reside in the chest, and people conventionally put their hand to their chest when referring to it. Nonetheless, it is distinct from the physical heart. For example, one can still refer to someone with heart disease as having a 'good heart' when talking about their kindness or generosity (Goddard 2008a; Wierzbicka 1992: 31ff.).⁸

Whether or not an ethnopsychological construct is thought to be part of the person or part of the body has serious consequences for how cognitive and emotional behaviour are conceptualised. For example, the humoral system of the middle ages thought of the heart as performing a physical role in regulating a person's mood and constitution,⁹ in a manner analogous to traditional Chinese medicine. The profound differences between cultures which conceive of embodied mind concepts and those which dissociate them from the body can be observed in the conflict between traditional and imported Western medicine in present-day China. These differences not

⁸ See also Niemeier (2008).

⁹ The linguistic legacy of English humoral medicine is discussed in detail by Geeraerts and Groendleers (1995).

only affect prescriptions for mental health problems but in how individuals make sense of their own feelings.¹⁰

The second broad area of variation is how cognitive and emotional faculties are distributed among the different parts of the person. Some languages, such as East Cree (Junker 2003) bundle these faculties into a small number of concepts, while others such as Japanese (Hasada 2002) split them between many different parts of the person. Within the cultural and linguistic spread zone of Standard Average European languages¹¹ the psychological model of English stands out as unusual because of its sharp division between a cognitive mind and an emotional heart (Wierzbicka 1992: 31-40).

Even between languages as genetically close to one another as English as German, there are profound differences between the psychological categories in the two cultures. For example, Bettelheim (1983: 70, cited in Wierzbicka 1992: 42) has argued that the (mis)translation of German *Seele* as ‘mind’ has fundamentally altered the nature of Freud’s teachings. *Seele* cannot be translated by its cognate *soul* as this has come to be associated exclusively with the afterlife. However, *mind* is too restrictive a term as it focuses on a person’s intellectual capacity rather than the locus of their deepest, most secret feelings.

More obvious differences present themselves the further one travels from the cultural and linguistic influence of English. For example, the Korean concept *maum*, like English *mind*, is conceived to be in a dualistic relationship with the body. However, *maum* carries connotations different from English ‘mind’. Although it used for thinking, it is the part of the person devoted to thinking good things about other people. Intellectual thoughts are reserved for a separate concept, *meli* (Yoon 2004; Goddard 2010).

The final area of variation is the general character of these ethnopsychological constructs, or their ‘personality’. These characteristic further differentiate the psychological concepts of the world’s languages by ensuring that they are not just a configuration of common faculties like thinking, feeling and wanting. For example, the Danish concept *sind* is highly involved in interpersonal feelings, a concept which is

¹⁰ On the interaction between traditional and Western medicine in China see Pritzker (2007), and for linguistic studies of traditional Chinese concepts relating to emotion and cognition see Yu (2003, 2007, 2009). On the export of Western psychological categories in general see Watters (2010).

¹¹ On Europe as a linguistic ‘spread zone’ see Haspelmath (2001).

absent from the English ‘mind’ (Levisen 2012: 43). Likewise, the Russian *duša* is seen as an internal theatre of thought (Wierzbicka 1992), whereas the Malay concept *hati* is thought of as speaking to and encouraging the person (Goddard 1998). It is against this typological context of ethnopsychological constructs that we can begin to consider the similarities and difference in the Old Norse and Old English cultural models of psychology.

1.2 *Hugr* and *mōd*

The vernacular psychologies of Old Norse and Old English share much in common. Both conceived of a unitary ethnopsychological construct responsible for thinking and feeling which was thought to be a part of the body located in the chest. In Old Norse this concept was *hugr*, in Old English *mōd*. Both of these concepts exhibit similar polysemy networks and compounding behaviour. In both languages these words are used to localise feelings and their compounds express a wide range of emotional and cognitive concepts. This behaviour is typologically similar to the languages of South-east Asia which likewise use their primary psychological concepts in compounds to express types of cognition and emotional states. In Whorf’s terms, they represent an overt linguistic category, compared to the lexically covert association between the ‘mind’ and thinking in Present Day English (Marchand 1976).

These semantic and structural parallels strongly suggest that while not formally cognate, both concepts are descended from a shared conceptual ancestor in Proto-Germanic. However, in spite of such similarities, the two concepts quickly begin to diverge in terms of the features discussed above. Although both are responsible for thinking and feeling and located in the chest, the relationship between emotion and cognition and the body in the two languages is strikingly different.

It has been noted that Old English is particularly interested in ‘interiority’ compared with other medieval Germanic languages (Harbus 2002: 98) and has the largest poetic vocabulary for psychological concepts. The ‘mind’, Kastovsky (1992: 301) has remarked, is a privileged lexical set which is comparable in size to that of warriors and weapons. However, it is not just that Old English has more lexical resources for referring to psychological states; it talks about them in ways notably different from Old Norse-Icelandic, which is much more reserved about emotions and interiority.

The most salient difference between the two languages is in the representation of the interaction between mental states and body. In Old English, as is well documented, people swell and seethe with emotion; their thoughts grow hot and expand, and contract and grow cold in ways familiar from the cognitive metaphor EMOTION IS A HOT FLUID IN A SEALED CONTAINER. This motif is rarely seen at all in Old Norse literature, whether in prose or poetry. In fact, it is rare for somatic reactions to emotion to be mentioned at all (Miller 1992), and when they are they do not resemble the Old English model. Occasionally people swell up with rage, which has a parallel in Old English and throughout early Germanic. However, even in these rare cases, such activity is not linked to the *hugr* as it is linked to the actions of the *mōd* in Old English. So while both languages are similar in compartmentalising thinking and feeling in one concept located in the chest, they differ in how they talk about the body interacting with cognitive and emotional processes. There are also differences in the ‘personalities’ of the two concepts. While Godden (1985: 274) characterised the *mōd* as having a mind of its own, a wilful entity which petitioned the person and needed to be actively controlled, this motif occurs very rarely in Old Norse literature.¹² In fact, *hugr* emerges as a comparatively prosaic entity, closer in character to the modern English mind than the mysterious concept that has been proposed in the on works on comparative Germanic psychology. In general, and contrary to what is normally assumed, the Old English concept appears to be more unusual than the Old Norse one from the perspective of Present Day English.

These differences are considerable and have implications not only for the understanding of the two cultures, but also for the reconstruction of Proto-Germanic. However, most previous studies have played down these differences by focusing on the commonalities between the two languages. These approaches will be the subject of Chapter 2. The rest of this chapter is devoted to the theoretical constructs underpinning this thesis and to a discussion of my methods and sources.

2 Theoretical assumptions and methods

In order to compare the ethnopsychological constructs of Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English in detail, it is necessary to select a descriptive metalanguage which enables the differences between such concepts to be explicated clearly and which minimises the

¹² This is discussed in Frank (1997) and treated in more detail in Quinn (2012).

semantic ‘contamination’ from present-day English psychological concepts. Equally as important is selecting a theoretically sound methodology for analysing the linguistic data from these two languages. The first part of this section argues for the necessity of a maximally culture-neutral metalanguage to facilitate cross-linguistic comparison, and outlines in some detail the semantic framework adopted in this thesis. The second part describes the corpus of texts used in this research, and outlines the methods of linguistic analyses that have been applied to it.

2.1 Language, metalanguage, and vernacular psychology

While it has been seen above that languages demonstrate a great deal of variety in their conceptualisations of ethnopsychological constructs, presenting these concepts without imposing onto them the categories of the analyst’s own language is a difficult and problematic task. In describing concepts such as Korean *maum*, German *Seele*, and Russian *duša*, I have had to frame them as approximations based around analogous English words. However, because such definitions carry with them the associative baggage of the English words used, they cannot capture the full range of differences between these concepts; the English analogues act as semantic filters which strain out unfamiliar meanings.

To return to the earlier analogy of colour-semantics, a comparison can be drawn with describing the colour concepts of other languages through our own. Welsh *glas* is glossed by English dictionaries as *blue*, *pale*, *grey*, *green* and *silver* (Biggam 2012: 10-11). This list of equivalents brings English speakers closer to the nature of the Welsh concept but can only do so crudely. The arbitrary English categorisation of the colour spectrum into *blue*, *green* and *grey* is reaffirmed by framing *glas* in such terms and impedes the appreciation of the equally arbitrary, but different, categorisation contained in the Welsh concept. When describing ethnopsychological constructs in English, the resources for doing so are limited to the restrictive conceptual palette of ‘mind’ for cognitive parts of the person and ‘heart’ for emotional ones.

This is a problem familiar to lexicographers and translators. Regis Boyer (2004: 30), who has written about the difficulties involved in communicating the world-view of saga literature into French, demonstrates the problem with reference to *hugr*, the primary focus of this thesis. Boyer notes the *hugr* along with its compounds and phraseological

behaviour corresponds to a range of French concepts such as *esprit*, *pensée*, *idée* and *âme*,¹³ none of which fully match up to the Old Norse concept. However, he also considers how the French cultural keyword *âme*, which can be roughly glossed in English as ‘mind, soul, spirit’, might be expressed in Old Norse-Icelandic (Boyer 2004: 33-4). Here he has to rely on Old Norse-Icelandic not just on *hugr* but also *hamr*, *fylgja* and *qnd*. Boyer (2004: 34) performs this exercise to demonstrate the difficulties the “ravages de la polysemy” cause the translator, but it is an instructive example not only of how the conceptual categories of the world’s languages rarely align but also of what Goddard (2002b, 2008c: 4) calls ‘terminological ethnocentrism’; that the interpretation of a concept determined by the language of description. The fact *hugr* is glossed in English as ‘mind, heart, soul’ but in French as ‘*esprit*, *pensée*, *idée*, *âme*’, all of which categorise the unseen parts of the person in different ways should make clear the need for a descriptive metalanguage which is as free from culturally-bound concepts as possible.

But while the problems of inter-translatability have been a perennial problem for translators and lexicographers, until relatively recently ‘terminological ethnocentrism’ was not recognised as problematic within the dominant trends of English language psychology. In parallel with the negligible status afforded to semantics by generative linguistics in the second half of the twentieth century, psychology was more concerned with universals than culturally specific concepts.

A prime example of this paradigm is ‘basic emotion theory’ developed by Paul Ekman. Ekman’s contention was (and still is) that because of our shared biology all people around the world must experience the same set of emotions.¹⁴ Basic emotion theory proposed that these universally experienced feelings are ‘fear’, ‘anger’, ‘disgust’, ‘happiness’ and ‘sadness’ (Ekman 1992a: 175), though the precise number has fluctuated somewhat during the development of the theory. The fact that these concepts are neatly lexicalised in English, but not in other languages is considered to be a linguistic rather than conceptual issue. While people in other cultures may not have the same words, they

¹³ *Âme* is compared to a number of modern European ethnopsychological constructs in Wierzbicka (1992: 41-44).

¹⁴ See for example Ekman (1992a, 1992b, 1994, 1999). Prominent critics of the approach include Ortony and Turner (1990) and Russell (1991, 1994). An up-to-date survey of basic emotion theory is presented in the special edition of *Emotion Review* devoted to the topic, for which see Russell *et al.* (2011) and Ekman and Cordaro (2011). The special sections of *Emotion Review* 2010 and 2012 ‘On Defining Emotion’ also provides a useful surveys of the theoretical approaches to the relationship between language and emotion, in particular see Dixon (2012) and Izard (2010a,b) and Wierzbicka (2010b). The emergence of ‘emotion’ as a concept in English is treated by Dixon (2003).

nonetheless experience the same emotions. For example, Lazarus (1995: 250, cited in Wierzbicka 1999: 28) has this to say about the relationship between words and emotion:

Words have power to influence, yet – as in the Whorfian hypotheses writ large – they cannot override the life conditions that make people sad or angry, which they can sense to some extent without words [...] I am suggesting, in effect, that all people experience anger, sadness and so forth, regardless of what they call it [...] Words are important, but we must not deify them.

However, this begs the question of why the English concepts are privileged. As Lutz (1985) has asked in “Cultural Psychology Compared to What?”, why not ask if English speakers feel the Ifaluk emotion *fago* (roughly ‘compassion’/‘love’/‘sadness’)? How do we know that our words *enjoyment* and *sadness* are not just two separate linguistic labels for a unitary emotion covered by one word in some other culture?

The development of fields such as cross-cultural psychology and cognitive anthropology as well cross-cultural work in linguistics has shifted the debate from searching for, and often imposing universal categories onto vernacular psychological models to focusing on their typological diversity, though this has yet to fully impact upon the cognitive sciences (Goddard 2010: 82). However, the issue of developing an appropriately culture-neutral metalanguage has been taken up by some in psychology and anthropology (see Shweder 2004 and D’Andre 2001 respectively).¹⁵

Within linguistics, a common response to addressing the issue of a descriptive metalanguage is to employ formal systems of representation, such as the diagrams commonly used in cognitive linguistics or technical formalism as used in semantic framework which have developed from generative linguistics.¹⁶ However, as John Lyons (1977: 12) notes, “any formalism is parasitic upon the ordinary everyday use of language”. Abstract formalisms have to be re-translated into natural language before they can be processed by the reader, and because abstract formalisms and technical language have to be interpreted through the prism of natural language, this does little to solve the problem of terminological ethnocentrism. The culture-bound concepts of the target language are not bypassed but instead are further hidden behind an apparently neutral representational system.

¹⁵ Heinrich *et al.* (2010) is a useful discussion of the problems of treating Western cultural norms as universal.

¹⁶ Such representational systems are surveyed and discussed in Geeraerts (2010).

In order to address these twin problems of formal obscurity and ethnocentrism I have chosen to use some aspects of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) methodology developed by Anna Wierzbicka and Cliff Goddard to inform my analysis of *hugr* and its relationship with other Germanic ethnopsychological concepts.¹⁷ NSM has been developed over the last forty years as a means of facilitating cross-cultural linguistic comparison by using a descriptive framework which is both maximally culture-neutral and intuitively clear. Lyle Campbell (1998: 253) has remarked that the study of meaning would be greatly helped by an agreed theory of semantics; however, as this has yet to be achieved in the closed systems of syntax (see Croft 2001: 43) and phonology, no consensus in the open system of semantics seems near. Consequently, I agree with Bromhead (2009: 32) who suggests that the best way to elucidate a semantic problem is to shine as many lights on it as possible. As most of the recent studies of early Germanic psychology have studied the topic from the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory¹⁸ it seems beneficial to explore this field with a new approach, rather than conduct another study from the same theoretical perspective. As NSM is less well known than other branches of linguistics and has only recently been applied to historical linguistics, I outline the theory and its applicability to this study below.

2.2 The Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach

The NSM approach to semantic explication is based on reductive paraphrase using a tightly constrained lexis and syntax. In this respect it differs from the diagrammatic trend in contemporary cognitive linguistics, from Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and from other formal representations stemming from generative linguistics. Reductive paraphrase is an attempt to ‘say the same thing’ using terms simpler than the expression being defined (Goddard 2006). This is done to minimise circularity and to remove the need to back-translate from technical language. In addition to this, NSM seeks to frame its explications using a maximally culture-neutral set of lexical elements and universally occurring syntactic constructions.

¹⁷ The most recent summary of the theory is Goddard (2012) though Goddard (2009) perhaps serves as clearer introduction. Key publications include Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014b), Levisen (2012), Goddard (2011), Goddard (2008b), Peeters (2006), Goddard and Wierzbicka (2002) and Wierzbicka (1996). A useful collection of evaluation of NSM is contained in the special edition of *Theoretical Linguistics* devoted to the topic, for which see Durst (2003). The most comprehensive critique of the NSM’s theoretical foundations is Riemer (2005), summarised in Riemer (2006).

¹⁸ See, for example Low (1998), Mize (2006, 2008, 2010), Gevaert (2005, 2007), Geeraerts and Gevaert (2008) and Harbus (2012).

The fundamental units of NSM explications are ‘semantic primes’ (Goddard 2012: 712).¹⁹ These are lexicalised concepts which cannot be paraphrased in terms simpler than themselves and which are considered to be intuitively understood. Currently the list of such concepts stands at sixty-four, and includes elements such as I, YOU, THINK, DO, SOME, LIKE, PEOPLE and BODY (see Table 1, below).²⁰ This theoretical stance can be traced back to seventeenth-century linguistic philosophy, and in particular to Leibniz’s concerted effort to establish an ‘alphabet of human thought’ (Wierzbicka 2011: 379-82). Leibniz’s proposition was that unless one could find a set of concepts which were themselves indefinable, nothing could be defined but would be condemned to perpetual circularity. The problem is aptly demonstrated by concise dictionary definitions which involve feedback loops of circularity (see Wierzbicka 1996: 274-78). The contention of NSM semantics is that concepts must be defined by recourse to simple, intuitive concepts to avoid such circularity.

A corollary of the hypothesis that a language contains a set of indefinable concepts is that, given what Boas (1938, cited in Wierzbicka 1996: 184) referred to as the ‘psychic unity of mankind’, these conceptual units should be identifiable in all languages. In the forty years that NSM has been attempting to identify such a set of concepts, it has cross-tested proposed primes against a large number of languages in a variety of Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages (see for example Goddard and Wierzbicka, 1994, 2002; Peeters 2006; Goddard 2008b). The practical benefit of such a proposal is that not only can definitions be constructed which avoid circularity, they can be cross-translated into other languages without transferring any excess semantic baggage contained in more complex, culture-bound words.

The theoretical commitment to finding words and syntactic constructions which are universally cross-translatable has resulted in a highly constrained metalanguage which can legitimately claim to be as culture-neutral as possible. A recent list of primes is presented below.²¹

¹⁹ Earlier publications refer to semantic primes as semantic primitives.

²⁰ Primes are conventionally represented in small capitals to distinguish them from their mononymous lexemes.

²¹ The most recent list (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014b: 2012) adds DON’T WANT, replaces HAVE with BE (SOMEONE’S), and makes PART plural.

Table 1 English Exponents of Semantic Primes (Wierzbicka 2011: 382)

I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING~THING, PEOPLE, BODY	Substantives
KIND, PART	Relational substantives
THIS, THE SAME, OTHER/ELSE	Determiners
ONE, TWO, MUCH~MANY, LITTLE~FEW, SOME, ALL	Quantifiers
GOOD, BAD	Evaluators
BIG, SMALL	Descriptors
THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	Mental predicates
SAY, WORDS, TRUE	Speech
DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH	Actions, events, movement, contact
BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, HAVE, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)	Location, existence, possession, specification
LIVE, DIE	Life and death
WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	Time
WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE	Space
NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	Logical concepts
VERY, MORE	Intensifier, augmentor
LIKE~AS~WAY	Similarity

It is important to emphasise that many of the primes' target language exponents are polysemous, and have different polysemy networks in other languages (Goddard 2012: 715-718). For example, as noted above the common Indo-European polysemy between *see* and *understand* does not occur in all languages and it is only the 'visual' sense of *see* which is considered to be semantically 'primitive'. More importantly, primes exist at the level of 'lexical units' in Cruse's (1986: 23) terms, rather than at the level of lexeme. For example, it is only the intransitive sense of *move* that is represented by the prime MOVE, as in *something moved* rather than *someone moved something*, which cannot be found to occur in all languages. Each prime thus has its own specified mini-grammar of how it can

behave combinatorial and syntactically within a clause. For example, the valence options of the prime THINK include the following:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| a. someone thinks about someone/something | [topic of cognition] |
| b. someone thinks something (good/bad) about someone/something | [topic + complement] |
| c. someone thinks like this: “ - - ” | [quasi-quotational thought] |
| d. (at this time) someone thinks that [- -] | [propositional complement] |
- (Goddard 2008c: 14)

However, the English-specific usages of *think*, such as the *think* of opinion in statements like ‘She thinks that he did it’, or the use of *think* to express uncertainty are not included as part of the valency of THINK as a semantic prime (see Goddard and Karlsson 2008). Such constructions are not permissible with, for example, the Swedish analogue of think *tänka*. Instead, these constructions need to be further paraphrased before they can be cross-translated into other languages.²² Likewise, the common English construction ‘feel bad’ cannot be found in all languages and is thus not used as part of the descriptive framework of NSM; instead, this has to be explicated in terms of ‘someone feels something bad’.

Primes can exist as words, phrases, or morphemes depending on the nature of the target language. For example, in English the prime A LONG TIME is expressed by a phraseme, whereas in Danish it is expressed by the single word LÆNGE (see Table 2, below). In languages with case systems primes may take different surface exponents, such as the distinction between *I* and *me* for I, a phenomenon referred to as allolexy (Goddard 2008c: 5-7). These differences are considered to be ‘cosmetic’; semantically the person referred to as *me* is indistinguishable from *I* (Goddard 2011: 68).

²² The *think* of opinion is explicated as:

She thinks that [- -] =

when she thinks about it,

she thinks that [- -] (Goddard and Karlsson 2008: 233)

The *think* of uncertainty as defined as follows:

I think she did =

I say: I think like this – she did it

I don’t say I know it (adapted from Goddard and Karlsson 2008: 234)

Table 2 Danish Exponents of Semantic Primes (Levisen 2012: 46)

JEG <i>I</i> , DU <i>you</i> , NOGEN (PERSON) <i>someone</i> , NOGET~TING <i>something~thing</i> , MENNESKER, <i>people</i> , KROP <i>body</i>	Substantives
SLAGS <i>kind</i> , DEL <i>part</i>	Relational substantives
DEN HER <i>this</i> , DEN SAMME <i>the same</i> , ANDEN <i>other</i>	Determiners
ÉN <i>one</i> , TO <i>two</i> , MEGET~MANGE <i>much~many</i> , LIDT~FÅ <i>little~few</i> , NOGLE <i>some</i> , ALLE <i>all</i>	Quantifiers
GOD <i>good</i> , DÅRLIG <i>bad</i>	Evaluators
STOR <i>big</i> , LILLE <i>small</i>	Descriptors
TÆNKER <i>think</i> , VED <i>know</i> , VIL HAVE~VIL <i>want</i> , FØLER <i>feel</i> , SER <i>see</i> , HØRER <i>hear</i>	Mental predicates
SIGER <i>say</i> , ORD <i>words</i> , DET PASSER <i>true</i>	Speech
GØR <i>do</i> , SKER <i>happen</i> , BEVÆGER SIG <i>move</i> , RØRER <i>touch</i>	Actions, events, movement, contact
ER (ET STED) <i>be (somewhere)</i> , DER ER <i>there is</i> , HAR <i>have</i> , ER (NOGEN/NOGET) <i>be (someone/something)</i>	Location, existence, possession, specification
LEVER <i>live</i> , DØR <i>die</i>	Life and death
NÅR~TID <i>when~time</i> , NU <i>now</i> , FØR <i>before</i> , EFTER <i>after</i> , LÆNGE <i>a long time</i> , KORT TID <i>a short time</i> , ET STYKKE TID <i>for some time</i> , ØJEBLIK <i>moment</i>	Time
HVOR~STED <i>where~place</i> , HER <i>her</i> , OVER <i>above</i> , UNDER <i>below</i> , LANGT VÆK <i>far</i> , TÆT PÅ <i>near</i> , INDE I <i>inside</i>	Space
IKKE <i>not</i> , MÅNSKE <i>maybe</i> , KAN <i>can</i> , FORDI <i>because</i> , HVIS <i>if</i>	Logical concepts
MEGET <i>very</i> , MERE <i>more</i>	Intensifier, augmentor
SOM~MÅDE <i>like~as~way</i>	Similarity

The value of using this framework in the analysis of ethnopsychological constructs is that it uses a metalanguage which is intuitively comprehensible, but also allows for fine-grained semantic analysis. By freeing analyses from using ethnocentric vocabulary such as ‘mind’ it prevents the imposition of meanings from the language of analyst onto the target language. This is best demonstrated by example. In the following section a number of the ethnopsychological constructs introduced in the first part of this chapter will be defined using NSM.

2.3 NSM applied to ethnopsychological constructs

In general, ‘invisible’ concepts such as emotions and ethnopsychological constructs are semantically simpler than visible ones, such as artefacts and animals. These tend to involve numerous intermediate concepts, which have to be independently defined before they can be incorporated into a definition. For example, the definition of *cat* requires it to include the non-basic, culturally bound concept *animal*, which in turn needs to be defined in terms of *creature*, itself a non-universal concept. Within the NSM framework, these intermediate concepts are referred to as semantic molecules and marked in definitions with a ‘[M]’. However, ethnopsychological constructs can for the most part be explicated using semantic primes only. The most important of these the ‘mental predicates’ THINK, KNOW, FEEL, WANT and SEE, and the substantives SOMEONE and BODY. From this very limited conceptual ‘palette’ of universally occurring concepts a high level of semantic specificity can be achieved. For example, ‘mind’ can be defined as follows:

- mind* (someone’s *mind*)
- a. one of two parts of this someone (one part is the body, this is the other part)
 - b. people cannot see this part
 - c. because someone has this part, this someone can think about things
 - d. because someone has this part, this someone can know things
 - e. when someone thinks about something, something happens in this part
- (Goddard 2010: 83)

This explication expresses the dualism between ‘mind’ and ‘body’ that is prevalent in everyday conceptions of the *mind* in English. It also makes clear the cognitive and rational role of the ‘mind’, and shows by the absence of a ‘feeling’ component that it is not considered an ‘emotional’ part of the person. The final component is intended to reflect the fact that when thinking, the ‘mind’ is involved in a process.

The ethnopsychological ‘heart₂’ can be deconstructed in the same manner, this time using the semantic molecule of the physical ‘heart₁’:

- heart* (someone’s *heart*₂)
- a. one part of this someone
 - b. people cannot see this part
 - c. because someone has this part, when this someone thinks about other people,
this someone can feel many things
these things can be good things, these things can be bad things
 - d. because someone has this part, this someone can feel good things towards
other people
 - e. because someone has this part, this someone can want other people not to
feel bad things

- f. because someone has this part, this someone can want to do good things for other people
- g. people can think about this part like this:
- h. it is like a part of someone's body
- i. this part is near the place where this someone's heart₁ [M]²³ is (Goddard 2008a: 82)

By defining these two concepts by means of reductive paraphrase we are able to appreciate how they carve up conceptual space. Far from being simple, basic natural categories *mind* and *heart* are seen to be culturally bound concepts built out of a number of variables. Against this background it is possible to compare in more detail how these concepts relate to ethnopsychological concepts attested in different languages.

Above it was mentioned that the Korean concept *maum* shared features of both English 'mind' and 'heart'. Like 'mind', Korean conceptualises *maum* as an immaterial, invisible part of the person in a dualistic relationship with the body. However, unlike 'mind' the *maum* is responsible for feelings, for interpersonal relationships and 'moral character'. These components can be expressed as follows:

- maum* (someone's *maum*)
 - a. one of two parts of this someone (one part is the body, this is the other part)
 - b. people cannot see this part
 - c. because someone has this part, when this someone thinks about something this someone can feel many things
 - d. because someone has this part, this someone can do many good things
 - e. when this part of someone is good, this someone wants to do good things
 - f. when this part of someone is bad, this someone wants to do bad things
 - g. when someone thinks about someone else, it is good if this someone thinks with this part
 - h. when someone does something, it is good if this someone thinks with this part like this:
"I want to do this thing well"
- (Goddard 2007: 28-29, based on Yoon 2004)

It is now possible to see where *maum* shares components with *mind* and *heart*₂ and where it differs.

Different again is the Malay concept of *hati*, which, like *maum*, has similarities to both 'heart' and 'mind', but is identical to neither. Unlike *maum* and 'mind', *hati* is

²³ *heart*₁ (someone's *heart*₁)

- a. one part of this someone's body
- b. it is inside the upper [M] part of this someone's body
- c. when someone is living, something is happening in this part all the time
- d. because of this, something is living in this part all the time
- e. someone can hear this if they do some things

associated with an internal bodily organ, rather than an abstract concept opposed to the body. Furthermore, it is more active, and in this respect similar to *mōd*, and unlike *hugr*; it petitions the person, but unlike *mōd* it does not cause any physiological reactions, and a person can thus keep their feelings to themselves if they so desire (Goddard 2001; 2008a).

hati (a person's *hati*)

- a. a part of someone
 - b. when someone thinks about someone else for some time, something can happen in this part
 - c. when this happens, this someone can feel something because of it
sometimes it is something good, sometimes it is something bad
 - d. because of this, this someone can want to do something
sometimes it is something good, sometimes it is something bad
 - e. when something happens in this part of someone, sometimes this someone can think about it like this: "something inside me is saying something to me"
 - f. other people can't know what happens in this part of someone if this someone doesn't want them to know
 - g. people think about this part like this: "it is like a part of someone's body, like a big part inside the middle of the body"
- (Goddard 2008: 91)

Although the ethnopsychological *hati*₂ was historically associated with the 'liver' *hati*₁, there is no longer a strong association between the two concepts. Unlike the two English 'hearts', the ethnopsychological *hati* is not figuratively depicted as a liver as 'heart₂' is, nor is it located in the body by reference to the liver. While both 'heart₂' and *hati*₂ have developed out of cultural models which gave bodily organs psychological status, the ethnopsychological 'heart₂' has retained a stronger association with its physical namesake than *hati*₂ has with the physical liver. This is probably because the heart is more physically salient: it can be felt and heard inside the chest, whereas the liver cannot. This demonstrates that it is not enough merely to talk about ethnopsychological concepts being 'embodied' or not; instead a cline exists between the two poles. The definitions of 'heart₂' and *hati*₂ show that this can be dealt with clearly and efficiently within the NSM framework.

Finally, as 'exotic' eastern concepts, unfamiliar to the reader, are often used in anthropological studies it might be worthwhile showing that the same principles can be applied to cultures and languages closer to home. Carsten Levisen (2012: 73-75) has recently proposed the following explication for Danish *sind*. Like 'mind' it is an invisible, 'unembodied' part of the person, but is not in a dualistic relationship with the body (*krop*). Further, in contrast to 'mind', *sind* is an "identificational" concept, considered to be

responsible for someone's personality, rather than being seen as a specifically rational part of the person. For example, one cannot speak in terms of a 'brilliant' *sind* (with reference to thinking) or an 'inquiring' *sind* (with reference to knowledge) (Levisen 2012: 72). However, *sind* can be described as *lys* 'light, bright' or *mørk* 'dark' in reference to one's disposition and natural character. Such characteristics in English are usually spoken of in terms of a 'person', or apportioned to some other concept such as 'mood' or 'spirits' or 'soul' but not to a person's mind.

sind (someone's *sind*)

- a. one part of this someone
- b. people cannot see this part
- c. because someone has this part, this someone wants to do some things, this someone doesn't want to do some things
- d. because someone has this part, this someone can feel many things, when this someone thinks about something, not like someone else can feel many things, when this someone else thinks about the same
- e. because someone has this part, this someone can think like this:
 "I know that there are many kinds of people,
 I am someone of one kind, I can say what kind"
- f. when something bad happens to this someone, because this someone has this part, this someone can think like this:
 "I want to think for some time, I don't want to do many things"
- g. when someone thinks about something, something happens in this part, other people can't know what happens in this part of someone if this someone doesn't want them to know

(Levisen 2012: 73)

Component (d) in this explication is intended to convey the sense that *sind* is responsible for a person's personality, and their individual outlook on the world; people experience things differently depending on the nature of their *sind* (Levisen 2012: 73). Component (e) expresses the fact that the *sind* is seen to be important in the construal of Danish national identity: *dansksindet* 'of a Danish *sind*' is thought to be different from *tysksindet* 'of a German *sind*'. These components are perhaps the least intuitively clear, a problem I turn to in the next section. However, whether or not they are considered as successful explications of this part of the Danish concept, by incorporating them into this explanatory framework we are able to compare this concept objectively with others with far more precision than by using culture-bound concepts such as 'personality', 'mind' or 'heart'.

In addition to facilitating definitions which are not burdened with the associations of English 'folk-concepts', this method also strikes an appropriate balance between analytical depth and formal clarity. The main stumbling block to reading these explications is perhaps their 'unnatural' phrasing and syntax when compared to everyday written

English. This is a consequence of NSM's commitment to optimal inter-translatability between different languages; the definitions above all use words and syntactic structures which could be converted isomorphically into any of the world's languages with negligible change of meaning.²⁴

2.4 Discussion

Despite a publication history of over forty years and ranging across a substantial range of languages and linguistic topics, NSM is comparatively poorly known when compared to other contemporary linguistic approaches such as the various disciplines grouped under the umbrella term of cognitive linguistics. NSM is generally seen to be a “love it or hate it” discipline and tends to be either whole-heartedly embraced or dismissed altogether (Goddard 2008c: 1). Whereas there is a good deal of crossover between contemporary European cognitive linguistics, NSM is rarely part of the ‘linguistic toolkit’ employed by scholars out with the discipline. Because of this, I will briefly address some common criticisms below.

I consider the definitions of the ethnopsychological constructs given above to demonstrate the explanatory value of using NSM as a descriptive methodology rather than relying on everyday or scientific English terminology. However, a frequent concern levelled against NSM definitions is that they prioritise comprehensive coverage over formal clarity. The most common critique of the method is that explications are too long and thus difficult for the reader to process (Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Ahlgren 2003). While this is not the case with the explication for ‘mind’ (p. 24), which runs to only five lines and can be processed with little difficulty, it is true that the longer explications of *hati*₂ and *sind* require more effort on the part of the reader. As mentioned above, abstract psychological and emotional concepts are on the whole semantically simpler than ‘concrete’, physical ones which can run to many lines. For example, Wierzbicka's (1985: 87; see also Goddard 2012: 228) devotes 35 lines to her definition of ‘cup’. While this is clearly more complicated than the *Oxford Dictionary of English*'s definition (“a small bowl-shaped container for drinking from, typically having a handle”), other detailed semantic definitions are comparably complex. William Labov's (1973: 366-367) definition of ‘cup’ is around half as long as Wierzbicka's, but contains mathematical formulae which are less

²⁴ There are slight differences between how close the phrasing of NSM explications is to the natural discourse patterns of any one language, and there will therefore be slight differences in how ‘natural’ a definition sounds from language to language.

intuitively comprehensible. However, more serious criticisms of the approach have been made which I will address below.

It has been often been argued that the ‘primes’ NSM uses are not, as claimed, universally found in the world’s languages. As a point of fact, this has been true throughout the forty-year development of the programme. The list of primes, their valency options, and syntax have been constantly refined in light of cross-linguistic evidence.²⁵ However, it is because NSM has been devoted to finding universals in as many languages as possible that allows it to claim maximal culture-neutrality when compared to other metalanguages. A case in point is Ray Jackendoff’s set of primitives which reflect the culture-bound nature of the English language concepts he uses, whether obviously so (‘freedom’) or less obviously (‘go’) (see Wierzbicka 2007c).²⁶ A recent selection of primes which have had their universality challenged include WANT (Khanina 2008), BODY (Enfield *et al.* 2006), ALL (Everett 2005), BEFORE and AFTER (Bohnemeyer 1998, 2003) and THINK (Evans 2007).²⁷

From a theoretical point of view, these claims are highly significant and would compromise Boas’s ‘psychic unity of mankind’ and NSM’s attempt to specify a ‘universal language of thought’. But from a methodological point of view, little would change other than having to concede that in certain languages there would be some concepts and constructs which were not isomorphic with the more commonly occurring semantic primes. It is possible that the conceptual system of Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic is not isomorphic with Present-Day English, but this does not invalidate the benefits gained from using NSM as metalanguage. We can get a clearer picture of *hugr* and *mōd* by defining them in terms of THINK, FEEL, BODY and PART rather than ‘mind’, ‘heart’, and ‘soul’.

A number of criticisms, some more serious than others, focus on the nature of the explications themselves. For example, the philosophical validity of using reductive paraphrase has been criticised for not accurately representing the concept defined (Barker

²⁵ For example Wierzbicka’s (1972) first list contained only fourteen items, some of which have since been abandoned; this list was expanded and revised to take account of the evidence from non-Indo-European languages and further insights from more familiar languages. Goddard and Peeters (2006: 15–21) provides a useful overview of the development of NSM.

²⁶ Representative publications include Jackendoff (1990, 2002); the differences between NSM primes and Jackendoff’s primitives are set forth in Jackendoff (2006, 2007) and Wierzbicka (2007d).

²⁷ A number of these claims have been countered: WANT (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2010), BODY (Wierzbicka 2007a), BEFORE and AFTER (Goddard 2001), ALL (Wierzbicka 2005) and THINK (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014a: 94–98). However, the universal status of IF is still considered an open question (Goddard and Peeters 2006: 20).

2004). This is true to an extent, but only in the sense that no two items can be truly synonymous with each other (cf. Goddard 2006). This criticism can be levelled at all forms of definitions, regardless of the metalanguage employed. A related point is made by Strauss (2009), who argues that Wierzbicka's (2009a) definitions of Russian emotional concepts do not convey the full range of emotional resonance and lived experience which a native speaker of Russian feels when they think of the word. This is of course true, and is conceded by Wierzbicka (2009b). However, this is a lot to ask from a definition. There is no way a reductive paraphrase, or cognitive metaphor, diagram, or any other formalism could match the full associations and resonances of a word used by a native speaker. The best it can hope to do is provide a comprehensive list of the semantic components of any one concept that would be recognised by a native speaker.

More seriously, Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Ahlgren (2004) argue that in spite of claims to free explications from culture-bound concepts, readers of NSM definitions filter them through concepts which are already familiar to them. For example, in response to Uwe Durst's (2001) explications of anger-like emotions in German, Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Ahlgren (2003) state that the definitions of German emotions are still processed by English speakers through the conceptual lens of English *anger*. It may well be that Durst's explication of *ärger* is understood by speakers of English in terms of 'anger', but when compared with an explication of English *anger* it is clear where the differences lie:

Ärger/X ärgert sich (über Y)

- a. X feels something bad
 - b. sometimes a person thinks
 - c. something bad is happening (Y)
 - d. I don't want this to be happening
 - e. this person thinks about this for some time
 - f. when this person thinks about this, this person feels something bad because of this
 - g. X feels something like this
 - h. because X thinks something like this²⁸
- (Durst 2001: 125)

'Anger', unlike *ärger*, includes as part of its meaning a desire to do something because of what one is feeling, 'to lash out'. This is exemplified in expressions such as 'I was so angry I could have...', and the metaphorical images of anger building up inside a person and erupting in some violent action. The difference can be seen in the following definition:

²⁸ The slight disparity in the phrasing of the two definitions is a product of the development of the formal representation of NSM explications.

X was angry at Y

- a. X felt something because X thought something
 - b. sometimes a person thinks:
 - c. “something bad happened
 - d. because someone did (didn’t do) something
 - e. I don’t want things like this to happen
 - f. I want to do something because of this if I can”
 - g. when this person thinks this, this person feels something bad
 - h. X felt something like this
 - i. because X thought something like this²⁹
- (Wierzbicka 1999: 89)

We naturally process the unfamiliar through the familiar, so some form of semantic contamination is ultimately unavoidable, but this problem affects any definition regardless of its theoretical and methodological stance. The benefit of framing definitions through reductive paraphrase is that they make explicit the semantic components of a concept and open them up for comparison and examination.

A more profound criticism has been levelled against the theory by Nick Reimer (2005). He notes that in the vast majority of cases, NSM’s claims for cultural neutrality are hampered by the fact that explications are based around target-language descriptions of the concept in question (Reimer 2005: 93-5). Apart from explications composed by deeply bilingual analysts, the evidence on which a definition is constructed will have already been filtered through the analyst’s target language. For example, Reimer (2005: 94) notes that Wierzbicka’s (1996: 239) definition of the Japanese concept *amae* is based on a series of ethnographic descriptions provided by English-speaking researchers. These include such glosses as “helplessness and a desire to be loved”, “act lovingly towards (as a much fondled child towards its parents)” and “depend and presume upon another’s benevolence” (Wierzbicka 1996: 238-9, cited in Reimer 2005: 94). Such ethnographic descriptions were converted into the following definition:

amae

- a. X thinks something like this:
- b. when Y thinks about me, Y feels something good
- c. Y wants to do good things for me
- d. Y can do good things for me
- e. when I am near Y nothing bad can happen to me
- f. I don’t have to do anything because of this
- g. I want to be near Y

²⁹ Whether this definition of the meaning of the clause ‘X was angry at Y’ is fully successful is debatable, though it arguably captures the core meaning of being angry at someone even if some peripheral features may be considered to be missing. Regardless, it is valuable for facilitating a well formed comparison between *anger* and its cross-cultural analogues.

h. X feels something good because of this
(Wierzbicka 1996: 239)

Riemer (2010: 73) grants that this definition is clear and instructive and gives the reader a fuller understanding than the standard dictionary definition. However, his contention is that NSM cannot claim to be ultimately culture-neutral when reductive paraphrases are based on the interpretation of a foreign concept seen through the eyes of the analyst's own language. This is a profound point and presents cross-cultural interpretation with an unavoidable obstacle.

While such problems are faced by any interpretative framework, they do have a particular bearing on NSM's attempt to establish the "common language of all people" (cf. Wierzbicka 2011). However, this does not detract from the methodical benefits of using NSM as a tool for cross-cultural comparison. This position is advocated by both Goddard and Wierzbicka as well as those critical of the theoretical status of NSM. I make no commitment one way or the other to the universal nature of the metalanguage, or its claims to represent the 'alphabet of human thought', but have used it because it has the most legitimate claim to being culturally neutral. Likewise, although I have used provided explications for both *hugr* and *mōd* using NSM paraphrase, I do not suggest that the meaning of these concepts exist compositionally. The explications should rather be taken as summaries of the features of each of these concepts, rather than as representations of how they existed in the minds of speakers of Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English.

2.5 NSM and historical linguistics

While I have argued that NSM is an appropriate, useful and methodologically rigorous semantic metalanguage to use in the explication of ethnopsychological constructs and emotion concepts, it remains to be seen whether it is appropriate for use in historical linguistics. Although Anna Wierzbicka's writings have included comparisons between Shakespeare's English, the English of the Enlightenment and Present-Day English (see Wierzbicka 1996, 2010a, *inter alia*), on the whole historical linguistics has received little attention from the NSM community. However, something of the appeal of the approach is shown by Augustyn's (2002) application of it to Old Saxon material and Fabiszak's (2000) attempt to define Middle English emotion concepts using NSM. More recently, the Spanish scholars associated with the Nerthus Project have begun publishing on semantic primes in

Old English and using the method to explicate morphological features of the language.³⁰ However, because of the lack of historical linguistic material produced by the NSM community as a whole, there has been little critical engagement with it as an approach. To date, the most thorough historical application of the method is Helen Bromhead's (2009) study of epistemic expressions in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English.

Bromhead's study is valuable in that it addresses some of the issues involved in applying NSM to a language with no native speaker informants. Nonetheless, the problems she addresses are in effect those which apply to any semantic study of a dead language (or past period of a language). The only critique of NSM historical semantics from outwith its own ranks I know of is that by Carole Biggam (2012).

Biggam (2012: 87) raises general concerns about the length and comprehensibility of NSM explications, but holds that more traditional definitions can, while being clearer to the reader, mislead by imposing concepts from the target language onto the source language. As such, Biggam grants that NSM can be a valuable methodology in present-day semantic studies; however she argues it is inappropriate for historical studies. Her argument is as follows: because of the nature of historical records from the medieval period and the chance nature of survival, our textual witnesses to the language represent a distorted picture where only the language and interests of a cultural elite are preserved, and in a patchwork, rather than uniform, manner (Biggam 2012: 92-97). Because of this, Biggam (2012: 98) argues that the specificity of NSM explications is out of place in a context where we know so little about the general state of the language, an issue compounded by the lack of native speaker intuitions to confirm our analyses. Consequently, NSM's goal of presenting an "insider perspective" is likely to be misleading when we cannot really be sure what the insider's perspective was.

It is true that NSM prides itself on its ability to present an insider perspective, free (or as free as possible) from target language concepts (Goddard 2012: 712). However, this is not the only goal of the research programme. One of the benefits of using NSM is that it provides the analyst with a lexical set that does not rely on culture-bound concepts. By framing an explication of a historical concept in NSM does not mean one is committing oneself to the claim that it presents an insider's view of the concept; such a claim is by definition impossible without recourse to native speaker judgements. However, as long as

³⁰ See for example Martín Arista (2012), Martín Arista and Martín de la Rosa (2006), Guarddon Anelo (2009) and de la Cruz Cabanillas (2007).

this point is conceded, using NSM is no different from any other metalanguage or formalism. By using NSM's constrained lexical set and syntax, the analyst can frame his or her definitions in a manner which has been shown to be maximally culture-neutral. This strikes me as far more important than concerns surrounding over-specificity. It may be that different metalanguages are better suited to different historical problems, and that Biggam's own methodology better suits her field of study. However, when it comes to concepts such as emotions and ethnopsychological constructs, NSM is an appropriate and well-tested methodology whose application to historical data does not suffer from any issue not faced by other semantic theories. Nonetheless, I have primarily used NSM as a theoretical lens by which to approach the study of ethnopsychological lexis in a culture-neutral way. The methods of analysis I use are drawn from corpus linguistics and traditionally philology.³¹ These, and the texts chosen, are outlined below.

2.6 Text selection and corpus

In order to compensate for the lack of native speaker informants, any study of a historical language should attempt to review as many of its surviving textual witnesses as possible. For Old English, such comprehensive study has been greatly aided by the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (diPaolo Healey *et al.* 2000) and the *Thesaurus of Old English* (Roberts *et al.* 2000). However, because equivalent lexicographic resources do not exist for Old Norse-Icelandic,³² it is not possible to analyse the full corpus of surviving texts as can be done for Old English. Nonetheless, a large number of Old Norse-Icelandic texts and manuscripts have been lemmatized and indexed, which facilitates searching and analysing large quantities, though not all, of the surviving linguistic data. The study of the Old Norse-Icelandic lexicon also benefits from the number of surviving texts, which greatly outnumber those of Old English. Therefore, although it is not possible at present to study every instance of a particular lexeme in Old Norse-Icelandic, this is mitigated to some degree by the quantity of data available.

Because I have not examined every occurrence of the lexemes I am concerned with, it is not possible to make a claim for the completeness of this study or to rule out potential

³¹ For a more numerically-driven corpus linguistic approach to a similar topic, see Kiricsi (2004, 2010) on the semantics of Old English *mōd* and *gemynd*.

³² Nor does there seem to be the prospect of one in the foreseeable future as *A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* is not involved in creating one (Sanders 1997); however, the current *Gammalnorsk ordbokverk* project does aim to produce one for all early Norwegian texts (Eithun 1997).

counter examples to the semantic patterns I have identified within the lexicon. However, I have attempted to compile a representative sample of the surviving record of Old Norse-Icelandic textual culture by building a corpus of citations from the following resources. For poetry I have used Kellogg's (1988) *Concordance to Eddic Poetry* and the currently available corpus of skaldic poetry hosted by the *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* project website in conjunction with its published output (Whaley 2012, Gade 2009c, Clunies Ross 2007). For prose texts I have used Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's and Bergljót Kristjánsdóttir's (1996) concordance to the *Íslendingasögur*, the lemmatized indices to the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* compiled by de Leeuw van Weenen (2004), and the lemmatised edition of *Strengleikar* prepared by the Medieval Nordic Text Archive (Menota 2001-) project. In addition to these published concordances I have compiled a database of citations from digitised copies of Guðni Jónsson's and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson's (1943-1944) edition of the *fornaldarsögur*, Finnur Jónsson's (1911) *Heimskringla* and collections of texts included in both volumes of *Heilagra manna sögur* (1877), *Póstola sögur* (1874), and *Maríu saga* (1871) edited by Unger.³³ Evidence from *Sturlunga saga* was accessed using the Íslenskt Textasafn (2004) online corpus, which was also used to check results from the other sources of the *Íslendingasögur* and *Þættir*, *Heimskringla*, and the *fornaldarsögur*. Larsen's (1931) *Old Icelandic Medical Miscellany* and the Arthurian romances edited by Kalinke (1999c, d) were searched manually.

I have attempted to survey as wide as possible a range of text types as Diller (1996, 2012 *inter alia*) has demonstrated that genre plays an important role in the lexical expression of particular semantic fields. I have also included texts based on exemplars composed in different languages (Latin in the case of the adapted Christian biography and Anglo-Norman and Old French in the case of the translated romances) as these provide valuable comparative evidence for the cultural categorisation of semantic fields. As Lönnroth (1965b: 54) has argued, it is only by examining the reception of foreign motifs in Old Norse-Icelandic texts that we can establish what represents a truly native tradition and what has been imported.

While not fully comprehensive, the material studied represents almost the complete corpus of surviving Old Norse poetry and over two million words of prose. This cannot

³³ The data from the digitised texts is less reliable in terms of its comprehensiveness due to the quality of the optical character recognition (OCR) on which it is based. To compensate for this I searched for textual variants and predictable errors in the OCR, such as confusable characters for <h> and so forth. This increased the number of citations by around 5%. However, it is unlikely that the data gathered in this manner represents the full number of lexical forms for any one lemma.

account for every recorded instance of the lexemes studied in this thesis, but it is likely to cover a representative sample of them and their semantic behaviour. It is certainly possible that counterexamples have been missed, but it is reasonable to assume that the linguistic behaviour identified across this body of writing represents something close to common usage. However, it is of course important to acknowledge that despite the range of this study, the texts examined can only be taken as evidence of the conceptual structures of the literate class of (primarily) Icelanders³⁴ and can only be assumed, not proven, to be representative of the population as a whole. There is also the likelihood of a certain degree of diachronic semantic change having taken place considering the time period covered by the texts selected in this study.³⁵ I address both these issues below. First, however, it is necessary to consider potential sources of evidence which I have not employed as part of this research.

While evidence from runic lexicology is illuminating for a number of semantic fields,³⁶ there are very few extant runic texts which are relevant to the topic of this thesis. For example, *hugr* occurs once in *An English Dictionary of Runic Inscription in the Younger Futhark*³⁷ in the compound *hugsnjallr* ‘quick-thinking’ on a stone now lost. Likewise, *munr*, a partial synonym for *hugr*, only occurs in the form *ōmunR* ‘unremembered’.³⁸ Runic evidence supplies a great deal of early evidence for concepts in related semantic fields such as ‘soul’ and ‘memory’ which feature prominently in funerary inscriptions, and it is unfortunate that there are so few early texts relating to *hugr* itself.

Another potential source of early attestations is the occurrence of word forms in dithematic personal names. For example, *hugr* is a plausible derivation of the second element in *djúpuðga*, the epithet applied to Auðr ‘the deep-minded’ (North 1991: 81). There is plenty of scope for using names to investigate linguistic pre-history (see Hall 2007: 55-62, and with reservations in Hall 2012: 101), but it is much harder to draw conclusions about synchronic categorisations from the words preserved in personal names.

³⁴ The majority of the texts considered in this study were produced in their current form in Iceland, as is the case with the majority of the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus. Exceptions include *The Old Norwegian Homily Book*, *Strengleikar* and the other romances, and some of the minor medical texts discussed in Chapter 4. It is assumed that the vernacular psychology of the community that produced these texts is essentially the same as those produced contemporaneously in Iceland, on the basis of their linguistic unity (on this see Barnes 2005) and the connections between their textual communities (Abram 2004).

³⁵ The earliest manuscripts used in this study are the Icelandic and Norwegian homily books which date to around 1200 (McDougall 1993: 290). Others such as *Old Icelandic Medical Miscellany* (1931) date from the late fifteenth century.

³⁶ See for example Jesch (2001) and Sawyer (2000). Runic lexicography is surveyed in Jesch (2013).

³⁷ *An English Dictionary of Runic Inscription in the Younger Futhark* s.v. *hugsnjallr*.

³⁸ *An English Dictionary of Runic Inscription in the Younger Futhark* s.v. *ōmunR*.

As the focus of this thesis is on contemporary conceptualisation of vernacular psychology in Old Norse-Icelandic, onomastic evidence has little to offer compared to the occurrence of the lexemes concerned in extended passages of text. Unless newly coined, the evidence from names tells us more about the conceptualisations of past societies than contemporary ones and for this reason I have not relied on it in this thesis.

For similar reasons I have also not made use of etymological evidence, which likewise reveals more of the past than it does of the present. For example, the fact that Present-Day English *mind* is the reflex of Old English *gemynd*, which itself can be traced back to the Proto-Indo-European etymon **men-* (Watkins 2011: s.v. *men-*¹; see also Mallory and Adams 2006: 321-323) has no bearing on the present-day concept. Further, the main lexeme under consideration in this study, *hugr*, has an ill-traced etymology outside the Germanic language family. It has tentatively been related to Lithuania *kaũkas* ‘pixie, goblin’, Sanskrit *śúci-* ‘bright, pure’, from Proto-Indo-European **k̑uki*, and a number of other forms, none of which are considered convincing (see Orel 2003: s.v. **xuʒiz* ~ **xuʒuz*; Lehmann 1986: s.v. *hugjan*).³⁹ Even if a suitable etymology could be found, such information would have as little bearing on *hugr* as the semantics of **men-* do on ‘mind’. Nonetheless, the fact that the reflexes of Proto-Indo-European **men-* did not develop into the prototypical ‘mind’ words but were restricted to ‘memory’ in early Germanic is of considerable interest, and raises questions about the reasons why the etymon of *hugr* was selected for this purpose in early Germanic. However, it is the contention of this thesis that we do not yet know enough about the semantics of *hugr* and its conceptual cognates elsewhere in Germanic to permit a reconstruction of the ethnopsychological constructs of Proto-Germanic or a full consideration of its status within Proto-Indo-European. The semantics of reconstructed lexemes are only as strong as that of their reflexes and it is for that reason that I have not used reconstructed evidence as part of the argument of this thesis. It is, however, hoped that the evidence discussed in the following chapters will help to clarify what we are able to reconstruct as features belong to the ancestor of Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English, and what represent independent developments.⁴⁰ I discuss these issues further, in the context of previous work on Germanic psychology, in Chapter 2 §§2&3.

³⁹ See also de Vries (1961: s.v. *hugr*) and Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon (1989: s.v. *hugur*).

⁴⁰ See Low (1998: 22-24) for a critical discussion of the value of etymological evidence and Anderson (2003) and Flowers (1983) for examples of studies which do make use of reconstructed evidence.

2.7 Methods of analysis

This thesis takes a primarily lexical approach to the study of vernacular psychology; I am concerned with words as the carriers of cultural meaning. As such, the main focus of this study is on how Old Norse-Icelandic *hugr* compares semantically with Old English *mōd*. As mentioned above, because of the nature of the textual culture of Anglo-Saxon England and medieval Iceland these words are primarily representative of the culture of a literate elite. In order to ensure that the words studied are as representative of the speech communities as a whole, the lemmata I have focused on have been selected according to the criteria set out by Biggam (1995, 1997) for studying basic colour terms which serves as a useful heuristic for ensuring the widespread currency of the words across socio-linguistic divisions. In order for a colour word to qualify as basic within Biggam's system it must be frequently occurring, morphologically simple⁴¹ and found across a range of text types; an additional necessary feature is the lexical and phraseological productivity of the words selected. It is assumed that words which meet these criteria have a great claim to function as cultural 'key words',⁴² words which function as salient entities within semantic fields and which serve as referents for a range of other synonyms which are restricted to specialised registers (Goddard 2008a: 78). It is one of the key insights from corpus linguistics is that "words in texts are distributed very unevenly" within the lexicon (Stubbs 2001: 39). As Levisen (2012: 71) puts it, languages "pay attention" to certain words by using them disproportionately in a range of formulaic expressions and discourse routines. It is clear that in Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English *hugr* and *mōd* occupy the role of key words in this sense.

Applying these criteria to the selection of lemmata as key words has important consequences for the understanding of contemporary vernacular psychology, and by extension the reconstructed systems which have played a prominent role in previous

⁴¹ Morphological simplicity is less relevant outside the domain of colour semantics. It is also something of a vague term in a historical perspective where multi-morphemic units become reanalysed as single morphs, as in the case of 'barn' from Old English *bere* 'barley' and *ern* 'store room' and countless other examples (see Campbell 1998: 414). When dealing with dead languages morphological simplicity is best considered in the light of lexical and phraseological productivity. For example, although Old Norse-Icelandic *lík* 'body' is morphologically simpler than the compound *líkami* 'body', *líkami* is used in a wider range of expression to mean body, while *lík* is in the process of becoming restricted to reference to the dead body as is the case in modern Icelandic.

⁴² The study of cultural 'key words' was greatly influenced by Raymond Williams (1976) and has been an important feature of NSM semantics (see Wierzbicka 1997). Williams' work on keywords is being explored and developed by the University of Pittsburgh 'keywords project' <http://keywords.pitt.edu/williams_keywords.html>, last accessed June 2014. The topic of Old English keywords is treated in detail by Frantzen (2012).

considerations of the topic. For example, numerous studies⁴³ take the fact that Old English has two frequently occurring and lexically productive ‘mind’ words, *mōd* and *hyge*, as evidence of a dualistic (or polyvalent) Proto-Germanic psyche. However, it is only *mōd* which occurs frequently across all genre of Old English texts, with *hyge* restricted to poetry (bar four rare occurrences in prose texts).⁴⁴ A comparison can be drawn between Present-Day English ‘mind’ and ‘psyche’. ‘Psyche’ is a relatively infrequently occurring lexeme⁴⁵ with low lexical and phraseological productivity, restricted to high registers and scientific discourse. It does not mean precisely the same as ‘mind’, but it functions as a synonym of the English cultural key word ‘mind’ rather than as a distinct conceptual entity; there is no evidence that English speakers distinguish between a ‘mind’ and a ‘psyche’ as part of their vernacular psychology.

A similar pattern to *mōd*’s relationship with its synonyms can be identified in Old Norse-Icelandic texts. *Hugr* is by far the most frequently occurring lexeme within its semantic field and the most lexically productive, far outperforming *mōd* in this regard.⁴⁶ Unlike Old English, however, *hugr* is used more frequently than any other word in poetic contexts as well as prose; there is no Old Norse-Icelandic equivalent to *hyge*’s role in Old English poetry. Similarly, fewer words are restricted to purely poetic contexts, though *sif* and *sjafni* are notable examples.⁴⁷ However, those synonyms which do occur in both prose and poetry *geð* and *munr* have a much more restricted semantic range than *hugr*. *Geð* is used in poetry primarily where alliteration requires it and is mostly confined to the formula *geð guma* ‘the mind/memory of men’. It occurs only four times in the *Íslendingasögur* compared to *hugr*’s 361 occurrences and is rarely associated with thinking and feeling. Unlike *geð*, *munr*’s semantic range is much broader, and it is used more frequently in prose.⁴⁸ *Munr*’s greater semantic range and behaviour suggests that it carries more conceptual baggage than *geð*, essentially a synonym for *hugr*. Nonetheless, it is clear that *hugr* is Old Norse-Icelandic’s primary ethnopsychological concept, and there is no evidence of *munr* or other synonyms acting as a dualistic ‘mind’ concept.

For this reason I have chosen to study *hugr* as indicative of the cultural psychology of Old Norse-Icelandic without extended reference to its synonyms. The semantics of *geð*, *munr* and other such words are worthy of study in their own right; however, they are

⁴³ These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

⁴⁴ On these examples see Frank (1994).

⁴⁵ The British National Corpus <bnc.bl.uk> records 242 occurrences of *psyche* compared to 27097 for *mind*.

⁴⁶ The *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (2013) lists 409 words containing the morpheme *hug(r)*.

⁴⁷ On these see North (1991: 71).

⁴⁸ *Munr* occurs 60 times in the *Íslendingasögur*. See Larrington (1992) for a discussion of its semantics.

semantically subordinate to *hugr*. While it is true that semantic fields operate as systems where individual items interact dynamically through time, this plays a greater role diachronically than it does synchronically (Smith 1996: 63).

The citations upon which my analysis of *hugr* is based are drawn from the corpus outlined above. And although *hugr* is the primary topic of concern, I have attempted to contextualise it within the emotional and psychological models expressed in Old Norse-Icelandic literature as lexicographic studies can run the risk of reductionism by failing to account for wider culture patterns. The danger of not seeing the wood for the trees is raised by Ármann Jakobsson (2008) who has argued that on the whole close readings are too limited to provide a detailed picture of a culture's vernacular psychology. For example, it would be possible to look at the paucity of emotion collocates with *hugr* and conclude that Old Norse-Icelandic culture was unemotional, and bypass poems such as *Sonatorrek*. Clearly something more subtle is required. Nonetheless it is necessary to have a full understanding of the concepts under discussion in order to perform the kind of cultural analysis advocated by Ármann Jakobsson so as to avoid an ethnocentric perspective.

The primary method employed in this thesis is collocation analysis, that is, examining the company the words under examination keep. This involves studying derivational and compounding behaviour of relevant lexemes, but, more important, by paying attention to their phraseological patterns. This is because *hugr*, like many words in the lexicon, rarely occurs as an isolated noun but in a range of conventional syntactic units which contribute to its meaning. As Stubbs (2001: 166) writes, “a community's value system is built up and maintained, at least partly, by the recurrent use of particular phrasings in texts”. I have based my analysis primarily on the occurrences of *hugr* in prose texts as it provides a clear picture of the relative frequencies of the semantic contexts it features in.

By studying the collocational behaviour of key words such as these, the methodology used takes seriously the principle that linguistic elaboration is indicative of cultural values. While popular in the early twentieth century and advocated by Sapir (e.g. 1921) and Whorf (e.g. 1941) this proposition was dismissed by the dominant paradigm of Chomskyan linguistics.⁴⁹ The position taken here is not the Whorfian view that language

⁴⁹ See for example Pullum (1989) whose article about the Eskimo words for ‘snow’ dismisses the cultural significance of lexical elaboration. The last two decades, however, have seen a renewed focus on the relationship between language and thought, most notably in the works of Guy Deutscher (2000, 2010 *inter alia*) and Lera Boroditsky (2001, 2011 *inter alia*). For a survey of neo-Whorfian work

shapes thought, but rather that culture ‘gets into’ language and provides the path of least resistance when categorising the world.⁵⁰ This take on the relationship between language and culture has been labelled *ethnosyntax*, and has been demonstrated in a wide range of semantic domains where cultural preoccupations are manifested in linguistic systems. These range from lexical phenomena such as rice-producing nations having a far larger vocabulary for what English speakers categorise as ‘rice’ to syntactic features such as English’s large number of ‘wimperative’ constructions which have been explained by the English cultural script of not imposing one’s opinions on another person (Wierzbicka 2006a: 171 ff.).

This position has been tested empirically by Pavlenko (2002) who examined Wierzbicka’s (1999) claim that the Russian lexicon provides evidence that Russian speakers have a greater range of salient bodily gestures associated with emotion than speakers of English, which has far fewer lexicalised expressions in this semantic domain. Pavlenko found that English and Russian speakers categorised emotional situations differently from each other, and in accordance with Wierzbicka’s lexical findings. The significance of Pavlenko’s work for this thesis is that it provides a theoretical framework in which to interpret the linguistic behaviour of *hugr* as indicative of cultural values.

For example, at the most basic level it is taken to be significant that *hugr* is used in phraseological expressions for thinking, wanting and feeling. Such evidence allows us to propose that *hugr* is responsible for these processes rather than any other part of the person. Moreover, the fact that *hjarta* ‘heart’ is used apparently synonymously with *hugr* in emotional contexts, but not in cognitive or volitive ones, suggests that there is a disparity between these two parts of the person. Beyond these basic attributions of psychological faculties to parts of the person, the fact that emotional activity is rarely localised in a body part in Old Norse-Icelandic texts can be understood within this framework to be significant in informing us about the ‘embodied’ state of *hugr* when compared to the significant lexical and phraseological elaboration of this field in Old English texts.

It is important to acknowledge that collocational analysis faces particular challenges when applied to historical texts and most notably the problem of what Goddard

see Evans and Levinson (2009). The relationship between NSM and Whorfian linguistics is treated by Goddard (2003).

⁵⁰ A large number of studies examining the influence of culture upon language from the perspective of *ethnosyntax* are collected in Enfield (2002a). A similar position is held by Everett (2005, 2012). For a critical discussion of the various theoretical perspectives covered by the term see Goddard (2002).

(2008a) refers to as ‘new wine in old skins.’ While phrases, compounds and words may stay the same for generations, there is no guarantee that their semantics are similarly static. A similar issue in Conceptual Metaphor Theory was considered by Geeraerts and Groendleers (1995), who show that many of our metaphorical expressions for ANGER are relics of the conceptualisations of a culture immersed in humoral theory. Likewise, the ‘heart’ expressions in Present-Day English are relics of a time when the physical heart was thought to play an active role in our emotional and cognitive lives. The point to be taken from this is that meaning cannot be read directly from linguistic form. This is problematic for a dead language, where sources of clarification are restricted to the texts that have come down to us. Consequently, each expression must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and situated in its historical contexts, before being taken it as evidence for any current conceptualisation.

3 Summary

The main theoretical claims made in this thesis are that the differences between various cultural conceptualisations of vernacular psychology (and other conceptual domains) risk being obfuscated by the phenomenon of terminological ethnocentrism: that the categories of the source language can distort the categories of the target language. However, I argue that such problems can be mitigated to a degree by framing the analyses of these concepts by using the culture-neutral metalanguage developed by the Natural Semantic Metalanguage research project. By freeing the definitions of the psychological key words of Old Norse and Old English from the perspective of English words it is possible to compare the semantics of the two in finer detail. This has the benefit of revealing what components the two languages have in common and where they differ. Consequently, it is possible to establish a solid base for the reconstruction of the semantics of the etyma of these words in Proto-Germanic and to consider what features are a part of Old Norse and Old English’s shared heritage and what represent independent developments. Having outlined the theory and methods used in this thesis, in the next chapter I survey previous approaches taken to the study of early Germanic psychology and considers in more detail the semantics of Old English *mōd*.

Chapter 2: Previous Work on Germanic Psychology

1 Introduction

All studies of Germanic psychology have to address two questions concerning the role of lexical evidence in establishing the cultural conceptualisation of thoughts and feelings. These are: to what extent are the various words glossed as ‘mind’ synonymous, and to what extent are the representations of these concepts metaphorical. There has been a tendency for these questions to be bundled together, with ‘exotic’ interpretations preferring a large number of independent concepts represented by the various lexical items and a literal interpretation of their characteristics, set against ‘normalising’ works which favour fewer concepts and a metaphorical interpretation of the ‘mind’ concepts which brings Germanic psychology closer to Present-Day English. There is, however, no need to assume that the two go hand in hand, and some studies fall between these two poles, arguing that the attested Germanic languages represent an intermediate stage between the colourful past and the familiar folk-psychology of today. As there is such a disparity between the major accounts of Germanic psychology, it is worth reviewing the arguments employed as these have had a profound influence on the interpretation of material, and it is necessary to contextualise this thesis within the debate. I will deal first with the issue of synonymy in Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic psychological lexis, and then with metaphor. As part of the discussion of the role of metaphor in Germanic psychological lexis I will address the most significant, and to my mind convincing, interpretation of Anglo-Saxon psychology to date, Leslie Lockett’s (2011) embodied realism and the ‘hydraulic model’ of cognition she has advanced.

2 Lumping and splitting

Of all the medieval Germanic languages, Old English has been noted for its extremely large lexical field of psychological words. Low Soan Ai (2001) has collected some 49 in total. As Kastovsky (1992: 299) has pointed out, this places the ‘mind’ on a par with other privileged lexical fields for concepts such as man, weapons, and war, and it clearly reflects a profound interest in the inner life which characterises Old English poetry. Old Norse-Icelandic is more typical of the other Germanic languages in having substantially fewer words and phrases recorded for this field, but nonetheless still has more than Present-Day English. While there is yet no Thesaurus of Old Norse-Icelandic, a contemporary glimpse

into this lexical field is provided by Snorri Sturluson's *Skáldskaparmál* and the anonymous *heiti* list included in the same manuscript (AM 748 I b 4° (A)):

Móðr, hjarta, negg,
munr, hugr, sefi,
geð, heil, sjafni,
gollorr, eljunar. (Finnur Jónsson 1967 vol. 1: 688)

Snorri's *heiti* are as follows:

Hjarta heitir negg. Þat skal svá kenna, kalla korn eða stein eða epli eða hnot eða mýl eða líkt ok kenna við brjóst eða hug. Kalla má ok hús eða jörð eða berg hugarins. Brjóst skal svá kenn<a> at kalla hús eða garð eða skip hjarta, anda eða lifrar, eljunar land, hugar ok minnis.

Huginn skal svá kenna at kalla vind tröllkvinna ok rétt at nefna til hverja er vill ok svá at nefna jötnana eða kenna þá til konu eða móður eða dóttur þess. (ed. Faulkes 1998: 108)

The heart is called bosom. It shall be referred to by calling it corn or stone or apple or nut or ball or the like, and referring to it in terms of breast or thought. It can also be called house or ground or mountain of the thought. The breast shall be referred to by calling it house or enclosure or ship of heart, spirit or liver, land of energy, thought and memory. Thought shall be referred to by calling it wind of troll-wives and it is normal for this purpose to use the name of whichever one you like, and also to use the names of giants, and then refer to it in terms of his wife or mother or daughter. (Faulkes 1987b: 154)

There are at least two potential approaches to this type of data, to split the lexis into various different concepts, or to consider them as synonymous or hyponymous of one (or more) 'key' concepts. These two approaches are taken by the earliest studies of the renewed focus on Germanic psychology: Michael Phillips' (1985) thesis and Malcolm Godden's (1985) influential article "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind". Phillips' thesis examines nine high-frequency words from the psychological lexical field, which he calls 'soul terms', and discusses their features. Phillips (1985: 9) is explicit that he assumes semantic discreteness of his terms and deliberately avoids any form of semantic theory, instead basing his conclusions on the syntactic behaviour of his 'soul terms'.

Godden (1985) takes the opposite view, in which *mōd*, *hyge* and others are grouped together as the 'mind' of the 'vernacular tradition' and compared with the analogous concept in his 'classical tradition'. Godden's approach makes sense intuitively, but he offers no justification for it. Nor is there any discussion of the range of lexis employed in the referring to the mind in Old English poetry. Instead, the focus is on the conceptual

differences between the vernacular and classical traditions. However, it is worth noting that Godden rightly separates the ‘soul’ from the ‘mind’, as Hans Eggers (1957) had done in his earlier study of Old Saxon psychological vocabulary.

Phillips’ thesis contains a great deal of interesting material, and for some words is still the best description of their individual behaviour. However, his semantic analysis is unconvincing because he refrains from any application of semantic theory. Without aligning syntactic evidence to the semantic content of his words, he leaves himself little to work with. Low Soon Ai (1998: 118) has critiqued his work in detail and there is no need to repeat those criticisms here. Godden’s (1985) analysis is more nuanced and has remained influential. However, it is worth noting that his semantic analyses are relatively thin, and while I believe he is right, he presents little evidence for grouping the huge word-hoard Old English has for ‘mind’ together as one concept.

While it is intuitively clear that the 49 words Low has recorded cannot each represent discrete concepts, there is nothing out of the ordinary in a typological perspective for a language splitting what we see as one concept of ‘mind’ into numerous other concepts. And as linguistic evidence is our best evidence for cultural conceptualisations, and in dead languages often our only evidence, it is necessary to have a principled linguistic account for proposing one concept with many synonyms, or several discrete concepts.

Here it is useful to apply the methodology developed by Carole Biggam (1995) for identifying basic colour-terms in Old English. Biggam notes that for a colour-term to count as ‘basic’ in the typology developed by Berlin and Kay (1969),⁵¹ it must be available to all speakers of the language. While she notes that this is an inherently problematic field to deal with in a dead language which preserves the language of a high-status group of scribes, she proposes a method for establishing likely candidates for basic colour-term status. In order to qualify, a word must be available across all genres of texts and must not be restricted to specialised contexts. Further, it must not be a compound word (blue-grey) or a derivate (blueish).

The semantics of colour is a specialised area, and one not necessarily compatible with the semantics of psychological terms; nonetheless, it does share important correspondences in that the concepts identified by the lexis do not exist in a one-to-one

⁵¹ For more recent iterations of the theory, see the survey given in Biggam (2012: 21ff.).

relationship with physical ‘reality’ but represent culture-specific conceptualisation of what is seen (in terms of colour) or felt (in terms of psychology).⁵²

Biggam’s typology may need to be reviewed in some respects when applied to psychological vocabulary, but it can nonetheless be used as a heuristic to gain a general perspective of how the lexis of Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic represents the conceptualisations of their speakers in a theoretically grounded way. As it happens, one need only apply the first of Biggam’s criteria for the pattern to become clear. Once poetic lexis is removed from the equation, it is evident that Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic each had only one primary term for the ‘mind’: *mōd* in Old English and *hugr* in Old Norse. For example, while a number of studies (e.g. North 1991, Beck 1988) have emphasised the salience of *hyge* in Old English, because of its high frequency and productivity in poetry and its relationship to Old Norse-Icelandic *hugr*, it occurs only four times in prose (see Frank 1994: 98-100). If *hyge* was a saliently discrete concept we would expect it to occur far more frequently and in distinct semantic contexts from *mōd*, but this is not the case. The same is true for Old Norse, where not only are the words and phrases listed by Snorri and the anonymous *heiti* list used rarely even in poetry, they are as infrequent as Old English *hyge* when the prose corpus is analysed. Although exact numbers are unavailable for the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus, of the texts I have examined, *geð* which only occurs in poetry in the formula *geð guma* ‘the minds of men’, is featured in prose texts only twice: once at the beginning of *Hungrvaka* and once in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*.

This is not to discount the importance of the lexical elaboration of this field, particularly in Old English poetry; lexical elaboration clearly demonstrates that the topic is of importance to a culture (see Wierzbicka 2010a: 71 ff. and Pavlenko 2002, *pace* Pullum 1989). And while a number of the poetic terms are clearly chosen for alliterative reasons, if we hold that true synonymy does not exist we can assume that the lexis of Old English poetry conveyed shades of meaning to its audience which are hard for us to recover. Nonetheless, as these words almost never occur in prose they can be legitimately considered to be broadly synonymous with *mōd* for the purpose of this thesis.

⁵² On the psychological reality of colour terms see Wierzbicka (2005, 2006b, 2008) and Levinson (2000).

3 Cross-Germanic evidence

Because of the similarities in the psychological lexis of Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English, and because of their similar behaviour, there has been a trend to use this material to reconstruct the nature of the ‘mind’ in Proto-Germanic. The conceptual system of Proto-Germanic, or early North-West Germanic, is not the focus of this thesis. However, a number of scholars, most notably Richard North (1991), have argued that the remnants of this system can be detected in Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic, and provide a way for interpreting the nuance of the mind concepts in these languages. Such additional information would clearly be of great benefit in interpreting the world-view of the speakers of Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic, and help us to compare their development from their common ancestor.

Part of the problem with using reconstructed Germanic evidence as a lens through which to interpret the conceptualisation of its daughter languages is knowing how to conflate the existing data into a reconstructed scheme. Much of this depends on assuming that we are able to trace a common conceptual thread through the surviving medieval Germanic languages, and also in assuming that these stem from a unitary conceptualisation in Proto-Germanic. Ultimately, one has to put faith in the reconstruction as an achievable goal (for a review of semantic reconstruction see *inter alia* Fox 1995: 92 ff., Anttila 1989: 364 ff.). Even if we grant that this is the case, the usefulness of the endeavour for interpreting the recorded languages is thrown into doubt when we consider the variety of reconstructions that have been proposed. Such variety does not of course rule out the possibility of achieving a ‘correct’ reconstruction, but it does highlight the difficulty in doing so.

There have been a number of approaches to this problem. In general, when it comes to reconstructing Germanic concepts, Old Norse-Icelandic (which is essentially Old Icelandic material in this case) is mined for information about the Germanic past. However, the first modern linguistic attempt to investigate the Proto-Germanic ‘psyche’, Hans Eggers’s “Altgermanische Seelenvorstellungen im Lichte des Heliand” (1957) used evidence from Old Saxon, which he considered offered the best insight into the development of the psychological concepts in Proto-Germanic. Eggers’s work is important in distinguishing the ‘mind’ from the ‘soul’, which is one of the fundamental conceptual distinctions seen throughout the early Germanic languages. His work also provides a valuable methodological framework for studying early Germanic psychology, which looks

in detail at the data from one language on its own terms, without unnecessary recourse to analogues in others. This is of fundamental importance, and is often ignored in the literature, where concepts are cherry-picked from other languages and used to augment the conceptual system of another language.

Eggers states that by the time Old Saxon came to be written down, *mód* and *hugi* were synonymous terms. However, he argues that in the early stage of the language, and by extension Proto-Germanic, *hugi* was the primary ‘mind’ term, whereas *mód* represented a ‘Dämon’, unconnected with cognitive processes (Eggers 1957: 302). Eggers argues that although broadly synonymous *mód* and *hugi* in Old Saxon represent echoes of a rational (*hugi*) and emotional (*mód*) disparity in early Germanic, where there was a dualistic split between thinking and feeling.

A different approach is taken by Stephen Flowers (1983), who uses mass comparison across the existing Germanic languages in order to reconstruct the meanings of a number of what he calls ‘soul conceptions’. Flowers’s (1983: 117-18) study, like most others, assumes that it is Old Norse-Icelandic which preserves “pre-Christian terminology within an indigenous ideological framework”. He sees the Proto-Germanic ‘anthropology of the person’ as consisting of a tripartite structure: an embodied soul; a disembodied soul; and a separable soul (1983: 119). He notes that with Christianisation there was a move from this scheme towards a dichotomy between body and soul, and within this a trichotomy between body, soul and spirit. The adoption of Christianity had a profound effect on pre-Christian Germanic concepts, but the evidence Flowers presents for his original trichotomy is thin.

Flowers’s article focuses on the first part of this trichotomy, the embodied soul, whose faculties he attempts to reconstruct by lexical means. His method is philologically informed, but is limited by drawing on lexicographical sources rather than close readings of texts. Flowers (1983: 134) reconstructs the Proto-Germanic ‘embodied soul’ as consisting of three parts. **Hug-* is attributed the role of cognitive seat, responsible for reflective, perceptive and votive functions, whereas **mód-* is conceived of as ‘the emotive force’, and a third part, modelled on Old Norse-Icelandic *önd/andi* is designated the ‘breath concept’. This reconstruction is interesting, but is inherently problematic because it is based on lexical forms rather than semantic features. Further, the fact that a tripartite ‘psyche’ is reconstructed from a system where there is a unitary ‘mind’ is surprising and in need of stronger evidence. However, even if we grant that Flowers’s

reconstruction is valid, it is nonetheless of little explanatory value when examining the extant languages. Because Flowers's reconstruction is based on an amalgam of the psychological concepts across early Germanic, it leaves us with less detail than individual studies of a single language's lexis.

Richard North's (1991) *Pagan Words and Christian Meanings* falls somewhere between Eggers's and Flowers's work. Unlike Flowers, North (1991: 63) argues for an essentially unitary 'mind' concept in Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic, but one which is functionally divided. Like Eggers, North's conclusions are based on close readings of texts, but like Flowers, a great deal of cross-Germanic evidence is employed. North's assertions are self-consciously controversial, and presented in what some have found an alienating style. Low Soon Ai (1998) wrote her thesis purposely to counter what she considered North's unrestrained romanticism. However, despite the questionable assertions that the Germanic mind was 'epic and systematised' and that heroic verse was resistant to Christian doctrine (1991: 63), many of North's starting assumptions are reasonable. He rightly states that there is "an extraordinary gap between concepts of mind today and those of the early Middle Ages" (1991: 63), and in light of Leslie Locket's (2011) work his assumption of "a unitary mind [...] based on an ancient inheritance of popular physiology" seems largely to have been vindicated.

North's chapter on mind is set out to demonstrate that Godden was wrong to group *mōd* and *hyge* together as interchangeable synonyms (1991: 65). Although North conceives of a unitary mind in both Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English, he argues that *mōd* and *hyge* in Old English represent significantly different functional aspects of this concept. North (1991: 75) is attentive to the evidential quality of the examples he chooses, and goes to great effort to exclude cases where words have been chosen for alliterative purposes. He then sets about classifying the contexts in which *hyge* and *mōd(sefa)* are used in Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic poetry. On the significance of his examples he writes "As the evidence is mostly scant and randomly preserved, the mind-word classifications must always be regarded as tentative, and the conclusion as preliminary" (North 1991: 85). However, the assertions are far from tentative. His ultimate conclusion is that *hyge* and *mōd(sefa)* existed as contrasts in Early Germanic, which were polarised between a male *hyge* and a female *mōd(sefa)*:

Within larger cacophonies of dissonant terms for mind, a male *hyge* and a female *mōdsefa* could be used in the same proportions of harmony or variance as in any marriage between two complementary beings." (North 1991: 98)

This goes far beyond the evidence adduced.

However, an even more serious problem with North's approach is that although he is innovative in using functional evidence in respect to the words he analyses, he assumes that cognates across the Germanic languages represent the same concepts. Thus, *hyge* in Old English is paired with *hugr* in Old Norse-Icelandic, and the very rarely attested poetic synonyms used in the Edda (such as *sefi* and *sjafni*) are functionally paired with their Old English cognates. However, there is very little reason for assuming that these lexical forms retained the same semantics in North and West-Germanic, and considering the fact that the principal 'mind' words in the two languages have diverged, it is highly unlikely that the rest of the semantic field remained static.

In light of the variety of Proto-Germanic reconstructions surveyed here, Hans Eggers' rational-emotive dichotomy, Flowers's trichotomy of soul conceptions, and North's harmonious whole composed of male and female elements, it seems safer to consider the vernacular psychology of Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic without recourse to reconstructed concepts. As the lexical evidence from each language shows, their psychologies were based on a unitary mind concept, not a series of discrete faculties. However, this does not mean that the concepts are identical. In order to understand their differences, it is necessary to study each on its own terms, rather than conflate the lexical evidence from across Germanic, which necessarily obscures a great deal of detail. Just how far *mōd* and *hugr* differ leads us to the second of the two questions raised at the start of this chapter: the extent to which the representations of these concepts are metaphorical.

4 Conceptual metaphor and embodied realism

Malcolm Godden (1985) and Richard North (1991) both consider the 'mind' in Old English (and Old Norse-Icelandic) as an essentially embodied concept, with North explicitly tying Germanic psychology to 'traditional physiology'. North however, stops short of a fully literal interpretation of the physiological depiction of the 'mind' in Germanic literature. For example, he attributes the swelling up in rage seen across Germanic poetry as a stylised literary device (North 1991: 89). Such images are frequently employed throughout Old English literature, where people are said to swell, emotions boil up and seethe, anger is represented as hot and so forth. Such images are partly recognisable in Present-Day English, but many are not. Minds do not expand with the heat of emotion,

nor do they cool down and contract. Further, much of the language which corresponds to what has been designated the cognitive metaphor of ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A SEALED CONTAINER has been shown to be a lexical remnant of the doctrine of the humours, which has long since passed into metaphor (Geeraerts and Grondelaers 1995; see also Kövecses 2000). However, as these Present-Day English figures of speech stem from previous literal understandings, it is worth considering if the ‘metaphors’ of swelling, heating up, and seething in Old English represent a literal, physiological conceptualisation of emotion.

Until recently, partly because of the influence of Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) Cognitive Metaphor Theory, the lexis of the ‘mind’ in Old English has been interpreted as metaphorical. The first work to apply Conceptual Metaphor Theory to Old English psychology in a thoroughgoing way was Low Soon Ai’s (1998) thesis, which categorised a great number of metaphorical representations of the ‘mind’ in Old English. However, part of Low’s motivation was to move Old English psychology away from what she saw as the unnecessarily ‘romantic’ interpretations of North’s (1991) work. Consequently, Low chose to favour metaphorical interpretations over literal ones.

A similar research programme has been carried out by Britt Mize (2006, 2008, 2010), whose work explores the stylistic implications of the metaphorical schemes used in Old English poetry and their literary import. Mize, in his most recent work (2013), demonstrates how important psychology is to the world-view of the Anglo-Saxons, but stops short of committing himself to the psychological reality of the metaphors he discusses.

In some cases, distinguishing what is metaphorical from what is literal in a dead language is an intractable problem; the extent of the methodological issues are well discussed by Kay (2000).⁵³ In light of this it is understandable why Low chose to interpret the material as metaphorical and why Mize chooses to concentrate his efforts on the stylistic features of psychological lexis, rather than its status as physiological reality. Recently, Geeraerts and Gevaert (2008) have continued the metaphorical tradition, but unlike others have clearly outlined their methodology for deciding what is and is not likely to be a metaphor in Old English. In effect, this amounts to whether or not similar metaphors exist in Present-Day English.

⁵³ Larrington (2001) has written that identifying what is literal and physiological and what is metaphorical is one of the most pressing tasks of the study of medieval emotions. The topic is also addressed by Enfield (2002b).

However, Present-Day English, or any isolated language is a poor barometer against which to measure the conceptual system of another language. Ideally, such decisions should be made in a typological perspective (see Sharifian *et al.* 2008). In recent years insights from cross-cultural psychology have revealed that conceiving of the ‘mind’ as an embodied part of a person is common among cultures which have not developed sophisticated medical traditions, or adopted those from other cultures (Sharifian *et al.* 2008). On this basis, comparing Old English with Present-Day English for metaphors is unwise. In light of this Leslie Lockett (2011) has argued comprehensively that what have traditionally been interpreted as metaphorical expressions are in fact literal depictions of the physiological conceptualisation of the mind in Old English.

Lockett’s thesis is of course ultimately impossible to prove, but unlike previous treatments of the psychological lexis of Old English, she provides compelling evidence for interpreting it as literal rather than metaphorical. Firstly, she draws comparative evidence which shows that the literal interpretation of the images Old English uses to describe cognitive and emotional processes have analogues across the world’s languages, both in modern society, and in ancient languages (Lockett 2011: 150 ff.). Such comparative work establishes that a non-metaphorical interpretation of the Old English material is typologically permissible, and, Lockett would argue, preferable to a metaphorical interpretation, which she sees as a later part of a developmental chain (2011: 171 ff.).

Second, Lockett (2011: 228 ff.) shows that the doctrine of an incorporeal soul was only introduced into Anglo-Saxon England in the tenth century when it became theological orthodoxy. Before then, in the Latin tradition of Theodore and Hadrian, an embodied soul concept was not at odds with mainstream theology. Further to this, Lockett (2011: 374 ff.) argues that Ælfric’s explicit teaching against a corporeal soul is strong circumstantial evidence that this belief was common among the Anglo-Saxons before this point. Finally, Lockett applies Occam’s razor to the material. She argues that her embodied realism accounts for the phraseology of the mind in Old English in a much simpler way than the numerous cognitive metaphors assembled by others do.

Lockett’s work is in my opinion the most convincing treatment of Old English psychology to date. It has yet to receive sustained critical review, but the only critique so far published (Harbus 2012: 49-50) is unconvincing. Harbus argues that the Anglo-Saxons located the ‘mind’ in the head and brain, and therefore all references to the heart as the seat of the mind are necessarily metaphorical. Harbus bases this on McIllwain’s (2006) article

on cephalocentric traditions in Anglo-Saxon England. However, Lockett (2011: 440 ff.) has shown that these theories made no impact on the medical traditions of any known Old English or Anglo-Latin work.

4.1 The hydraulic model

Lockett argues that the phraseology of ‘mind’ in Old English reveals a highly organised conceptualisation of cognitive and emotional activity which she has labelled the ‘hydraulic model’. In this model, Lockett (2011: 62-63) argues that the *mōd* is thought of as being analogous with the heart and the fleshy organs of the chest. The heart and *mōd* are not exactly the same concept, but pragmatically synonymous, with the heart representing the innermost core of a person’s mind. Lockett argues that as the ‘mind’ is part of the body, thoughts and feelings were conceived of having physiological responses. In her model, the inner chest grows hot in response to strong feelings. Very strong feelings can cause these organs to seethe and boil, and in turn cause the body to swell. Further, this swelling can lead to the expulsion of hot tears and the words from the chest.

This basic system has various associated features. For example, the contraction of the mind is associated with mental cooling, and mental roominess is associated with wisdom (Lockett 2011: 68-74). She further argues that this motif is also seen in allegorical form in the poem *The Ruin* (2011: 66-67). Importantly, this model affects all the ‘mind’ terms used in poetry, which again adds evidence for the interpretation of a unitary mind concept in Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic, and it shows that it is not just *hyge* which swells up, as North (1991: 89) claims.

Lockett (2011: 110 ff.) argues that her hydraulic model is essentially the default assumption cultures make about the mind-body problem. She notes a wide range of cross-cultural parallels, which, with varying degrees of local variation, bear this out. However, while it seems likely that bodily sensations do shape the most theory-neutral cultural conceptualisations of the ‘unseen parts of the person’ (Gaby 2008), the hydraulic model is not the only option for understanding this area of experience. As has been shown above in Chapter 1, there are various ‘building blocks’ cultures can start with when conceiving of the ‘ethnopsychological constructs’. Some choose the abdomen, some the chest, some the head. And while swelling and hydraulic activity are very common, they are not the only possible option of conceptualising the mind’s relationship with the body.

Nonetheless, Lockett (2011: 135 ff.) has shown that the same hydraulic model can be identified in Old Saxon, which although slightly different, is in the essentials the same as in Old English. Unlike Old English, in Old Saxon the revelation of one's true thoughts and feelings are not seen to be inevitable and resisting their expulsion from the breast is seen as virtuous. Additionally, it is only negative mental states which cause this hydraulic activity and pain rather than heat is the primary cardiocentric manifestation of these feelings. Further, Lockett (2011: 141 ff.) has shown that a similar model exists in Old Irish, and on this basis it would seem that there is indeed a tradition of cardiocentric, 'hydraulic' conceptualisation of mental activity in North-West European medieval languages.

Lockett does not conduct a detailed study of the hydraulic model in Old Norse-Icelandic, but argues for its presence on the basis of the admittedly very hydraulic-looking episode in *Njáls saga*, where blood pours out of Þórhallr Ásgrímsson's ears, and the story of the comparison between Hjalli and Hogni's hearts in *Atlakviða* and *Völsunga saga*. Lockett (2011: 148) states that:

Old Norse can add little meaningful evidence to a body of data that already includes three literatures with which it shares significant cultural links: Old English, medieval Irish, and Old Saxon.

However, she also adds that:

The cardiocentric psychology of Old Norse narrative is, in fact, one of the most intriguing psychological idioms in all of medieval literature and is worthy of a much more detailed investigation (Lockett 2011: 148)

While I agree that the conceptualisation of the 'mind' and 'heart' in Old Norse-Icelandic is as interesting as Lockett claims, I am not convinced that the hydraulic model formed an important part of the psychological model of Old Norse-Icelandic. For one, Old Norse-Icelandic does not speak of the mind in hydraulic terms with anywhere near the frequency that Old English does. The episode in *Njáls saga* is notable for its absence elsewhere in the literature. Further, neither heat nor boiling feature in the phraseology of *hugr* in Old Norse-Icelandic, and although Old Norse-Icelandic clearly has a cardiocentric psychology, its relationship with *hugr* is not as clear as *mōd*'s relationship with the heart. Nonetheless, people do occasionally swell in anger in Old Norse-Icelandic, so it is not that there are no parallels between the two languages. However, as Lockett's hydraulic model is not the default setting for cultural conceptions of the 'mind', it cannot be assumed that Old Norse-Icelandic had a hydraulic psychology on the basis of its occurrence in Old

English, Old Saxon and Old Irish. Whether Old Norse-Icelandic had a hydraulic model will be the focus of Chapter 3, but for now we may conclude that *hugr* is the principal psychological term in Old Norse-Icelandic, and should be compared with *mōd*, not defined in terms of it.

4.2 The semantics of *mōd*

Before turning to the analysis *hugr* it is worthwhile reviewing what is known about *mōd*'s semantics, so that the two can be compared in similar terms. As mentioned above, *mōd* differs from 'mind' in a number of important ways. Whereas 'mind' is a primarily cognitive concept, considered separate from the body, *mōd* is responsible not only for thinking and knowing but for feeling as well. As such, it shares semantic components with both 'mind₁' and 'heart₂'. Furthermore, as Lockett has demonstrated, *mōd* was considered part of the body, which responded physically to emotional stimuli. However, although considered to be part of the body, there is evidence that *mōd* was thought to be able to travel outside the chest during times of reminiscence (Lockett 2011: 38). The vernacular tradition also presents *mōd* as having 'a mind of its own', often encouraging and exhorting the person to action. Finally, it is important to note that although often glossed by 'soul' or 'spirit', *mōd* plays no role in the afterlife. These features, or lack thereof, can be represented in NSM as follows:

mōd (someone's *mōd*)

- a. one part of this someone
- b. people cannot see this part
- c. it is part of this someone's body
- d. it is inside the upper [M] part of this someone's body
- e. the *heorte* [M] is part of this
- f. because someone has this part, this person can think about things
- g. because someone has this part, this someone can know things
- h. because someone has this part, when this someone thinks about something
this someone can feel many things
- i. sometimes, when this happens, this part becomes [M] hot
- j. because of this, this part becomes big
- k. because of this, after this, many things can happen to this person's body
- l. sometimes this someone can think about this part like this: "something inside
me is saying something to me"
- m. sometimes, when this someone thinks about something this part can be in
one place
- n. at the same time this person's body can be in a different place

This explication is not intended to cover the full semantic profile of *mōd*, or to be applicable to every context in which the word is found. However, it does represent what might be considered its ‘core’ features. Presenting it in this form allows its main semantic components to be compared with other ethnopsychological constructs, and shows how much is lost in translation when glossing it as ‘mind’ or ‘soul’. Importantly, it also provides us with a means of comparing the *mōd* and *hugr*, without having to rely on culture-bound English concepts.

Chapter 3: Vernacular Psychology in Old Norse-Icelandic

1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the physical status of *hugr* and its relationship to the body. The first part considers the proposal that in the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition, the ‘mind’/‘soul’ was conceived of as breath. This theory is principally based on the puzzling reference in *Skáldskaparmál* that *hugr* can be referred to as *vindr tröllkvinna* ‘wind of the troll-women’ (Faulkes 1998: 108), which has influenced the interpretation of various other medieval and post-medieval references to the ‘mind’ and ‘soul’ in (Old) Icelandic and other Scandinavian languages. This association of the mind with breath has become entangled with other features of the Old Norse-Icelandic model of the person, alluded to in the previous section, such as the native concept of *fylgja* and the Christian concept of the soul. This has led to two scholarly traditions arising from the synthesis of this material. One conceives of *hugr* as a spiritual entity which can be inhaled and exhaled and is able to leave the body and interact with other people (for example, Heide 2006a,b,c). The second also conceives of *hugr* leaving the body, but in physical form (for example Raudvere 1996, 2002). In both cases, the evidence relies heavily on post-medieval sources and comparative material from other Northern European and Arctic cultures, particularly the shamanistic practices of the Sámi. However, although there appears to be a genuine Old Norse-Icelandic tradition that part of the person was able to act independently of the body, there is far less evidence to suggest that it did so either as breath, as physical form, or even that *hugr* itself was involved in the process.

The attention given to the mind being able to leave the body, either as a breathy substance or in physical form, has largely ignored *hugr*’s physical relationship with the body. However, there is far more contemporary evidence placing *hugr* in the chest and associating it with the heart than there is for it being conceived as *vindr tröllkvinna*. In light of Lockett’s (2011) work on Old English *mōd* and its relationship with the heart, the second part of this section considers the relationship between *hugr*, *hjarta* and *brjóst*. Like *hugr* and the wind of troll-women, the Old Norse-Icelandic heart is primarily interpreted in terms of its most unusual representations in the literature, such as Sigurðr eating Fáfnir’s heart or the examination of Högni and Hjalli’s hearts in *Atlakviða*. However, in spite of these memorable incidents, the heart plays a marginal role in the emotional and cognitive

life of Old Norse-Icelandic speaking peoples, and its relationship to *hugr* is far less clear than is *mōd*'s connection to *heorte*.

2 Breath, wind, and troll-women

Throughout Old Norse-Icelandic literature there are references and allusions to part of the person acting independently of the body. These vary in both in type and clarity. It is doubtful whether the various sources can be considered to represent a unified Old Norse-Icelandic tradition or even if they should be attributed to medieval Scandinavia, rather than post-medieval traditions. In terms of type, there are references to the person travelling in various different animal forms while the body lies as if it were dead or asleep, an ability attributed to Óðinn in *Ynglinga saga* Ch. 7. Apparently connected to this tradition is the scene in *Hrólfs saga kraka* Ch. 33 where Bǫðvarr lies asleep during the battle with Hjǫrvarðr, while a great bear, assumed to be Bǫðvarr, overwhelms his enemies. These episodes are of a relatively late date, and *Hrólfs saga kraka* only survives in early modern sources which makes it a particularly unreliable witness to medieval traditions.⁵⁴

Nonetheless, there are similar episodes scattered throughout saga literature where animals are assumed to embody some part of a person. On some occasions, as in *Kórmaks saga* Ch. 17-18, it appears that the person is present in the animal while their body rests elsewhere. In other cases, it is not clear if the person's body has changed fully into animal form, as in Ch. 61-62 of *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*.⁵⁵

Although these examples, and various others, do not form a coherent group, they have been grouped together as indicative of a belief in a 'wandering soul' in Old Norse-Icelandic culture. Specifically, they are seen as evidence that the part of the person which leaves the body is *hugr*, variously referred to as 'mind', 'soul' or 'spirit' in the literature. In spite of this, there are very few instances in Old Norse-Icelandic sources which imply that the *hugr* did in fact leave the body as a 'wandering soul'. In the absence of firm evidence, much has been made of Óðinn's raven Huginn, which we are told in *Grímnismál* 20 that he sends flying across the world each day, and Þjálfi's race with Hugi, a personification of 'thought' in *Gylfaginning* (Faulkes 2005: 40).

⁵⁴ *Hrólfs saga* is a medieval work at heart. Nonetheless, this episode is not recorded in other medieval analogues of the tale.

⁵⁵ These incidents are discussed in greater detail below, in §3.

Although these episodes have been used to argue for a ‘pagan’ belief in mind-travel, particularly by those wishing to argue for a non-Christian tradition of mind-travel in the Old English poems *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*,⁵⁶ they are far from conclusive proof that *hugr* was thought to be able to leave the body in Old Norse-Icelandic. For example, after Þjálfi’s race with Hugi, Þórr wrestles with Elli, an embodiment of the concept of old age. Þjálfi’s race with Hugi serves to demonstrate, within a mythological framework, the speed of thought in the same way that Elli represents the effects that time and age exert on people. There is nothing in the *Gylfaginning* tale to suggest that he represents the disembodied nature of *hugr* as a psychological concept.

The significance of Óðinn’s ravens is less clear than the personification of ‘thought’ in *Gylfaginning*. It is only in *Grímnismál* that they are portrayed flying out across the world; elsewhere, they are used as kennings for ravens in ‘beasts of battle’ scenes (see Simek 1993: s.v. *Huginn*, *Muninn*). Although attempts have been made to distil some psychological significance from the names of these ravens, there is no consensus on what they might represent. It is worth noting, as mentioned above, that in *Ynglinga saga* Óðinn himself takes on animal form; there is no mention of him sending forth his ravens as mind emissaries. It is also telling that no one, as far as I am aware, argues for a disembodied ‘memory’ concept on the evidence of Óðinn’s less frequently mentioned raven *Muninn*. As it stands, Óðinn appears to have been associated with ravens for a long time before they were named *Huginn* and *Muninn* (Jesch 2002: 252); and although these names are suggestive, we have to concede that we do not know why they were so called, or how this relates to the cultural psychology of the ninth and tenth centuries when they appear to have been named (Simek 1993: s.v. *Huginn*).

However, the conception that in Old Norse-Icelandic *hugr* functioned as a wandering soul is based on a far more opaque reference than the examples given above. In the *heiti* section of *Skáldskaparmál*, Snorri provides a sweeping list of synonyms, kennings and expressions which can be used to refer to *hugr*. Among these Snorri includes the kenning *vindr tröllkvinna* ‘wind of troll-women’:

Hugr heitir sefi ok sjafni, ást, elskugi, vili, munr. Huginn skal svá kenna at kalla vind tröllkvinna ok rétt at nefna til hverja er vill ok svá at nefna jötnana eða kenna þá til konu eða móður eða dóttur þess. Þessi nöfn eru sér. Hugr heitir ok geð, þokki, eljun, þrekr, nenning, minni, vit, skap, lund, trygð. Heitir ok hugr, re<i>ði, fjándskapr, fár, grimð, bōð, harmr, tregi, óskap, grellskap,

⁵⁶ See for example Salmon (1960) and Diekstra (1971).

lausing, ótrygð, geðleysi, þunngæði, gessni, hraðgeði, óþveri. (Faulkes 1998: 108)

[*Hugr*] is called mind and tenderness, love, affection, desire, pleasure. [*Hugr*] shall be referred to by calling it wind of troll-wives and it is normal for this purpose to use the name of whichever one you like, and also to use the names of giants, and then refer to it in terms of wife or mother or daughter. These names form a special group. [*Hugr*] is also called disposition, attitude, energy, fortitude, liking, memory, wit, temper, character, troth. [*Hugr*] can also be called anger, enmity, hostility, ferocity, evil, grief, sorrow, bad temper, wrath, duplicity, insincerity, inconstancy, frivolity, brashness, impulsiveness, impetuosity. (adapted from Faulkes 1987b: 154)

This kenning has exerted influence over the understanding of *hugr* and the nature of Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology. More than any other reference to *hugr* in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, it has been used to argue for the concept of a ‘wandering soul’ and in the process has accumulated a host of ancillary features, very few of which have any basis in the textual culture of medieval Scandinavia. Despite the importance this kenning has had on shaping ideas about the nature of the mind and soul in Old Norse-Icelandic culture, until recently no one has been able to offer a satisfactory explanation for it. In 1933, Sigurður Nordal referred to it as a puzzle no one has been clever enough to interpret⁵⁷ and Whaley (1982), and others, have assumed it must refer to a myth now lost, in much the same way that the rationale for the names of Óðinn’s ravens are now lost. This gap in our knowledge has been filled by numerous attempts to rationalise the relationship between *hugr* and *vindr* (whether of troll-women or not) and has attracted a wide range of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparisons. However, eighty years after Sigurður Nordal’s remark on the kenning, Judy Quinn (2012) has convincingly demonstrated that *vindr tröllkvinna* has nothing to do with *hugr* as an ethnopsychological construct, and that Snorri and all those following his entry in *Skáldskaparmál* have misinterpreted those skaldic poems which make use of the kenning. Because Quinn’s work has yet to be integrated into discussions of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology, I will first review some of those studies which have assumed a connection between *vindr tröllkvinna* and *hugr* as an ethnopsychology construct.

The most detailed and sustained work on the ‘breathy’ nature of Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology has been by Eldar Heide (2006a, b, c; 2007). Heide’s work combines and extends two of the early approaches to the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning, those

⁵⁷ “enginn er svo fróður, að kunni að skýra hana” (Sigurður Nordal 1933: 251, cited in Quinn 2012: 211).

by Strömbäck (1935) and Weiser-Aal (1936).⁵⁸ Strömbäck's work was significant in formalising the concept of a separable 'soul' in Old Norse-Icelandic culture, and for integrating Scandinavian folklore with the shamanism of Sámi culture. A large part of Strömbäck's work is based on the folklore of early modern Swedish and Norwegian, which feature numerous references to *hug*, and other 'mind' concepts, physically affecting other people.⁵⁹ For example, when someone chokes on their food, it is customary to attribute this to someone else's negative thoughts. On the basis of this, Strömbäck (1935, 1975) suggests that in Old Norse-Icelandic the *hugr* could not only leave the body but could attack or otherwise negatively affect other people. Weiser-Aal (1936) also appealed to later folklore traditions and argued that the kenning referred to sickness which could be passed onto others by means of breath, referring to the Norwegian words *trollgust* and *alvgust* as names for disease. Like Strömbäck she associates the kenning with illness, but does not assume that this is necessarily a person's mind sent forth to attack another person; instead, illness is conceived of as a witch's breath sent forth to harm others.

As Motz (1988) and Frank (1997) have pointed out, part of the problem with these analyses is that neither *hugr* nor the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning ever refers to illness or physical attacks manifesting in choking or nausea in Old Norse-Icelandic sources. Because there are no clear parallels between wind or breath in later Scandinavian folklore and the medieval material, attempts have been made to explain the kenning with references to traditions outside the Scandinavian language area. The most extreme example of this is Lotte Motz's (1988) paper which links the kenning to Eskimo religion and folklore.

In Eskimo religion the principal god Sila (also known as Hila or Tila) is associated with the weather, and in particular, storms. In addition to this, in Greenlandic, Sila is used in constructions referring to thought, intelligence and the 'mind' (Motz 1988: 32). For example, the phrase 'someone has Sila' is used to designate intelligence, and in Alaska where *Sla* means 'weather' the verb for 'I am thinking' is *slaugohatoa*. Motz attributes these lexical parallels between the mind and weather to the shamanic practices of achieving supernatural wisdom and inspiration by communing with nature. She draws on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources which report that in order to an *angakoq* 'shaman' an initiate must take himself into the wilderness away from other people and call upon the helping spirit Tonrngarusk (Motz 1988: 32-33). Motz (1988: 33) considers this to

⁵⁸ A similar argument was also advanced by Liestøl (1937).

⁵⁹ These arguments are laid out in Strömbäck (1975). Fuller treatments of early modern Scandinavian folklore concerning the mind/soul can be found in Alver (1989 and 1971).

be indicative of a belief that in order to acquire wisdom one must interact with the forces of nature, and in particular storms and winds.

Despite the tenuous relationship between the components of Motz's argument, she argues that the traditions recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth century reflect cultural traditions which were once widespread across the arctic regions. On this basis she proposes a paradigm in which the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning might be understood as referring to wisdom being gained through communion with nature. She argues that trolls and giants represent the forces of nature, that these beings are capable of imparting wisdom and knowledge, and that humans gain wisdom for these being in remote areas. But while it is true that trolls and giants are often associated with arctic weather conditions, there is no evidence to suggest that they are representative of an assumed (Greenlandic) shamanic practice where inspiration is gained through commune with storms. In fact, like most other studies, Motz (1988: 35, 40 n. 8) relies on later folk-traditions to make her point, noting for example, that in German folklore *Windsbraut* 'whirlwind' is associated with witches, and that this somehow relates to trolls and giants being representatives of natural powers in Old Norse-Icelandic.

Motz's paper has been justly criticised by Tolley (2009: 189) and others for the imprecise and coincidental nature of the parallels she draws between Old Norse-Icelandic and Eskimo traditions. However, Motz's work is instructive in that it shows how easy it is to find parallels in folk traditions which cannot have had any direct, or 'genetic', influence with one another. Motz (1988: 38) is clear that the links between Eskimo and Scandinavian traditions are not reflexes of the same proto-form, but rather expressions of similar 'thought patterns' and 'linguistic dynamics' of a shared arctic environment. While the apparent similarity between the 'thought patterns' of living in an arctic environment are suspect, there are nonetheless typological patterns which associate concepts like 'mind' and 'temper' with weather phenomena (on this, see Low 2005) and within Europe there are a wide range of folk-beliefs linking whirlwinds with supernatural activity (Giraudon 2007). These range from Irish Celtic folklore which associates gusts and whirlwinds with fairies, twentieth-century Breton traditions that the clergy could travel in whirlwinds, Basque beliefs that whirlwinds could impregnate young women, and the German association between witches and whirlwinds mentioned above.

The widespread distribution of such motifs and their various cultural elaborations should serve as a warning for those wishing to invoke cross-cultural explanations for any

Old Norse-Icelandic feature. Without being able to show direct connections between two traditions, drawing such parallels is as dangerous as proposing etymological connections between words based on surface similarity rather than systematic correspondence (on this, see Ringe 1999). For example, although Tolley (2009) employs a much more thorough and cautious approach to the connections between Old Norse-Icelandic culture and European shamanism than Motz does with North American shamanism, he occasionally relies on unsubstantiated cultural parallels. For example, in interpreting the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning Tolley draws upon the Norwegian folk beliefs discussed by Weiser-Aal (1936) that disease can be transmitted on a witch's breath, and the widespread association between whirlwinds and witches. He compares the following lines from the seventeenth-century English play *The Witch of Edmonton* (1623) to the Sámi belief that a shaman could travel in a whirlwind:

She on whose tongue a whirlwind sits to blow
A Man out of himself, from his soft pillow
To lean his head on rocks and fighting waves,
Is not that scold a witch?

On the basis of these correspondences Tolley (2009: 189) states that:

It seems clear that behind the kenning is the belief that a witch could send out her *hugr* in a controlled manner to achieve missions at a distance; it therefore functioned as a free soul, and its manipulation here is parallel to that orchestrated by a shaman

However, the very fact that material from early seventeenth-century English literature, early modern Norwegian folklore and twentieth-century descriptions of European shamanism have to be marshalled to support this interpretation only serves to demonstrate how little evidence there is from medieval sources. Nonetheless, in concluding his study of *hugr* Tolley (2009: 193) is more circumspect, noting that while there are pre-Christian parallels in neighbouring Eurasian cultures for a 'wandering soul', much of the evidence relies on later folk traditions and that in medieval sources *hugr* is not mentioned in any of the most explicit examples of the 'wandering soul' motif. Despite drawing on a wide range of cross-cultural parallels linking the wandering soul to breath, Tolley does not fully commit to a systematic link between 'breath' and *hugr* in Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology. This stands in stark contrast to Heide (2006a, b, c; 2007) who has proposed an elaborate description of how the 'mind' operated as 'magic wind' in Old Norse-Icelandic culture. Unlike previous work, Heide sets out concrete proposals for

how the mind was conceptualised, rather than relying on less specific concepts such as ‘wandering soul’.

2.1 Spinning psychological yarns

Heide’s work on *hugr* is based on his 2006a doctoral thesis on *gandr* and its cognates in later Scandinavian languages (including Shetlandic Norn). *Gandr* is a word of uncertain etymology, which as a simplex appears to refer to land-spirits, and as a compound has a wide range of denotations including references to the wind, to magic staffs, witch-ridings, and in Norn at least, to sickness and ill-health. Heide’s treatment of *gandr* has been thoroughly reviewed by Clive Tolley (2009: 246-69) so will not be repeated here. However, unlike Tolley (2009: 246) who treats the psychological vocabulary of Old Norse-Icelandic as elaborating on various and distinct aspects of “subjective metaphysical experiences”, Heide conflates what Tolley considers to be distinct entities. Consequently, Heide extends his work on *gandr* to previous work on *hugr* as ‘wandering soul’.

Heide’s work on *hugr* makes two proposals: 1. Magic wind could be conceived as a sorcerer’s mind sent forth; 2. This magic wind was conceived of as a spun thread. Whereas previous theories have not made explicit claims about how the wandering soul operated, Heide (2006b: 164) argues that the mind as breath was spun during the practice of *seiðr* and was drawn through respiratory passages. This spun thread could be used to physically retrieve items and, by entering into other people, harm them.

Heide’s first claim, that the mind was conceived as a wind or breath, is based on the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning and lexical evidence in Old Norse-Icelandic (and typological parallels from other languages) which associates the mind/soul with breath, such as the noun *andi/önd* ‘soul’ and *andast* ‘breathe one’s last, die’, which are etymologically related to breath and wind (2006b: 165). Neither of these provides secure evidence for linking *hugr* with breath, but for now will be taken for granted while his additional evidence is assessed. The second claim, that the mind could be spun like a thread, relies on Heide’s etymological reading of *seiðr* as well as a range of cross-cultural parallels. In terms of lexical evidence, this is more secure than the association of *hugr* with breath, but as Heide (2006c: 358) himself concedes, there is very little contemporary evidence for what he proposes. However, he argues that despite being “in principle highly problematic”, his methods of mixing young and old sources from a variety of different cultures is justified

because so many otherwise inexplicable pieces of evidence cohere within his model (2006c: 358).

Heide (2006b: 164) associates the practice of *seiðr* with the mind, a notion supported in Old Norse-Icelandic sources. In *Völuspá* 22 Hieðr (Freyja) is said to use *seiðr* to ‘play with minds’:

seið hon, hvars hon kunni, seið hon hug leikinn,
æ var hon angan illrar brúðar. (Neckel 1962: 6)

she made magic wherever she could, with magic she played with minds,
she was always the favourite of wicked women. (Larrington 1996: 7)

However, Heide not only sees *seiðr* influencing other minds, but shaping and sending forth a person’s mind so it could physically interact with other people’s *hugr*. This interpretation of *seiðr* is based on his interpretation of the etymology of the word. *Seiðr* appears to have developed from an Indo-European root meaning ‘to bind’. Germanic cognates included Old English *sāda* ‘cord, halter, snare’ and Old High German *seid* ‘band, string’ and similar meanings are found throughout Indo-European languages (see Orel 2003: s.v. **saidaz~*saiḡaz*). It has also been argued by Flint (1991: 226-131) that Germanic magic was concerned with binding. However, despite these cognates, there is no particularly clear case for binding, supernatural or not, being part of the process of *seiðr* as represented in Old Norse-Icelandic sources.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, on the basis of later Scandinavian usage, Heide (2006b: 164) argues that *seiðr* was a process in which a magic cord which ‘lassoed’ people and objects was sent forth, and which could then be drawn back towards the sorcerer or magician. Principally, this is based on later meanings of the reflexes of Old Norse-Icelandic *gandr*, which Heide (2006a, 2006c: 350) interprets as the mind sent forth in the form of a cord. These include modern Norwegian *gand* ‘spinning top propelled by string’ and modern Icelandic *göndull* ‘coarse yarn’. In support of this thesis he draws on a Sámi legend from northern Norway

⁶⁰ Heide (2006a: 260) argues that in *Ragnarsdrápa* 15 where Jormungandr is referred to as *allra langa endiseiðr*, *-seiðr* means cord rather than the fish saithe, as it is usually interpreted. This is certainly a plausible reading, and as Tolley (2009: 251) has argued, does make better sense of *endi-* within the compound. However, even if *seiðr* does mean ‘cord’ here, it still does little to inform us about the contemporary understanding of *seiðr* as magic.

where a woman, using her yarn-spinning distaff, apparently spins the wind to direct her husband's ship back to shore.⁶¹

Despite these examples not being particularly persuasive, Heide attempts to link them to the practice of *seiðr* in Old Norse-Icelandic. He notes for example, that this interpretation of *seiðr* fits with the emasculating connotations of the practice of magic, as spinning was women's work (Heide 2006b: 167). Likewise, he points to the traditional representation of the *nornir* as spinning men's fates. However, the relevance of this parallel is not particularly strong. Heide notes that one semantic component of *norn* is witch, but there is nothing to suggest that the *nornir* practised *seiðr*. It is also worth noting that Bek-Pedersen (2007, 2009, 2011) has recently called into question the notion that the *nornir* actually are involved in spinning fate.

There is nothing inherently problematic about associating *seiðr* with spinning on an etymological level. However, it is seriously hindered by there being no contemporary references to spinning forming part of *seiðr* rituals in Old Norse-Icelandic sources.⁶² Heide circumvents this problem by claiming that the entity spun was in fact the sorcerer's *hugr*, in the form of breath or air. However, the evidence for associating *hugr* with a spun thread is much poorer. Heide (2006b: 165-166) starts from a position of linking wind to spun thread or rope, and then working from this position to connecting *hugr*, which he associates with the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning, to a thread. The main evidence for this association comes from the tradition of wind-knots, which are found across the North Atlantic regions.⁶³ Wind knots are a means of magically controlling the weather, and were apparently bought from Lapps in Scandinavia up until the early modern period. Typically, three knots are tied in a cloth or rope and by some magic process these are instilled with the power to unleash particular weather conditions. Untying one knot will unleash a light

⁶¹ The tale is found in Qvigstad (1929: 520-521), with an English translation in Heide (2006b: 165). The reading of the passage as representing spinning as an attractive, 'lassoing' force is not necessarily the only, or most satisfying, interpretation. I quote Heide's translation: "Then she goes with her distaff to the top of the Kjøpsvikfjellet mountain to look for the ship. Then she sees that his ship is already leaving Bergen, and she *yoiks* [sings in the Saami way] on the mountain; she has her distaff on the mountain. She sits *yoiking*, and [...] [her husband] lets the ship sail so that the sea sprays to the sides in front of it [...], and she shouts to him to come on and not be afraid, and the ship should be at home within three days and nights."

⁶² However, a case has been made on archaeological grounds. Neil Price (2002: 175-204) has interpreted the many iron staffs which have been found in Scandinavian Viking Age women's graves as having a ceremonial function. Heide (2006b), followed by Gardela (2008), has interpreted these as distaffs and associated them with *seiðr*. However, this interpretation has to follow from spinning forming part of *seiðr* rituals in documentary sources. Without this information, it is difficult to make any informed link between these apparent distaffs and their supposed magical function.

⁶³ On wind-knots in general see Day (1950). For their role in Scandinavian maritime culture from the early modern period on see Hagen (2002) and more generally Foran (1995). Wind-knots in Scottish Gaelic culture are briefly discussed by Fomin (2011).

breeze, untying two a strong wind, and untying all three (though its purpose is unclear) would summon a hurricane (Day 1950: 233).

Although the tradition of wind-knots controlling the weather is found across Northern Europe, all with essentially the same function, there is very little to suggest there was any connection between them and psychological concepts. However, Heide (2006a, b; 2007) draws upon Sámi legends, such as “the Son of the Sun” (*Biejjiēn baernie*) where the untying of wind-knots is somehow connected to fertility and the conception of children, as a means of connecting *hugr* to wind-knots, and therefore spun cord. However, even if the link between Sámi wind-knot fertility beliefs and Old Norse-Icelandic tradition could be established, it is not at all clear how this can be presented as evidence that the mind could be conceptualised as a spun thread. It is also worth mentioning that although wind-knots have been traced back to as early as the thirteenth century in English texts (see Nansen 1911: 88-91) there is no evidence for the tradition in Old Norse-Icelandic sources. Both Óðinn (*Ynglinga saga* Ch. 7) and Þórr (see Perkins 2001) are said to have been able to control the weather, but wind-knots are never associated with this practice. In fact, the closest we get to an image of the wind-knot motif in Old Norse-Icelandic is in *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds* Ch. 5 where jarl Eiríkr has a towel knotted three times and rubbed between his thighs to scratch an itch. As the wind-knot motif is the only material Heide offers for the mind being thought of as a spun entity, we have to conclude that there is no evidence for this conception of the mind in Old Norse-Icelandic sources. However, although Heide’s main contribution to the study of *hugr* is its supposed connection to spun *seiðr*, he also has compiled a range of evidence for *hugr* being conceived of as breath, which can be evaluated independently of the notion that this breath operates as a magically spun cord.

2.2 *Hugr* and breath

As we have seen above, the theory that *hugr* was conceived of as a person’s breath has been important in the interpretations of the concept put forward by Strömbäck (1935, 1975), Weiser-Aal (1936) and Tolley (2009). Heide (2006a, b, c) has synthesised the proposals put forward by Strömbäck (1935, 1975), that *hugr* left the body and could attack other people, and Weiser-Aal (1936), who considered that witches sent out illness on their breath. This is based on his interpretation of *gandr*, whose reflex in Shetlandic Norn means both ‘a strong gust of wind’ and ‘a sudden feeling of powerlessness, nausea, sickness at

heart' (Jakobsen 1928: 210, cited in Heide 2006c: 350). Heide proposes that when a sorcerer sends forth her *hugr*, it enters another person through his or her respiratory passages, and in so doing expels their own *hugr* leaving them feeling either enervated or nauseated.

Although the assumption that *hugr* is breath is based primarily on the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning, both Heide and Strömbäck (1935, 1975) use later Scandinavian folklore to elaborate on features of Old Norse-Icelandic behaviour which apparently point to *hugr* being conceptualised as breath. The first of these is yawning, which occurs frequently in descriptions of *seiðr* performances in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. Heide (2006c: 354) in particular classes yawning as indicative of breathing in spirits, and refers specifically to the ability of the *seiðkona* in *Hrólfs saga kraka* who is able to gain information each time she yawns. This is seen to be an example of the *sagnarandi* 'telling spirit' motif of later Icelandic folk-lore. However, there are a number of issues with this interpretation. First, as mentioned above, *Hrólfs saga kraka* is a problematic source for medieval beliefs as it is preserved exclusively in post-medieval manuscripts. Secondly, yawning does not necessarily have to be conceptually associated with inhaling. In numerous scenes of witchcraft and sorcery, both the practitioner and object of *seiðr* are portrayed as sleepy or enervated. It is possible that the salient feature of the *seiðkona* yawning in *Hrólfs saga kraka* is not her inhalation of spirits, but her exhaustion from practising *seiðr*. Thirdly, and most importantly, if the *seiðkona* is inhaling spirits, there is no indication that these are related in any way to the concept of *hugr*.

As further evidence that *hugr* was conceived as breath and passed through respiratory passages, both Strömbäck (1975) and Heide (2006c) cite the evidence of premonitions in Old Norse-Icelandic. In later Scandinavian folklore, premonitions (Norwegian *hugbod*, cf. ON *hugboð*) are thought of as someone else's *hug* forewarning the person about something, and their physical responses have been systematised in a number of different ways. For example, if one's left ear itches it forebodes something different than if one's right ear itches (see Alver 1989). Strömbäck (1975), for instance, draws attention to the scene in *Orkneyinga saga* where Sveinn Asleifarson's nose itches as a foreboding of Earl Haraldr's approach. Heide (2006c: 355) interprets this scene as evidence that *hugr* passes in through the nose and other respiratory passages. The same claim is made about Sæmundr Ormsson Svinfellingr in *Sturlunga saga*, whose neck itches so badly that he gets a maidservant to rub his neck with a towel (Gudbrand Vigfusson 1878: 94); the following day, he is killed. However, although such premonitions do occasionally affect 'respiratory

passages', as often as not they affect other parts of the body. For example, as mentioned above, in *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds Eiríkr's* backside begins to itch when subjected to a recitation of offensive poetry. Here Heide (2006b: 168) argues that although the earl is not affected in a respiratory passage, what we are witnessing is a scene of phallic aggression in the form of someone's spun *hugr*, where the mind of the poet is acting as what he calls an *åndpenis* 'spirit penis' (2006a: 268-82). However, there is next to no justification for such a reading. As it happens, itching is in fact a comparatively rare physical manifestation of premonitions. Almqvist (1974-1976) has gathered together a corpus of examples of such *hugboð*, very few of which can be attributed to the actions of someone else's *hugr* entering into respiratory passages. As such, there is little persuasive contemporary evidence that *hugr* manifested itself as wind or breath, whether spun as a cord or not.

In light of this, it is worth returning to the two sources of evidence that Heide and others have based their interpretations of *hugr* as wind upon. As mentioned above, Heide's theory rests on the lexical association between the mind/soul and breath, and the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning. Heide's first piece of evidence that the mind/soul was conceived of as the breath is that the word for 'soul' in Old Norse-Icelandic is *andi/qnd*, which is etymologically related to the Indo-European root for 'to breathe', and that as seen in the verb *andast*, dying is presented as 'breathing one's last'. He writes "The reason why the idea of soul or spirit is derived from breath is of course that we breathe as long as we live and stop when we die" (2006b: 350). First, and most important, this analysis does not make the distinction between 'soul' and 'mind'. In the cases of the cross-cultural examples, we are not in fact comparing like with like. It is important to note that there is no cross-over between *hugr* and *andi/qnd* in Old Norse-Icelandic. A parallel can be drawn from Old English. Ælfric's *Homily on the Nativity* has been used in numerous studies to associate the mind/soul with breath:

Nis seo orþung þe we ut blawap . and in ateoð oþpe ure sawul ac is seo lyft þe ealle lichamlice þing on lybbað . butan fixum anum þe on flodum lybbað (ed. Skeat 1881-1900: 1.22)

Nor is our breath, which we blow out and draw in, our soul; but [our breath] is the air in which all bodily things live, except only the fish who live in water. (trans. Lockett 2011: 413)

However, it is important to note that when Ælfric informs his audience that the soul is not breath, he is addressing an audience which does not associate the soul with the mind (*mōd*). He is arguing against corporeality in his sermon, but this does not mean he or his

audience assumed the mind to be associated with breath (Lockett 2011: 413); this distinction holds in Old Norse-Icelandic as well. Whether or not the *hugr* can leave the body (as will be discussed below in §3), it is nowhere associated with *andi* or *qnd*.

In fact, both *andi* and *qnd* are almost exclusively restricted to Christian registers. The significance of these concepts and their pre-Christian referents are hard to establish. Certainly by the time of our written texts, they do not feature in the native psychological model of the person in a cognitive or emotional role. Flowers (1983: 134) has noted in his cross-Germanic study of ethnopsychological vocabulary that it appears that a ‘breath concept’ is poorly represented amongst the medieval Germanic languages and thus difficult to reconstruct for Proto-Germanic.

One of the rare occasions we do see *qnd* used in an apparently ‘pagan’ context is in verses 17 and 18 of *Völuspá* and Snorri’s retelling of it in his *Edda*:

Unz þrír qvómo qflgir oc ástgir, fundo á landi, Asc oc Emblo,	ór því liði, æsir, at húsi; litt megandi, ørloglausa.
Qnd þau né áttó, lá né læti qnd gaf Óðinn, lá gaf Lóðurr	óð þau né hofðo, né lito góða; óð gaf Hænir, oc lito góða. (Neckel 1962: 4-5)

Until three gods, strong and loving,
came from that company to the world;
they found on land Ash and Embla,
capable of little, lacking in fate.

Breath they had not, spirit they had not,
character nor vital spark nor fresh complexions;
breath gave Odin, spirit gave Hænir,
vital spark gave Lodur, and fresh complexions. (Larrington 1996: 6)

Þá svarar Hár: ‘Þá er þeir Bors synir gengu með sævar ströndu, fundu þeir tré tvau, ok tóku upp tréin ok sköpuðu af men. Gaf hinn fyrst qnd ok líf, annarr vit ok hræring, þriði ásjónu, málit ok heyrn ok sjón; gáfu þeim klæði ok nofn. Hét karlmaðrinn Ask, en konan Embla, ok þaðan af mannkindin þeim er bygðin var gefin undir Miðgarði. (Faulkes 2005: 13)

Then High replied: ‘As Bor’s sons walked along the sea shore, they came across two logs and created people out of them. The first gave breath and life, the second consciousness and movement, the third a face, speech and hearing and sight; they gave them clothes and names. The man was called Ask, the

woman Embla, and from them were produced the mankind to whom the dwelling-place under Midgard was given. (Faulkes 1987b: 13)

However, the significance of *qnd* and *óðr* here is difficult to reconstruct considering how rarely these terms feature in our surviving texts. Certainly, they do not appear to serve as prototypical parts of the person either in terms of a vivifying function or in a form of cognitive or emotional role. When a piece of driftwood is animated in *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds* Ch. 7, it is done so by giving it a man's heart and performing sorcery rather than breathing into him.⁶⁴

Further to this, there is no evidence that *anda* 'to breathe' and *andast* 'to breathe one's last, die' have any psychological or spiritual component in Old Norse-Icelandic culture. Even within Christian contexts, the soul does not have a life-giving function, and in non-Christian contexts one dies not when the spirit leaves the body, but when *ffqr* 'life-force' does. As such, it is not at all as obvious as Heide implies that these concepts are connected to the soul, and even if they were, this is an entirely different matter from being related to the 'mind'.

Having ruled out the connection between *hugr* and *andi/qnd* and breath concepts, the only remaining medieval 'evidence' for associating the mind with wind is the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning. However, this has recently been deconstructed by Judy Quinn (2012) who has shown that rather than referring to *hugr* as a psychological concept, the kenning is used to refer to what are better considered moods or attitudes. Quinn has shown that the link between the *tröllkvinna* kenning and *hugr* has not been lost, but never really existed in the first place. The association is the product of Snorri's own making, created by his categorisation of *heiti* and kennings, and repeated by Meissner (1921) in his own catalogue of kennings.

Without recourse to the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning, those studies which have proposed that *hugr* was manifested as a person's breath rely otherwise only on post-medieval evidence and cross-cultural comparisons. As we have seen above, these are not persuasive enough to support such an interpretation of *hugr*. This does not have to mean *hugr* was unable to travel independently of the person. Despite *mōd* being a fully embodied part of the person, it is still possible that speakers of Old English envisaged the possibility of mind-travel (Lockett 2011: 34-35). This apparent ability of the *hugr* to travel outside the body has led to another scholarly tradition arising, which in contrast to seeing *hugr* as a

⁶⁴ This incident is discussed further below, in Chapter 3 §4.2.

person's breath conceives of it as a psychological concept which takes on physical form outside the body.

3 Shape-shifting and out-of-body experiences: *hugr*, *hamr*, and *fylgja*

In addition to, and sometimes integrated with, the belief that the mind/soul was 'breath', there is a tradition that *hugr* could leave the body by taking on a physical form. As with the set of assumptions built around the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning, this tradition owes much more to later Scandinavian folklore than it does to evidence from the medieval period.⁶⁵ Although there are contemporary references to parts of the person acting independently of the body, and of people adopting animal forms, these belong to a variety of separate phenomena which are routinely grouped together and pressed into a conceptual system not evidenced in Old Norse-Icelandic sources. These include the different type of *fylgja*-motifs identified by Else Mundal (1974), where part of the person is represented in animal form; references to a person acting in physical form outside their body; shape-shifting and those people described as *hamrammr* or *hamhleypa*; and contemporary reports of Sámi spirit travel. These are routinely systematised in the following manner: a person's *hugr* is said to be able to take on a physical form (*hamr*) and travel away from the body (e.g. Raudvere 1996, 2002, 2008). This *hugr/hamr* relationship is often interpreted in terms of a person's *fylgja* 'animal fetch' (Hedeager 2005: 513-14, 2008: 13), which is itself bundled together (on etymological grounds) with *hamingja*, a person's luck (Raudvere 2002: 98; Sommer 2007: 218). Despite there being no direct medieval evidence for this formulation, it seems to have attained the status of orthodoxy.⁶⁶

For example, Raudvere (2008: 241) claims that *hugr* and *hamr* were Old Norse-Icelandic's "two fundamental terms for the human soul", and that shape shifters were able to "propel their *hugr* into a temporary body or guise, *hamr*". However, as this system is not

⁶⁵ Tolley (2009: 187) for example, begins his study of *hugr* and *hamr* with the reflexes of the words in early modern Scandinavian folklore.

⁶⁶ This formulation is particularly manifest in archaeological studies, where it is used to interpret (pre-) Viking Age iconography. For example Hedeager (2008, 2010, 2011) has applied these concepts to the interpretation of Iron Age and Migration Age Scandinavian culture, and Glosecki (2000: 13-14) has applied the concept of *fylgja* and shape-shifting to the Torslunda Die (for a critical review of such interpretations see Tolley 2009: 568-569). A rare exception to this pattern is Carrie Roy (2009: 179), who chooses not to apply specific concepts from literary sources to archaeological evidence on the grounds that the chronological gap is too large. Roy instead chooses to use typological patterns implied by the lexis of the literary sources, though she relies heavily on Heide's (2006a, b) interpretation of *hugr* and its supposed association with breath.

attested in Old Norse-Icelandic, but has instead been pieced together from a small corpus of disparate and opaque motifs, there a range of opinions as to how these out-of-body experiences actually operated. For example, Raudvere (2008: 241, 2002: 101-07) argues that in such shape-shifting, the *hugr* leaves the body and takes on a separate *hamr*, while Tolley (2009: 193-98) believes that shape-shifting involves no such bifurcation of the body and *hugr*, and that the *hugr* taking on animal form is part of a different process typically associated with *fylgja* motifs. Hedeager (2008: 13, 2011: 81-84) falls somewhere between these two positions, arguing that in shape-shifting, the *hamr* represents the “interim shape of a person’s *hugr*”. Because of this disparity it is worth deconstructing the triad of *hugr*, *hamr*, and *fylgja* and dealing with the situations typically associated with *hamr* and *fylgja* separately.

3.1 *Hugr* and *hamr*

The argument that *hugr* takes on a *hamr* is made by both Strömbäck (1935) and de Vries (1956: §§160-161) but has been treated in detail most recently by Catharina Raudvere, whose opinions on the topic are frequently cited. Raudvere (1996, 2002, 2008) claims that in shape-shifting the person splits in two, with the *hugr* taking on *hamr* and leaving the body behind. As evidence of this, she states that in *Ynglinga saga* Ch. 7 Óðinn’s *hugr* is depicted travelling in the form of an animal while his body lies asleep. While the passage does tell us that Óðinn changed shapes (*hamir*) and travelled independently of his body, there is no mention, or even suggestion, that this is any way related to his *hugr*:

Óðinn skipti hómum. Lá þá búkrinn sem sofinn eða dauðr, en hann var þá fugl eða dýr, fiskr eða ormr ok fór á einni svipstund á fjarlæg lond at sínum ørendum eða annarra manna. (ÍF XXVI: 18)

Óðinn changed shapes. Then his body lay as if it was asleep or dead, while he was a bird or an animal, a fish or a snake, and travelled in an instant to distant lands, on his or other people’s business. (Finlay and Faulkes 2011: 10)

Much the same is true for the only other clear Old Norse-Icelandic example of someone acting in animal form while separate from their body: Bǫðvarr bjarki’s apparent transformation into a great bear in the fight against king Hjörvarðr in *Hrólfs saga kraka* Ch. 33. However, while clearly we are meant to understand the bear as being in same way connected with Bǫðvarr, the association is not made explicit, nor is *hamr* let alone *hugr* mentioned in the text. Despite this, this passage is frequently taken along with *Ynglinga*

saga Ch. 7 as a proof case for the belief that *hugr* can leave a person's body and occupy a different physical form (see McGlynn 2009).

Aside from the fact that neither of these texts mention *hugr*, as mentioned above, *Hrólfs saga kraka* is a problematic source for medieval beliefs because of its late preservation. Nonetheless, the tales on which it is based are preserved in different and older sources, such as *Ynglinga saga*, *Bjarkamál*, Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* and the considerably younger *Bjarkarímur*. However, in none of these sources is the bear incident mentioned. *Ynglinga saga* does not record this part of *Hrólfs saga kraka* and the sections of both *Bjarkamál* and *Bjarkarímur* which would have potentially covered this occurrence have not been preserved. The only complete medieval version of the tale, Saxo's *Gesta Danorum*, is entirely silent on the matter. Considering that Saxo was prone to elaborating the tales of his source texts, we would have expected this to have been included were it part of the medieval tradition (Tolley 2009: 571). This strongly suggests that Bǫðvarr's out-of-body experience was not a prominent part of the medieval versions of the tale. Tolley (2009: 570-71) argues that the scene in *Hrólfs saga kraka* is indicative of a late borrowing from Sámi tradition, which may well be the case. However, whether or not the author of *Hrólfs saga kraka* as we now have it was influenced by Sámi traditions, the text cannot be used as a reliable guide to out-of-body experiences in the medieval period.

Raudvere (2008: 241) takes the *Ynglinga saga* passage as indicative of shape-shifting behaviour in general, and argues that there are no examples in the corpus of Old Norse-Icelandic where a shape changer does not leave their body behind. However, effectively the opposite is true. There are very few clear instances of such a bifurcation between body and the presumed *hugr/hamr*, and most of those that do occur are either attributed to Lapps or have likely been influenced by Sámi traditions (Tolley 2009: 198). The system Raudvere proposes, where the *hugr* leaves the body and takes on a different *hamr*, does find an analogue of sorts in contemporary depictions of Sámi shamanistic behavior, but there is little evidence it formed part of the Old Norse-Icelandic conceptions of *hugr*.

For example, the bifurcation between body and (for want of a better word) spirit is reported in the twelfth-century *Historia Norwegiae*. The text records that a group of Christian traders had sat down to dine with some Finns when the hostess dropped down as if dead. The Finns explain to the grieving Christians that the woman is not dead, but taken by the *gandis* of her enemies, and that they will be able to restore her. Accordingly a

magus steps forward and proceeds to perform some form of sorcery. However, after performing for some time he falls to the ground foaming at the mouth and dies. The Finns consult another sorcerer who performed a similar, but this time successful, ritual and who, after raising the hostess, informs the crowd of his predecessor's fate:

Gandum uidelicet eius in cetinam effigiem inmaginatum ostico gando in preacutuas sudes transformato, dum per quoddam stagnum uelocissime prosiliret, malo omnie obuiasse, quia in stagni eiusdem profundo sudes latitantes exacti uentrem perforabant. Quod et in mago domi mortuo apparuit.

[H]is gand, having taken on the likeness of a whale, was shooting rapidly though a lake when it had the misfortune to encounter a hostile gand, which had transformed itself into sharply pointed stakes; these stakes hidden in the depths of the lake, penetrated the repulsed creature's belly, and this was also manifested by the death of the magician in the house. (ed. and trans. Ekrem *et al.* 2003: 62, 63)

Similar practices are attributed to Lapps on a handful of occasions in Old Norse-Icelandic texts. However, bifurcation of the sort seen in *Ynglinga saga* and *Hrólfs saga kraka* only occurs once. For example, in *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* Ch. 33 Haraldr orders a wizard (*kunnigr maðr*) to go *í hamförum til Íslands* (ÍF XXVI: 271). This *hamr*-journey he takes in whale form (*hvalslíkr*). But although similar to the episode from the *Historia Norwegiae*, there is no mention of his body staying behind as he travels on his *hamr*-journey. The same is true for a similar incident recorded in *Landnámabók*:

Ingimundr unði hvergi; því fýsti Haraldr konungr hann at leita forlaga sinna til Íslands. Ingimundr lézk þat eigi ætlat hafa, en þó sendi hann þá Finna tvá í hamförum til Íslands eptir hlut sínum. Þat var Freyr ok gorr af silfri. Finnar kómu aptr ok hófðu fundit hlutinn ok nát eigi; vísuðu þeir Ingimundi til í dal einum milli holta tveggja ok sǫgðu Ingimundi allt landsleg, hve háttat var þar er hann skyldi byggja. (ÍF I: 218)

Ingimund couldn't settle down happily anywhere, and that's why King Harald encouraged him to seek his fortune in Iceland. Ingimund said he'd never intended to go there, but all the same he sent two Lapps on a magic ride to Iceland to look for the object he'd lost. It was an image of Frey, made of silver. The Lapps came back – they'd found the image but couldn't get it – and told Ingimund that it was in a certain valley between two hillocks. They described to him in detail how the land lay, and all about where he was to make his home. (trans. Hermann Pálsson and Edwards 1972: 83)

It is only when this story is told in *Vatnsdæla saga* that the Lapps are represented as participating in a spirit journey. They request to be shut together in a shed for three nights.

When Ingimundr returns, they stand up yawning and report that they are exhausted. However, in this telling of the tale, no mention is made of *hamr* or *hamfar* or *hugr*.

As Tolley (2009: 198) points out, the fact that such practices are restricted to Lapps strongly suggests that this did not form part of the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition. It also suggests that Snorri's account of Óðinn's shape-shifting has been influenced by Sámi tradition, rather than reflecting any original Germanic concept of mind-travel. It is worth noting in this regard that the shape-shifting of other gods does not involve them leaving their bodies behind, but a full transformation into another form.

While there is little evidence to support Raudvere's claim that a person's body is always left behind when shape-shifting, there is even less for the claim that it is a person's *hugr* which takes part in this procedure. As will be discussed below, *hugr* is occasionally used synonymously with *fylgja*, but is never depicted as taking on a physical form. All apparent examples of *hugr* taking on a *hamr* have to be read into the texts cited. A prime example is the following scene from *Kormáks saga* Ch. 18, which Raudvere (2002: 104) claims "clearly illuminate[s] some vital conditions of the human *hugr* and shape-shifting."

Þá er þeir bræðr létu ór læginu, kom upp hjá skipinu hrosshvalr. Kormákr skaut til hans pálstaf, ok kom á hvalinn, ok sökðisk. Þóttusk menn þar kenna augu Þórveigar. Þessi hvalr kom ekki upp þaðan í frá, en til Þórveigar spurðisk þat, at hon lá hætt, ok er þat sagn manna, at hon hafi af því dáið. (ÍF VIII: 265-266)

When the brothers put out from their place of anchorage, a walrus surfaced beside the ship. Kormak fired a weighted staff at it, hitting the animal, so that it sank. People though they recognised Thorveig's eyes when they saw it. The animal did not surface from then on; and it was reported of Thorveig that she was dangerously ill, and people say that she died as a result. (trans. McTurk 1997: 208)

Raudvere (2002) appears to interpret this as a case of the *hugr* leaving the body, which then experiences the injuries inflicted on the *hugr/hamr* complex in a manner similar to the incident reported in the *Historia Norwegiae* above. However, as is clear, there is no explicit evidence for this in the text. It could be legitimately be interpreted in this way if there was corroborating evidence from elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic, but such examples are lacking. Aside from Óðinn in *Ynglinga saga*, people who change *hamr* are always represented as undergoing a complete bodily transformation.

People described as *hamrammr* ‘able to change shape’ are rare in Old Norse-Icelandic texts, and *hamhleypa* ‘shape changer’ is even rarer.⁶⁷ Only two occurrences of *hamhleypa* are recorded in the *Íslendingasögur*,⁶⁸ once in *Barðar saga snæfellsáss* Ch. 8, and once in *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* Ch. 61, and it is only in *Egils saga* that we have any indication of the nature of this shape changing. After Egill has been distracted from composing his *drápa* for king Eiríkr in York by a swallow chattering at his window, Arinbjörn takes up a position to guard against it coming back. After sitting at the window Arinbjörn “sá hvar hamhleypa nokkur fór annan veg af húsinu” (Bjarni Einarsson 2005: 105). There is no indication that this *hamhleypa*’s regular body was left elsewhere while her *hugr* travelled in the form of a swallow. *Hamrammr* is a little more common⁶⁹ but we are rarely shown any shape-changing actually taking place. For example, although earlier in *Egils saga* Egill’s grandfather Kveldúlf (evening wolf) is described as *mjök hamrammr* ‘a great shape changer’, the closest we get to him transforming into a wolf is being told that he grew ill-tempered each evening so that few people wished to talk to him (Bjarni Einarsson 2005: 1).

However, there is one incident recorded in *Landnámabók* where the actions of two *hamrammir* men are described:

Dufþakr í Dufþaksholti var leysingi þeirra bræðra; hann var hamrammr mjök, ok svá var Stórolfr Høengsson; hann bjó þá að Hváli. Þá skildi á um beitingar. [...]

Þat sá ófreskr maðr um kveld nær dagsetri, at björn mikill gekk frá Hváli, en griðungr frá Dufþaksholti, ok fundusk á Stórolfsvelli ok gengusk at reiðir, ok mátti björninn meira. Um morguninn var þat sét, að dalrr var þar eptir, er þeir hǫfðu fundizk, sem um væri snúit jorðinni, ok heitir þar nú Oldugróf. Báðir váru þeir meiddir. (ÍF I: 355-356)

The brothers had a freedman called Dufthak, of Dufthaksholt. Like Storolf, Ketil Trout’s son, he was a great [shape changer]. Storolf lived at Hvoll, and he and Dufthak quarrelled over grazing. One evening, about sunset, someone with second sight noticed a huge bear set out from Hvoll, and a bull from Dufthaksholt. They met at Stórolfsvoll and set upon one another in a fury, the bear getting the best of it. In the morning, people saw there was a hollow where they had met, and it was just as if the earth had been turned upside down. Nowadays the place is called Oldugrof. Both men were badly hurt. (trans. Hermann Pálsson and Edwards 1972: 133)

⁶⁷ For reviews of shape shifting in Old Norse-Icelandic literature see Davidson (1978) and Grundy (1998).

⁶⁸ *The Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* only cites six occurrences.

⁶⁹ *The Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* records twelve examples, the *Íslenskt Textasafn* (2004) corpus eighteen.

Some features of this account might give rise to the interpretation that the bull and bear acted independently of the bodies of Dufþakr and Stórolfr which stayed inside. For example, the incident takes place at night, when we could assume the men were sleeping. Further, the incident is seen by someone with second sight, a motif familiar from *fylgja* passages (see below). However, *fylgjur* do not take on a form which interacts with the ‘real world’ (Mundal 1974: 42). Even if we were to interpret this fight as the separate *hamir* of the two men, there is no indication that it is their *hugir* fighting with each other.

Although we have seen that Raudvere’s claims that the *hugr* takes on *hamr* in animal form independently of a person’s body is not substantiated by Old Norse-Icelandic texts, Hedeager (2008: 13) who argues against bifurcation still claims that the process of shape-shifting is the transformation of the *hugr* into a different *hamr*. However, there is no evidence for this belief either. Throughout the texts connected with shape-changing in Old Norse-Icelandic, *hugr* is never mentioned. The only significant pairing of *hugr* and *hamr* comes from stanza 155 of *Hávamál*:

Þat kank ec iþ tíunda, ef ec sé túnriðor
 leica lopti á:
 ec svá vinnc, at þeir villir fara
 sinna heim hama,
 sinna heim huga. (Neckel 1962: 43)

I know a tenth one if I see witches
 playing up in the air;
 I can bring it about that they can’t make their way back
 to their own shapes,
 to their own spirits. (Larrington 1996: 36)

However, the last two lines of this stanza are particularly hard to interpret. Comparing the verses to *Ynglinga saga* Ch. 7 Evans⁷⁰ (1986: 140) comments that this,

clearly refers to the well-evidenced Norse belief that a person’s soul (*hugr*) could in certain circumstances depart temporarily from the body and range abroad by itself [...], sometimes taking on a new physical shape (*hamr*), while the owner’s body lay in a trance.

But, as we have seen, this belief is far from well evidenced. Tolley (2009: 190) also suggests that the pairing of *hugr* and *hamr* ‘hints’ that at the time of composition the belief that the *hugr* could take on *hamr* was widespread and common. However, as it stands the verse does not easily correspond to the notion that the witches’ *hugir* have taken on *hamir*.

⁷⁰ The most recent editor of *Hávamál* (Dronke 2011) merely refers the reader to Evans’ discussion in her commentary on this stanza.

The notion that both *hugr* and *hamr* are acting independently does not match situation laid out in *Ynglinga saga*. Instead, Evans follows Finnur Jónsson (1924) and concludes that *hamr* must be a ‘clumsy repetition’ of the sense of *hugr*, rather than referring to two separate entities.

However, other readings have been offered, including the emendation to *heima hoga*, ‘home field’ which appears to allow an equally acceptable and arguably clearer reading.⁷¹ Further, a number of critics do not interpret *hugr* and *hamr* here as forming a complex. In numerous publications, Sturtevant (1913, 1916, 1937) argues that *heimhuga* here refers to ‘proper sense’, with the implication of Óðinn confusing the witches, rather than stopping their spirits returning to their bodies. A similar reading is taken by Mitchell (1997: 90 n.11), following Clarke (1923), and it is telling that Anthony Faulkes’ (1987a: 14) glossary to Evans’s edition defines *heimhuga* as “home thought, proper thought (i.e. ‘they are confused’)”. The fact is that, considering that there is no mention of *hugr* taking on *hamr* in medieval sources, nor the motif of some part of the person acting independently of the body attested outside Sámi-influenced passages, this verse from *Hávamál* is too opaque to serve as evidence for an otherwise poorly attested belief.

In light of this evidence, or lack of it, we have to conclude that despite numerous claims to the contrary, there was no Old Norse-Icelandic tradition which conceived of the *hugr* leaving the body and adopting a *hamr* in animal form. Tolley (2009: 198) makes a similar point when concluding his discussion of *hugr* and *hamr*. However, although he does not believe that the *hugr* left the body in animal *hamr*, he does still argue (2009: 242) that the *hugr* could take on animal form. This claim is based on incidents typically understood as referring to animal *fylgjur*. Unlike the relationship between *hamr* and *hugr* there is at least a lexical overlap between *hugr* and *fylgja*, but as I will argue below, there is little evidence to suggest that a person’s *hugr* could adopt a different physical form.

3.2 *Fylgjur* and *manna hugir*

While we have seen that the belief that *hugr* can take on a *hamr* is not supported by medieval evidence, a second scholarly tradition associates *hugr* with another typologically interesting concept, the *fylgja*. This is a distinctly North Germanic phenomenon, which

⁷¹ This is the proposal was first made by Gudbrand Vigfusson and Powell (1883: vol. 1, 27), and the sense is supported by Evans (1986) and Sturtevant (1916).

does not have any convincing parallels in the other medieval Germanic languages.⁷² The concept is perhaps the most prominent difference between the cultural models of the person in Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic. However, a person's *fylgja* has no influence over how a person thinks or feels, and as such has little impact on the ethnopsychology of Old Norse-Icelandic; it is only through its association with *hugr* that it has any influence on the study of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology.

A person's *fylgja* is an animal which seems to mirror something of that person's character: noble people's *fylgjur* tend to be polar bears, evil people's wolves.⁷³ The concept is conventionally rendered into English as 'fetch' (Cleasby-Vigfusson 1957: s.v. *fylgja*; Simek 1993: s.v. *fylgjur*), or as a non-Christian soul. However, the concept bears very little relation to the soul, in that it is not associated with the person's body, does not carry on to the afterlife, and does not participate in the moral life of the person.⁷⁴ Instead, the *fylgja* seems to function as a shadow of the person, but one which does not interact with the 'real world' inhabited by humans. Occasionally they are seen by those with second sight, either by the person to whom they 'belong' or by another observer but never to many people at one time. When they do appear, they serve as portents of future events, which may suggest that their representation in our written sources has been shaped in some degree by their literary function. However, for the vast majority of the time, these *fylgjur* appear to lead a life of their own, making very little impact on the world recorded in saga literature.

Fylgja is also a polysemous term, which is applied to a number of loosely connected concepts, all of which relate to extraordinary phenomena. It is because *fylgjur* are unique within a Germanic context and because they permit relatively broad and imprecise interpretations that they have been linked to various circumpolar traditions associated with beliefs in free, or wandering souls (see for example Price (2002: 224 ff.) and Hedeager (2008)). Very infrequently, *hugr* appears to be used to describe phenomena which are elsewhere attributed to *fylgja* and because of this an interpretive tradition has arisen which links *hugr* to the wandering soul motifs attributed to *fylgjur*. However, the

⁷² Attempts have been made to link *fylgjur* with shape shifting and from shape shifting to various phenomena in Old English texts (see for example Glosecki 2000).

⁷³ Mundal (1974: 30-31) provides a list of the animals which frequently occur. They form a fairly constrained group with certain animals, such as the horse, never appearing.

⁷⁴ Simek (1993: s.v. *fylgjur*) notes that the concept is 'definitely different' from the Christian soul and the same point is made by Mundal (1974: 44) who notes that by using the word soul (or Norwegian *sjel*) one colours the concept of *fylgja* with unhelpful associations. However, both use soul/*sjel* in the absence of a suitable alternative.

various phenomena conventionally attributed to *fylgja* do not represent a unitary group, and these need to be briefly unpacked before we can consider their relationship to *hugr*.

3.3 *Fylgjur* in Old Norse-Icelandic

Although *fylgjur* are primarily associated with ‘fetches’, the animal ‘shadow selves’ of characters in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, the word itself is applied to a variety of different phenomena by medieval sources and by popular and scholarly literature. Mundal (1974), whose monograph remains the most complete study of the topic, splits the attestations of *fylgja* in Old Norse-Icelandic sources into two broad classes, *dyrefylgjemotiva* ‘animal-*fylgja* motifs’ and *kvinnefylgjemotiva* ‘woman-*fylgja* motifs’. The ‘women-*fylgjur*’ of Mundal’s classification are of a sufficiently different character from the ‘animal-*fylgja*’ so as not to concern this discussion. They typically appear in dreams and are often grouped together with *dísir*, *valkyrja*, and *nornir* (see for example Langeslag 2009), though the relationship between these three supernatural beings and ‘woman-*fylgjur*’ has not yet been established. Tolley (2009: 226-29) has gone further than most and has argued that these ‘woman-*fylgjur*’ should not be considered *fylgjur* at all, noting that Mundal’s examples of the category are weaker than claimed, and generally refer to *dísir* rather than *fylgjur* proper. Whatever their final classification, other than appearing in dreams these have little resemblance to the ‘animal-*fylgjur*’ which have been associated with the concept of *hugr*.

‘Animal-*fylgjur*’ are the most familiar manifestation of the phenomena and the one most often drawn upon in comparative study. Mundal (1974: 41-45) further splits this category into three subtypes: ‘animal-*fylgjur*’ proper; *hamferdmotiv* ‘hamr-journey motif’; and *hugmotiv* ‘*hugr* motif’. While Mundal is careful in delineating the differences between these three manifestations of the *fylgja* motif in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, they have in general been grouped together as a coherent conceptual group (see for example Hedeager 2008: 13). However, the differences between the three are significant. ‘Animal-*fylgjur*’ are typically recognised as the prototypical manifestation of *fylgja*, the animal fetch which represents a person’s character but acts independently of the person. This being does not take on a corporeal form and there is no implication that this is in any way a ‘real animal’. This is supported by the fact that these *fylgjur* can only be seen by certain people, usually though not exclusively, the person with whom they are associated. Further, there is no indication that these creatures can be physically harmed by people or other members of

the ‘real world’ (Mundal 1974: 43). Although *fylgjur* may appear to be injured, as in *Njáls saga* Ch. 41, this is not related in a direct manner to the physical condition of the person to whom the *fylgja* ‘belongs’.⁷⁵

This absence of a physical connection between a person and his or her *fylgja* distinguishes it from Mundal’s *hamr*-journey motif. As we have seen above, there is little evidence to support the contention, made by Raudvere (1996, 2002) and others, that people can send out their *hugr* in *hamr* form, while their body lies at rest elsewhere. Those who advocate this theory suggest that should the *hugr/hamr* complex be harmed during its out of body experience, the dormant body itself is injured in a manner similar to the *gandus* journey undertaken by the Lapps in the *Historia Norwegiae*. However, even if this were the case, such a process could not be attributed to a person’s *fylgja* as there is never a direct physical connection between it and the person with whom it is associated. In the same way, the *fylgja* can be distinguished from shape shifting events, as the person and *fylgja* always remain separate, unlike the complete bodily transformation involved in shape-shifting. Finally, people who are able to change *hamr* and those who travel in animal form outside their body are able to interact with the ‘real world’ in a manner quite unlike the liminal status afforded to ‘animal-*fylgjur*’. Tolley (2009: 242-43) like Mundal (1974: 41-42), distinguishes ‘animal-*fylgjur*’ from shape shifting and *hamr*-journeys. He argues that ‘animal-*fylgjur*’ should be kept separate from instances of *hugr* taking animal form and functioning as a free, or wandering soul. However, his argument that *hugr* can take on animal form is based in part on the final of Mundal’s (1974) subdivisions of *fylgja*: the *hugmotiv*.

3.4 *Hugr* in dreams

In addition to referring to a person’s fetch, *fylgja* is occasionally used in medieval sources to refer to the animals (and in rare cases people) which appear in dreams as portents of

⁷⁵ Þórðr mælti: "Undarlíga bregðr nú við," segir hann. "Hvat sér þú þess, er þér þykkir með undarlígu móti vera?" segir Njáll. "Mér þykkir hafrinn liggja hér í dælinni ok er alblóðugr allr." Njáll kvað þar eigi vera hafr ok ekki annat. "Hvat er þat þá?" segir Þórðr. "Þú munt vera maðr feigr," segir Njáll, "ok munt þú sét hafa fylgju þína, ok ver þú varr um þik." (ÍF XII: 106-107)

Thord said, "Now here's something strange."

"What do you see that seems strange?" said Njal.

"I think I see the goat lying in the hollow over there, all covered in blood."

Njal said that there was no goat or anything else over there.

"What is it then?" said Thord.

"You must be a doomed man," said Njal, "and you must have seen your fetch, and now you must be on your guard." (trans. Cook 1997: 48-49)

events to come. These animals are consistently interpreted in saga literature as referring to the intentions of another person or group of people. These dreams serve as a warning to the dreamer, and occur more frequently in the *fornaldarsögur* than they do in the *Íslendingasögur* (see Lönnroth 2002: 546-47).⁷⁶ For example, in *Qrvar-Odds saga* Ch. 4, the intentions of Oddr are inferred from the actions of the polar bear Guðmundr dreams of. Likewise, in *Þorsteins saga Víkingssonar* Ch. 12, Þorsteinn dreams that he is attacked by thirty wolves, which he interprets as the *fylgjur* of his adversary Jökull and his brothers.

Numerous other examples are catalogued by Mundal (1974: 26-28). However, in both these cases a link is drawn between *fylgja* and *hugr* by the description of the character of the fetches in these dreams. In *Qrvar-Odds saga*, Sigurðr interprets Guðmundr's dream about the polar bear as signifying that Oddr is angry with the group, which explains the bear's aggressive behaviour. In doing so he refers to the bear as having *úlfhugr* towards the men. A similar form of words is used in *Þorsteins saga Víkingssonar*, where Þorsteinn describes Jökull and his brothers as having *varga hug á oss*. Such figures of speech can be compared to Guðrun's suspicion that King Atli has *úlfshug* towards Gunnar and Högni in *Völsunga saga* Ch. 32.⁷⁷ Smithers (1959) and others, including Mundal (1974: 27) have used the references to *úlf-* (or *varg-*) *hugr* in these dreams as implying a connection between the 'dream-*fylgjur*' and the *hugir* of the adversaries these refer to. However, the use of *hugr* in such compounds or phrases refers to a person's attitude rather than the nature of their *hugr* taking on wolfish form. This is particularly clear in *Qrvar-Odds saga* where the fetch is not a wolf, but a bear who is described as behaving in a 'wolfish' manner. However, there are clearer cases where *hugr* is associated with dream animals.

It is the conceptualisation of wolves as devious and dangerous which underlies their frequent appearance in dreams as *fylgjur* alerting the dreamer to the intentions of his adversary. For example, in *Njáls saga* Ch. 62 Gunnarr dreams his men are attacked by wolves shortly before he wakes to find Starkaðr advancing on him. Similarly, in *Droplaugarsona saga* Ch. 10, Helgi dreams that he is attacked by eighteen wolves which Þorkell correctly interprets as signifying Helgi Ásbjarnarson's imminent ambush. Significantly, in three instances (two from *Þórðar saga hreðu* and one from *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings*) the wolves which appear in dreams are referred to as *manna hugir*, which

⁷⁶ Dreams in Old Norse-Icelandic literature are treated more fully by Kelchner (1935) and Turville-Petre (1958). Tromp (2012) argues that dreams represent a mental journey into different worlds, which has some affinities with other interpretations the *hugmotiv* dreams.

⁷⁷ This phraseology may be compared to the reference to *Eormanrices / wylfenne gepoht* in *Deor* 22 (Krapp and Dobbie (1936: 179).

unlike the *úlfrhugr* examples above, makes a direct connection between dream-*fylgjur* and *hugr*.

The following passage from *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings* Ch. 20 is representative of the other two. The chapter tells how Atli suffered a disturbed sleep which kept everyone else awake. He sighed and banged his feet and hands against the bed until he was woken by Torfi Valbrandsson. Harvarðr then asks him if he had dreamt anything unusual, to which Atli responds:

“ek þóttumk ganga út ór búrinu, ok sá ek, at vargar runnu sunnan á völlinn átján saman, en fyrir vörgunum rann refkeila ein. Þat var svá slægligt kvikendi, at slíkt hefi ek aldri sét fyrri; þat var ógurligt mjök ok illiligt. Þat skyggndisk víða, ok á öllu vildi þat augu hafa, ok öll sýndusk mér dýrin grimmlig. En er þau váru komin heim at bönum, þá vakði Torfi mik, ok veit ek víst, at þat er manna hugir; skulum vér þegar upp standa.” (ÍF VI: 349-350)

I dreamt that I walked out of the storehouse and I saw eighteen wolves running together from the south into the field, and in front of the wolves ran a vixen. It was such a cunning animal that I have not seen its life before. It was very awful and evil. It looked around carefully, taking in everything, and all the animals seemed to me very fierce. And just as they reached the farm, Torfi waked me, and I know for certain that they were the [*hugir*] of men. Let us get up immediately.” (Heinemann 1997: 343)

However, this passage is set apart from the references to *manna hugir* in *Þórðar saga hreðu* by what precedes and follows Atli’s dream in Ch. 19 and Ch. 21:

Var þetta ráð tekit, at Þorgrímr ríðr heiman við átjándan mann. Er eigi sagt frá ferð þeirra, fyrr en þeir koma til bæjar Atla í Otradal; var þat einn morgin snimma, ok ríða í eitt dalverpi, þat er eigi mátti sjá frá bönum. Bað Þorgrímr þá stíga af baki, kvað sik svá syfja, at hann mátti engan veg upp sitja. Þeir gera nú svá, létu hestana bíta, en Þorgrímr sofnaði ok breiddi feld á höfuð sér ok lét illa í svefni. (ÍF VI: 349)

It was decided that Thorgrim should ride from home with eighteen men. Nothing about their trip is told until they arrived at Atli’s farm in Otradal. It was early morning, and they rode into a little depression so that they could not be seen from the farm. Thorgrim ordered them to dismount, and said that he was so sleepy that he was on no account able to sit up. They did so and let their horses graze, but Thorgrim fell asleep and spread a skin over his head and tossed in his sleep. (Heinemann 1997: 342)

Þar er nú til at taka, at Þorgrímr vaknar; var honum orðit heitt. Hann mælti þá: “Heima hefi ek verit um hríð á bönum ok er svá villt fyrir mér, at ek veit eigi frá mér, en þó munum vér heim ganga at bönum. (ÍF VI: 350)

Now the tale turns to where Thorgrim was waking up. He had become warm. Then he said, “I have just been up to the farmhouse for a while, and everything was such a muddle that I do not see matters clearly, but still we will go up to the farmhouse.” (Heinemann 1997: 343)

As Þorgrímr is a magician, Dillmann (2006: 243) has argued that this scene represents an instance of a person sending his ‘free-soul’ wandering, only to have it disturbed and sent back by Atli, in a manner similar to the shamanistic practices in the *Historia Norwegiae*. However, as North (1991: 109) has previously noted, there is no indication that Þorgrímr has performed any sorcery. Although he tells us that he has been at the farmhouse, there is no suggestion that this was done deliberately, or that any particular ritual was performed. Further, Þorgrímr is presented as tired before the event not after it, and unlike the other instances of such sorcery none of the men are Lapps or connected in any way with shamanism. North (1991: 109-110) instead argues that these wolves represent the ‘intentions’ of the attackers,⁷⁸ drawing on the connection between *úlfrhugr* and related phrases. He follows Strömbäck (1935) by suggesting that these wolves represent the *hamir* of the attacking men’s *hugir*. However, he differs slightly from other *hamir*-journey interpretations, such as those by Raudvere (1996, 2002), by restricting these *hamir* to metaphors, rather than actual beings involved in a psychic attack.

Tolley (2009: 191) attempts to draw a compromise between North and Dillmann, suggesting that the passage may play on both ideas: a full-blown spiritual conflict and the abstract embodiment of a person’s intentions. Tolley suggests that the presentation of these animals appearing in dream form was a concession to Christian sensibilities which would have looked unfavourably on the representation of a genuine pagan practice of a free-soul being sent forth.⁷⁹ In this way, he argues that the episode reflects a genuine belief in *hugr* as a free-soul which could take on animal form, but is concealed behind a sanitised dream-vision presentation. In support of this reading, Tolley (2009: 191-192) compares the supposed psychic attack to stanza 155 of *Hávamál*, discussed above, which he interprets as referring to Óðinn disturbing the disembodied free-souls of the *túnríður*. This comparison essentially rests on a verbal parallelism between the two passages. Tolley (2009: 191-192) argues that the adjective *villr*⁸⁰ ‘astray’ represents a technical term used to refer to an assault on free-souls.

⁷⁸ This reading was previously proposed by Kelchner (1935).

⁷⁹ A similar point is made by Tromp (2012).

⁸⁰ *villt* in *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings* and *villr* in *Hávamál*.

However, this interpretation of *villr* depends on reading the two passages as some form of psychic attack, which is far from clear. Leaving aside the tenuous verbal connection between *Hávamál* and *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings*, there is little practical similarity between the two passages. In *Hávamál*, there is no indication that the *túnríður* take on animal shapes, nor that any of the participants in the supposed spiritual encounter are asleep. Tolley's reading of the *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings* passage as a concealed pagan motif further depends on his belief that the concept of a free-soul existed in Old Norse-Icelandic society, but outwith this example there is little substantive evidence that this is was the case. As it stands, the incident in *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings* is indicative only of itself; it does not fall into a pre-existing conceptual scheme which allows us to interpret it as concealed reference to the *hugr* taking on animal form and leaving the body. Nonetheless, the incident does remain unusual and falls outside the traditional representations of the *hugmotiv* in dreams in dream visions.

Some light can be thrown on the issue by considering the other occurrences of *manna hugir* in saga literature. The phrase is used very infrequently, and I am aware of only three other uses outside *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings*: two recorded by the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* concordance in *Þórðar saga hreðu* (s.v. *mannahugir*), and one other use in *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*. In Ch. 3 of *Þórðar saga hreðu*, Þórðr dreams that he is attacked in his booth by wolves, and wakes just as a bear cub runs in front of him and tries to protect him. His foster-son Eiðr responds as follows: *Auðséð er það að þetta eru mannahugir illir til þín* 'It is clear that evil men's *hugir* are set against you.' Likewise, in Ch. 8 Þórðr tells Kálfr that he had dreamt that he and his men had been set upon by eighteen wolves, which killed his companions. Kálfr responds that *eru þetta mannahugir* 'these are men's *hugir*'.

In neither of these cases from *Þórðar saga hreðu* is there any indication that these *hugir* have been sent out by anyone, or that they represent the free-souls of Þórðr's adversaries. Instead, they are analogous to the dream Björn reports in Ch. 25 of *Bjarnar saga Hítðalakappa*:

Hann segir: "Mér þótti sem sex menn sætti mik, ok þótti mér nær þurfa handa við; kann vera, at þá hafir þú heyrt til mín." "Þat er auðsætt," segir Þorbjörg, "manna fylgjur eru þat, er illan hug hafa á þér [...]" (ÍF III: 177)

He said, "It seemed to me that six men were attacking me, and I thought I almost lacked hands to oppose them. Perhaps that was when you heard me."

“The meaning of that is plain to see,” said Thorbjorg. “Those are the *fetches* of men who have evil intentions towards you.” (Finlay 1997: 287)

Here there is again no indication that these *fylgjur* have been purposefully sent out, but rather that they are portents of events to come. Further, these passages, like the others Mundal catalogues as *hugmotiva* do not involve any harm to the dreamers. In fact, the dreams are positive events in so much as they serve as warnings or insights into the behaviour or intentions of the dreamers’ adversaries. Were they indicative of some form of psychic attack, they are at best ineffective and at worse counterproductive. As such, there seems no compelling reason to interpret these incidents in the way Dillmann proposes we read the passage in *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings*.

However, the situation in *Þorsteins þáttur uxafóts* is somewhat different. Unlike elsewhere, here *manna hugir* are described as attacking the dreamer. In Ch. 10 of the *þáttur* the ogre Járnskjöldr is roused from his sleep by his daughter Skjalddís to warn him that the family is being attacked by Þorsteinn, who has pursued her into the hall. Þorsteinn’s entry into the hall is described as follows:

Hann gengr þá þar til, er hann kemr a hurðu; hon var greypt í stökk ok hnigin eigi allt í klofa. Hann sá mikinn mann á palli sitja ok mjök stórskorinn ok hengu yfir honum öll herklæði. Á aðra hönd honum sat mikil skessa ok illilig ok ekki alleldilig. Piltar tveir léku á gólfinu; þeim var sprottit hár ór kolli. Skessan tók til orða: "Hvárt syfjar þik, Járnskjöldr faðir?" "Eigi er, Skjalddís dóttir, liggja á mér hugir stórra manna." (ÍF XIII: 361)

Then he went on until he came to a sliding door which was lowered but not entirely shut. He saw a big coarse-featured man sitting on the cross-bench. A complete set of weapons and armour hung above him. Beside him sat a big ogress who was evil-looking but not very old. Two boys were playing on the floor. Hair was beginning to sprout on their heads.

The ogress spoke up: “Why are you sleepy, father Jarnskjold?”

“That’s not it, daughter Skjalddis. The [*hugir*] of powerful men are attacking me.” (Clark 1997: 350)

Heide (2006c: 352) has suggested that Járnskjöldr is under attack from the spun mind emissary of an opponent which entered though his respiratory passages and, by driving out his own *hugr*, left him enervated. For the reasons outlined above I do not think this suggestion can be substantiated. However, it is difficult to make sense of any form of psychic attack on Járnskjöldr, whether it is Heide’s respiratory model or Dillmann (2006) and Tolley’s (2009) free-soul model. This is because there is no one salient in the narrative who could be interpreted as carrying out this attack. We are told in the preceding chapter

that Ólafr Tryggvason had organised a retinue of men to clear the forest of Heiðarskógr, where Járnskjöldr lived, of the female trolls which had settled there. However, all but four of the sixty men who set out were killed in battle. When Þorsteinn attacks, he has travelled to Heiðarskógr separately with his companion Styrkarr. On setting up camp, they divide the work between them and while out fetching water Þorsteinn notices a troll-girl and follows her to the hall, leaving Styrkarr unaware of his whereabouts.

Þorsteinn himself clearly cannot be carrying out a psychic attack, as all such models require him to be asleep while doing so. As Styrkarr does not know where Þorsteinn is or what he is doing he cannot be attacking Járnskjöldr on his behalf. Járnskjöldr himself says that he does not fear the men the king sends, only Þorsteinn, and there is no indication that the four men remaining after the battle are involved in sorcery, and are unconnected with Þorsteinn's attack on the hall. As such, the most plausible reading of the *hugir stórra manna* attacking Járnskjöldr is a portent like all the other examples of *hugmotiva* in dreams. Although Járnskjöldr's response to his daughter asking why he is sleepy could be read as implying that he is sapped of energy because of some psychic attack, in the absence of any evidence of who these attackers are it is more likely that the attack he refers to is a dream vision.

If this reading is accepted, the unity of the *hugmotiv* dreams draws the passage in *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings* into sharper relief. Unlike all other incidents, some part of Þorgrímr appears to have travelled to Atli's farm. If we read this as a genuine form of 'mind-travel', rather than Þorgrímr merely imagining this journey, it can be added to the rare examples of bifurcation in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, and significantly one which does not appear to show any direct influence from Sámi tradition. In fact, what is particularly unusual about this incident is that there is no reference to any ritual behaviour. Þorgrímr's journey appears much closer to the Old English belief that the *gast* could wander separately from the body during sleep than it does to the *gandus* journey in the *Historia Norwegiae*. This Old English tradition is only attested in the misreading of *in somno spiritum ducimus necscientes* 'in sleep, we draw breath unconsciously' in the translation of Boethius as:

ure gast bið swiðe wide farende urum unwillum & ures ungewealdes for his
gecynde, nalles for his willan; þæt bið þonne we slapað (ed. Sedgefield 1899:
93)

our spirit tends to be wandering widely without our intent and outside our power – from its innate nature, in no way from its intention; that is when we sleep

As Godden (1985: 277) has argued, this mistranslation is likely to have been prompted by an idea already familiar to the translator, rather than an unmotivated mistranslation of the Latin text. However, if a similar belief was held in medieval Scandinavia, it does not appear elsewhere in the literary depictions of dreams in Old Norse-Icelandic texts.

Whatever the case, and however Þorgrímr was imagined to have travelled to Atli's farm, it would be a mistake to attribute it to his *hugr*. Atli referring to the wolves in his dream as *manna hugir* matches the use of this phrase and its functional analogue *manna fylgjur* elsewhere, where it clearly refers to the intentions of the people identified in the dreams rather than some part of this person sent out in a psychic assault. It does not mean that these wolves were actually the disembodied *hugir* and his men, sent out to attack him. It is of course possible that this connection was made by contemporary readers of the text, but there is no evidence that this was a salient or conventional attribute of a person's *hugr*. It is on the basis of this scene that Tolley (2009: 242) suggests that *hugr* can take on animal form and that the idea of the wandering *hugr* [...] existed in medieval sources" (193). However, without further evidence of this tradition, this theory cannot be supported.

3.5 Conclusions

Because Old Norse-Icelandic speakers occupied lands adjacent to circumpolar cultures whose beliefs about the nature of the person and his or her spiritual connection to the world were different from those seen in medieval Germanic texts, there has been a long scholarly tradition of interpreting Old Norse-Icelandic psychology in terms of shamanism, broadly defined.⁸¹ Consequently, previous treatments of *hugr* have viewed it in terms of typological models such as the Eurasian free-soul concept and its connection with air and breath (see Tolley 2009: 167-174). Further, this notion of a wandering soul has been conflated with shape shifting behaviour so that the *hugr* has been claimed to leave the body in animal form. However, as the previous sections have shown much that is taken for granted in the study of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology has a very limited evidential base. When the medieval evidence is considered without the imposition of concepts from later

⁸¹ This trend was begun by Strömbäck (1935) and is most prominently advocated by Price (2002, 2004) and DuBois (1999). Almqvist (2000) is a useful review of Strömbäck's (1935) thesis.

Scandinavian folklore or circumpolar cultures, Old Norse-Icelandic ethnopsychology appears far less unusual than that is usually considered to be.

Most importantly, we have seen that there is not nearly enough evidence to conceptualise the psychological parts of the person as ‘breath’ or some other respiratory entity. The keystone in this theory, the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning, has been dismantled by Quinn (2012) but even without this work the correspondences between the post-medieval and cross-cultural analogues drawn upon to bolster the theory are far too general to support this notion. And although many cultures conceive of mind-travel independently of a ‘breath concept’, there is no evidence that the *hugr* was thought to be able to leave the body in any physical form. The popular modern tradition of the *hugr* taking on an animal *hamr* has no clear basis in Old Norse-Icelandic texts. The same can be said for the association of *hugr* with the concept of *fylgja*. It would seem that the association of *manna hugir* and *manna fylgjur* in dream visions does not represent the disembodied parts of a person engaging in psychological warfare, but rather a means of speaking about someone else’s intentions and character.

Tolley’s (2009) study is currently the most comprehensive survey of Old Norse-Icelandic ‘psychological’ phenomena, and also the most sceptical of the recent trend towards shamanistic interpretations of medieval Scandinavian culture. Rather than proposing a firm association between *hamr* and *hugr* or *hugr* and *fylgja*, he instead argues that this systematisation may not have formed part of the conceptual world of Old Norse-Icelandic speakers, who seem unlikely to have cared much about whether a *hugr* could take on a *hamr* (Tolley 2009: 198). Nonetheless, he still believes the *hugr* could be considered both an ‘ego-soul’, i.e. part of the person responsible for thinking and feeling, and a ‘free-soul’, a part that can wander independently of the person. But despite the attractiveness of this interpretation, there is not sufficient evidence to support it. Tolley’s interpretation is heavily reliant on the association of *hugr* with breath and that the *hugr* could take on animal form. However, the only evidence for this is the *manna hugir* incident in *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings*. Although this passage is unusual, it is not sufficient evidence for proposing that there was a free-soul tradition association with *hugr* in Old Norse-Icelandic.

As Tolley (2009: 587-588) himself notes, the *gandus* journey in the *Historia Norwegiae* appears to have been recorded because it represents an alien belief rather than a familiar one. Overall, the evidence for Old Norse-Icelandic sharing any significant

psychological affinities with its non-Germanic neighbours is much weaker than is conventionally assumed. The irony is, however, that included in Snorri's *heiti* list for *brjóst*, *hjarta* and *hugr*, which features the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning that served as the catalyst for these circumpolar associations, there is much more evidence for an embodied *hugr* located inside the chest and connected in with the heart. This appears to align Old Norse-Icelandic ethnopsychology with Lockett's (2011) cardiocentric, hydraulic model of emotion and cognition in Old English. It is to this connection that we now turn.

4 *Hugr*, *hjarta* and corporeal psychology

Although the *vindr tröllkvinna* kenning has received most attention in the context of Snorri's *heiti* for *hugr*, there is more evidence to associate *hugr* with *hjarta* as a physical part of the person than as an ethereal, breath-like, wandering soul. In this respect, *hugr* seems much closer to the embodied ethnopsychological constructs of Old English and Old Saxon. For example, in *Skáldskaparmál* Snorri presents *hugr*, *hjarta* and *brjóst* as nesting dolls, with the *brjóst* housing *hjarta* and *hjarta* housing *hugr*:

Hjarta heitir negg. Þat skal svá kenna, kalla korn eða stein eða epli eða hnot eða mýl eða líkt ok kenna við brjóst eða hug. Kalla má ok hús eða jörð eða berg hugarins. Brjóst skal svá kenn<a> at kalla hús eða garð eða skip hjarta, anda eða lifrar, eljunar land, hugar ok minnis. (Faulkes 1998: 108)

The heart is called bosom. It shall be referred to by calling it corn or stone or apple or nut or ball or the like, and referring to it in terms of breast or [*hugr*]. It can also be called house or ground or mountain of the [*hugr*]. The breast shall be referred to by calling it house or enclosure or ship of heart, spirit or liver, land of energy, [*hugr*] and memory. (Faulkes 1987b: 154)

This broadly matches the representation of *hugr*'s relationship with the body elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic. Throughout the corpus of surviving texts, *hugr* is consistently located in the chest and in various kennings the chest is referred to in terms of *hugr*. For example, in *Guðrúnarqviða in fyrsta* 14 *hugborg*⁸² '*hugr*-fortress' is used as a kenning for the breast. Likewise, *hugr* is placed situated within the chest in the formula *hló hugr í brjóst* which occurs in *Prymskviða* stanza 31⁸³ and *Guðrúnarqviða in þriðja* stanza 10,⁸⁴ and in

⁸² *fránar síónir fylkis liðnar, / hugborg iðfurs / hiqrvi scorna.* (Neckel 1962: 204) 'the bright eyes of the lord grow dim, / the prince's breast scored by the sword.' (trans. Larrington 1996: 179)

⁸³ *Hló Hlórriða hugr í briósti / er harðhugaðr hamar um þecpi* (Neckel 1962: 115) 'Thor's [*hugr*] laughed in his breast, / when he, stern in courage, recognized the hammer;' (trans. Larrington 1996: 101)

⁸⁴ *Hló þá Atla hugr í briósti, / er hann heilar sá hendr Guðrúnar* (Neckel 1962: 233) 'Then Atli's [*hugr*] laughed within him / when he saw Gudrun's hands all whole:' (trans. Larrington 1996: 204)

Reykðæla saga ok Víga-Skútu Ch. 26 *hugr* is said to *býr í brjósti* ‘live in the breast’.

Furthermore, *hugr* is occasionally referred to in concrete terms, paralleling the behaviour of the heart, as in the anonymous verse from *Ásmundar saga kappabana* where *hugr* is said to ‘tremble in the breast’ *Þá hvarflaði / hugr í brjósti* in *Ásmundar saga kappabana* (Kock 1946-1950 vol. 2: 184). These examples represent a consistent pattern of talking about the *hugr* and the breast and it is clear, contrary to occasional claims that the head was seat of emotion and cognition (see for example Onians 1951: 106) and that the unseen psychological part of the person was located in the chest cavity.

However, while the location of *hugr* in the *brjóst* is common, the relationship between *hugr* and *hjarta* is less clear, as *hugr* and *hjarta* are rarely mentioned together. Björn Ragnarsson’s verse quoted in *Ragnars saga loðbrókar ok sona hans* and *Páttr af Ragnars sonum* refers to *hugr* and *hjarta* in the same context in a manner reminiscent of the closing line of *The Battle of Maldon*:

Duga mun hugr ok hjarta
í hauksnǫru brjósti, (Finnur Jónsson 1967 vol. 2: 236-237)

Hugr and heart must be prepared
in the hawk-brave breast

This suggests that the two concepts may have been functionally synonymous. However, this assumption is made problematic by *Hávamál* stanza 95 which locates *hugr* near the heart but does not make the relationship between the two explicit. It is not clear if *hugr* is thought to be the same entity as the heart, reside within it, or occupy the chest cavity separately:

Hugr einn þat veit, er býr hjarta nær,
einn er hann sér um sefa; (Neckel 1962: 31)

[*Hugr*] alone knows what lies near the heart,
he alone knows his spirit: (trans. Larrington 1996: 27)

Establishing the relationship between the two concepts is made harder by the fact that outside Christian contexts and translated romances, Old Norse-Icelandic literature rarely mentions the heart in reference to emotional or cognitive situations. This disparity has prompted von See (1978: 81) to propose that any association between *hugr* and *hjarta* was a product of Christian influence. He notes that the parallels between *hugr/hyge* and *hjarta/heorte* are restricted to Christian contexts, and in particular the *Genesis* poems of

Old English and Old Saxon.⁸⁵ As Björn Ragnarsson's verse shows, this is not the case. Nonetheless, von See's observation broadly holds true for Old Norse-Icelandic literature; *hugr* and *hjarta* are predominantly paired together in spiritual contexts referring either to the purity of a person's thoughts and intentions or his or her love for God, and rarely outside such situations.

There are, however, at least two further examples which suggest that as Snorri has it, *hugr* was physically associated with *hjarta*. In *Hyndluljóð* 41 (*Völuspá in skamma* 11) Loki eats a heart which is referred to by the *hapax legomenon* *hugsteinn* 'hugr stone':

Loki át af hjarta lindi brendo,
fann hann hálfsviðinn hugstein kono; (Neckel 1962: 294)

'Loki ate some of the heart, the [*hugr*]-stone of a woman,
roasted on a linden-wood fire, he found it half-cooked; (Larrington 1996: 258)

The synonymous *geðsteinn* occurs twice, once in *Háttalykill* 19a (Kock 1946-1950 vol. 1: 243) and once in Sturla Þórðarson's *Hákonarkviða* 38.⁸⁶ Although these constructions are rare,⁸⁷ they do indicate that *hugr* was thought to reside in the physical heart. However, there is not the same intimate connection between the heart and the 'psychological' part of the person as there is in West Germanic. The functions of *hugr* and *hjarta* overlap, but there is much that separates them as well. At one pole, *hugr* is almost exclusively responsible for cognitive functions while at the other it is only *hjarta* which is represented as the vital, vivifying part of a person. They overlap in terms of a person's character, which is represented partly as related to a person's *hugr* but is also connected to the physical status of a person, or animal's, heart.

The fact that the *hugr* is consistently located in the chest rather than the head and the few kennings which directly link it to the heart mean we can legitimately refer to Old Norse-Icelandic as having a cardiocentric psychology. However, this does not mean that it necessarily matches the cardiocentrism of Old English and Old Saxon. It is not

⁸⁵ The same point is repeated in von See (1998-2001: 385) where he states that *Hávamál* is the only Old Norse-Icelandic collocation of *hugr* and *hjarta*.

⁸⁶ *Var geðsteinn / gauzkum manni / styrjar stund / í stall drepinn, / áðr ógnstórr / játat hafði / Svía gramr / siklings boði.* 'The mind-stone [HEART] of the Gautish men was struck by fear in that moment of unrest before the awe-inspiring lord of the Swedes [SWEDISH RULER = Birgir] had agreed to the ruler's offer.' (ed. and trans. Gade 2009a: 726-727)

⁸⁷ Meissner (1921: 138) lists other kennings for 'heart' using base words like those mentioned by Snorri in his *heiti* list. The determinants of these do not include words closely synonymous with *hugr* or *geð*, though a case could be made for *móðr* in the *hapax legomenon* *móðakarn* (*Helgakviða Hundingsbana I*: 53) which La Farge and Tucker (1992) translate as 'mood-acorn'. However, *móðr* does not have the same psychological functions as *hugr*, and is at most partially synonymous with it.

immediately clear if *hugr* is thought to be functionally synonymous with *hjarta* in the way *mōd* and *heorte* are. For example, it is unclear if *hugr* was thought to be part of the body, as well as part of the person as in Old English, or if it was closer to the relationship between Present-Day English mind and brain, where the mind is thought to reside in the brain and head but not be physically part of it. In order to explore this relationship, this section will look at the different roles attributed to *hugr* and *hjarta*, beginning with those restricted to heart and progressing to those exclusive to *hugr*.

4.1 The heart in Old Norse-Icelandic

Writing in reference to Sigurðr eating Fáfnir's heart and the excision and examination of Hjalli and Hogni's hearts in *Atlakviða*, Lockett (2011: 148) has stated that the "cardiocentric psychology of Old Norse narrative is [...] one of the most intriguing psychological idioms in all of medieval literature" and one which is worthy of detailed investigation. However, aside from these dramatic incidents, one of the most striking features of the psychological idiom of Old Norse-Icelandic is how infrequently the heart is mentioned or employed (see von See 1978). For example, there are only two occasions in the corpus of the *Íslendingasögur* where the heart is used in a cognitive or emotional context, and similar patterns are seen in the other genres of native prose. Similarly, native poetry pays little attention to the heart, and in general it is only referred to as the psychological 'seat' of fear. This pattern is markedly different in religious and romance literature, as is discussed in Chapter 4 below.

4.2 *Hjarta* as 'life-muscle'

In spite of this paucity of references to the heart, there are some features which are directly attributed to it in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. The first of these is an animating function, suggested by the reference to the dragon's heart in *Fáfnismál* 32 as *fjorsegi* 'life-muscle'. *Fjor* in Old Norse-Icelandic is used synonymously with *líf* 'life', and occurs frequently in the formula *fé ok fjor* 'property and life'. Lockett (2011: 43-50) has argued that its Old English cognate *feorh* is a person's 'transient life-force', an animating part of the person which dissipates when he or she dies.⁸⁸ Lockett (2011: 47) argues that *feorh* functions as "one of four discrete parts of human beings" along with the body, soul, and 'mind'. This

⁸⁸ *Fjor* and *feorh* are also treated by Tolley (2009: 181) and Solomonik-Pankrašova (2007).

transient life-force is distributed throughout the person, though it is occasionally located within the breast, as in *Beowulf* ll. 1547b-1549. Although *feorh* shares many similarities with the Old English concept of the soul, it differs by being subject to physical injuries which do not affect the soul. Consequently, the life-force is destroyed when a person dies; it does not continue to the afterlife, nor does it decay with the body.

It is not clear if Old Norse-Icelandic conceived of an independent life-force component. *Fjör* certainly matches many of the features of Old English *feorh*. It does not continue to the afterlife, it is used frequently in collocations and compounds relating to death, and it is able to be able to be injured. Most importantly, it seems to be responsible for animating a person, as implied by *Skírnismál* (*For Scírnis*) 20.⁸⁹ On the basis of *Höfuðlausn* 9 which refers to the *fjör* being injured, Cleasby-Vígfusson (1957: s.v. *fjör*) propose that *fjör* refers to the ‘the vital parts, the body’. This is the implication of *Völuspá* 41:

Fylliz fjörvi	feigra manna,
rýðr ragna siqt	rauðom dreyra; (Neckel 1962: 9)

He is filled with the *fjör* of doomed men
reddens the gods’ dwellings with bloody gore;

Larrington (1996: 9) translates *fjörvi* here as corpses, whereas Dronke (1997) and Orchard (2011: 11) use ‘life-blood’. La Farge and Tucker (1992: s.v. *fjör*), unencumbered with metrical concerns, probably come closest with ‘flesh as the seat of the vital principle’. As Lockett (2011: 48-50) argues for *feorh*, there is no evidence that *fjör* is associated specifically with blood as is suggested by Dronke and Orchard’s translations. If the *fjör* permeates the body as its cognate does in Old English, flesh would be a more appropriate translation than life-blood, as implied by Larrington’s ‘corpses’.

Whether or not Old Norse-Icelandic conceived of *fjör* as a discrete part of the person, as the line from *Völuspá* above demonstrates the life-force was associated with the body. However, aside from the kenning *fjörsegi* there is little that directly connects *fjör* directly to the heart. Such a connection is implied by the interpretation of *fjörarrönn* ‘life-halls’ as a kenning for chests in *Erfidrápa Óláfs Tryggvasonar* 15 (Heslop 2012a: 421). However, as Tolley (2009: 181) notes, there is nothing to suggest that any particular part of the body is being referred to by *fjörann*. However, there are two episodes from Old Norse-Icelandic

⁸⁹ *né við Freyr, meðan occart fjör lifir, / byggjom bæði saman.* (Neckel 1962: 73) ‘nor will Freyr and I settle down together / as long as our lives last. (trans. Larrington 1996: 64)

literature which strongly imply that the heart played a role animating people and animals. The first comes from *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds* Ch. 7, where earl Hákon takes revenge on Þorleifr by constructing a wooden man from driftwood which he sends out to assassinate him. In addition to the witchcraft performed by Hákon and his sisters on the *trémaðr*, it is animated by furnishing it with a man's heart:

En er hann fékk þá fret, er honum líkaði, lét hann taka einn rekabút ok gera ór trémann, ok með fjölkynngi ok atkvæðum jarls, en trollskap ok fítonsanda þeirra systra, lét hann drepa einn mann ok taka ór hjartat ok láta í þenna trémann, ok færðu síðan í fót ok gáfu nafn ok kǫlluðu Þorgarð ok mǫgnuðu hann með svá miklum fjandans krapti, at hann gekk ok mælti við menn, komu honum síðan í skip ok sendu hann út til Íslands þess erindis at drepa Þorleif jarlaskáld. (ÍF IX: 225-226)

When he had received the omens that he wanted, he had a wooden figure made from driftwood and, with his own witchcraft and spells, and with the sorcery and magic of the sisters, he had a man killed so that his heart could be put into this wooden figure. They then clothed it and named it Thorgard. With the strong power of the devil, they charmed it so that it could walk and talk, put it on a ship and sent it to Iceland with the task of killing Thorleif. (trans. Jesch 1997b: 367)

Creating a living being from driftwood parallels the story of Ask and Embla in the Eddas referred to above. What sets this incident apart is there is no mention of breath animating the *trémaðr* Þorgarðr as there is with Ask and Embla. This suggests that if not directly influenced by it, Snorri's depiction of the creation of humans draws on the Biblical creation story of God breathing life into Adam's nostrils rather than an indigenous Old Norse-Icelandic tradition. Again this points away from a breath concept being salient in the psychology of Old Norse-Icelandic and favours a cardiocentric model.

The scene from *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds* is similar to the story of the clay giant Mǫkkurkálf in *Skáldskaparmál* Ch. 24. In preparation for the giant Hrungnir's duel with Þórr, the inhabitants of Jǫtunheim decide to create him a companion for support. Again, furnishing the creation with a heart is necessary for animating it:

Þá gerðu jǫtnar mann á Grjótúnagorðum af leiri ok var hann níu rasta hár en þriggja breiðr undir hönd, en ekki fengu þeir hjarta svá mikit at hinum sómði fyrr en þeir tóku ór meri nokkvorri, ok varð honum þat eigi stöðugt þá er Þórr kom. (Faulkes 1998: 21)

Then the giants made a person at Griotunagardar of clay, and he was nine leagues high and three broad beneath the arms, but they could not get a heart

big enough to suit him until they took one out of a certain mare, and this turned out not to be steady in him when Thor came. (Faulkes 1987b: 78)⁹⁰

It is not clear if a person's *ffjör* was thought to reside exclusively within the heart, but as these passages show the heart was evidently thought to be the vital component of a person. This vivifying function is never applied to *hugr* and as such it allows us to separate *hugr* from *hjarta* in some degree. *Hugr* may have had a close relationship with *hjarta*, but they are not precisely that same thing.

4.3 *Hjarta* and character

In addition to animating people and animals, the heart is also responsible for their character. Furthermore, such characteristics are able to be passed on to another person when either the heart or the heart's blood are consumed. This is most familiar from Sigurðr eating Fáfnir's and Bøðvarr Bjarki making Hǫttr eat the beast's heart and drink its blood in *Hrólfs saga kraka* Ch. 35.⁹¹ However, the clearest presentation of this motif comes from *Ynglinga saga* Ch. 34, when Ingjaldr complains to his foster-father Svipdagr about his lack of strength:

Þá svaraði Svipdagr, at þat væri mikil skömm. Annan dag eptir lét Svipdagr taka hjarta ór vargi ok steikja á teini ok gaf síðan Ingjaldi konungssyni at eta, ok þaðan af varð hann allra manna grimmastr ok verst skaplundaðr. (ÍF XXVI: 64)

Then Svipdagr answered that it was a great shame. The following day Svipdagr had the heart cut out of a wolf and grilled on a stick and then gave it to the king's son Ingjaldr to eat, and from then on he became the fiercest and worst-tempered of all men. (trans. Finlay and Faulkes 2011: 35)

The character of the animal is reflected in the properties it transmits. Ingjaldr becomes fierce and bad-tempered which matches the presentation of wolves in Old Norse-Icelandic

⁹⁰ This story is not known from elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. However, it may be alluded to by *Kormákr* in the following verse KormQ Lv 45V (Korm 66): *Seinn þykki mér sökki / snyrti-móts, ór Fljótum / sás elgrennir unnar / orð sendi mér norðan; / hringsnyrtir þarf hjarta / háðærr í sik færa / (þó's men-Gunnar manni / meira vant) ór leiri.* (ed. Finnur Jónsson 1967 vol. 1: 88) 'Late in coming from Fljot / to our sword-fight is he who feeds / the family fatal to Odin, / and who sent me word from the north; / what that crazy sword-polisher needs / is to plant in himself a heart, / albeit of clay; but worse still / is the necklace-valkyrie's husband. (trans. McTurk 1997: 214)

⁹¹ This scene also appears in *Bjarkarímur* IV, stanzas 57-66 and V, 4-13 (Finnur Jónsson 1904: 139-140; 141-142). In these versions, however, Hleiðargarðr is attacked not by a winged troll but by a wolf and bear respectively. The fact that this scene is included in both *Hrólfs saga kraka* and the *Bjarkarímur*, unlike the bifurcation of Bøðvarr into his body and bear form, suggests that this motif is older than its relatively late date of preservation in our manuscripts of *Hrólfs saga kraka*. The passages are translated and briefly discussed in Osborn and Mitchell (2007).

sources, and can be contrasted with the fate of Møkkurkálfi who was animated with a mare's heart:

Á aðra hlið honum stóð leirjotunninn, er nefndr er Møkkurkálfi, ok var hann allhræddr. Svá er sagt at hann meig er hann sá Þór. (Faulkes 1998: 21)

On one side of him stood the clay giant, whose name was Møkkurkalfi, and he was quite terrified. They say he wet himself when he saw Thor. (Faulkes 1987b: 78)

Likewise, this reflects to the representation of mares as cowardly elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic literature.⁹² However, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the nature of the creature consumed and the properties transmitted. For example, Sigurðr gains wisdom rather than strength, bravery or cruelty from Fáfnir's heart,⁹³ whereas we are told that when Gúðrun eats a piece of the dragon's heart she becomes both wiser and 'grimmer'.⁹⁴ Likewise, Høttr acquired the beast's strength in *Hrólfs saga kraka*, but none of the negative properties one might expect from imbibing the blood of a monstrous animal.⁹⁵ The belief system underlying these incidents is that character traits can be transmitted by eating another being's heart; however, the precise nature of this transformation is shaped more by narrative concerns than by any apparent systematisation of the process.

However, although the heart is presented as the most salient location of a person or animal's character, there are a number of instances where someone undergoes a transformation by ingesting part of the body where the heart is not specified. For example, paralleling the wolf's heart given to Ingjaldr, Guttormr is fed wolf flesh in *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu* 4 to make him fierce enough to attack Sigurðr. There is no indication that Guttormr ate the heart of either the wolf or the snake:

Sumir úlf sviðo,	sumir orm sniðo,
sumir Gothormi	af gera deildo, (Neckel 1962: 198)

⁹² To have a mare's *hugr* is used as an insult in *Fóstbræðra saga* Ch. 24 and *Vatnsdæla saga* Ch. 33.

⁹³ Heinemann (2004: 39 n. 14) suggests that although we are not told that the dragon heart made Sigurðr fearless, on the basis of the changes to Gúðrun it is likely to have equipped him with 'perfect fearlessness'. If this is the case, it is not made clearly in the text. It may be that Sigurðr is already courageous enough and there was no need to 'artificially' enhance his bravery.

⁹⁴ *Sigurðr gaf Guðrúnu at eta af Fáfnis hjarta, ok síðan var hon miklu grimmari en áðr ok vitrari.* (ed. Finch 1965: 48) 'Sigurd gave Gudrun some of Fafnir's heart to eat and after this she was much grimmer and wiser than before.' (trans. Byock 1990: 79) The prose prologue to *Guðrúnarkviða I* informs us that Gúðrun had eaten some of Fáfnir's heart and was thus able to understand the language of birds: *Þat er sagn manna, at Guðrún hefði etið af Fáfnis hjarta oc hon scilði því fugls rødd.* (Neckel 1962: 201)

⁹⁵ Høttr's fate can be compared to Þorsteinn's in *Þorsteins þáttur uxafóts*, discussed below.

Some roasted wolf, some sliced-up serpent,
wolf-meat they gave Guthorm to eat (trans. Larrington 1996: 174)

Similarly, in *Landnámabók* Oddr kills and eats the bear that killed his father and brother and in so doing becomes *illr ok ódæll* ‘evil and difficult to deal with’.⁹⁶ Oddr presumably ate the bear’s heart, but this is not specified and there appears to be the implication that eating just the flesh of an animal can cause one’s character to change. This is the case in *Hrólfs saga kraka* Ch. 27, where queen Yrsa offers Bera a plate of bear meat. Despite only taking a mouthful, Bera suffers a difficult pregnancy, falls ill and gives birth to Elg-Fróði, who is a human above the waist and an elk below. *Hrólfs saga kraka* is a late source but appears to preserve a tradition whereby animal flesh and blood can cause transformative effects. Drinking blood is prominent in *Hrólfs saga kraka*, not only does Bǫðvarr make Hǫttr drink the beast’s blood, he himself acquires his strength after Elg-Fróði draws blood from his calf and has Bǫðvarr drink it in Ch. 31.

However, the scene which deviates most from the pattern of the heart imparting special characteristics comes from *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts* Ch. 11, during Þorsteinn’s fight with the troll family. After dispatching Járnskjöldr, Þorsteinn encounters the troll-wife Skjaldvör, who throws him to the ground and makes to bite into his neck. At that moment, Þorsteinn is inspired to commit himself to King Ólafr and the Christian faith and upon doing so a brilliant ray of light bursts into the hall and into the troll’s eyes. This enervates her and has the following effect:

Hon tók þá at geispa niðörkliga. Hleypr þá or henni spýja ok ofan í andlit Þorsteini, svá at nálíga hélt honum við bana af illsku ok óþef þeim, er af stóð. Þykir mönnum ok eigi örvænt, at í brjóst Þorsteini muni af komit hafa nökkurr partr, sakir þess at mönnum þykkir sem hann hafi eigi síðan dyggliga einhamr verit, hvárt er því veldr meir spýja Skjaldvarar eðr þat, at hann var út borinn. (ÍF XIII: 363-364)

She began to yawn hugely. Then vomit poured from her down onto Thorstein’s face so that he barely kept himself from death because of the foulness and stench that came from it. People think that it is not unlikely that some part of it came into Thorstein’s breast, and that because of this he did not always have just a human form afterwards, whether the cause was really Skaldvor’s vomit or his being exposed. (trans. Clark 1997: 351)

⁹⁶ *Oddr drap björninn ok færði heim, ok segja menn, at hann æti allan, ok kallaðisk þá hefna fǫður síns, er hann drap björninn, en þá bróður síns, er hann át hann. Oddr var síðan illr ok ódæll við að eiga;* (ÍF I: 286)

Odd killed it and brought it home, and the story goes that he ate the whole bear. He said he’d avenged his father by killing it, and his brother by eating it. After that Odd turned out an evil man, very hard to deal with. (trans. Hermann Pálsson and Edwards 1972: 109)

No further information is given about the theory behind this transformation. One could argue that as the vomit was understood to proceed from the chest, which was the repository of the ethnopsychological part of the person, the vomit is imbued with the troll's character.⁹⁷ However, it is more likely that the vomit was considered toxic and represents a belief that ingesting any part of another being has the potential to transform a person's character.

Although it is not just the heart, or the heart's blood, that causes such transformations in Old Norse-Icelandic the heart can nevertheless be considered the salient part of the person in such situations. For example, the importance attributed to the heart can be seen in *Eiríks saga rauða* Ch. 4 where the *spákona* is fed a meal of all the hearts of the animals available at the farm.⁹⁸ We can propose a cline of salience from the heart through the heart's blood, blood, flesh and then vomit.

4.4 The physical nature of the heart

Although it is not just the heart which has the potential to transform a person if consumed, the heart itself was thought to be responsible for a person's character. The most well-known example of this concerns the fate of Hjalli and Hǫgni, told in *Atlakviða*, *Atlamál* and *Vǫlsunga saga*. *Vǫlsunga saga* Ch. 37 tells how King Gunnarr and his brother Hǫgni are captured by King Atli. Atli cuts out the heart of the thrall Hjalli, and presents it to Gunnarr telling him it is his brother Hǫgni's. However, Gunnarr is able to tell that the heart cannot be Hǫgni's as it trembles too much. Then Atli has Hǫgni's heart cut out. Unlike Hjalli, he endures the ordeal valiantly and when his heart is presented to Gunnar the he responds as follows, according to *Atlakviða* 25:

Mærr qvað þat Gunnarr, geir-Niflungr:
 'Hér hefi ec hiarta Hǫgna ins frœcna,
 ólíct hiarta Hialla ins blauða,
 er lítt bifaz, er á bióði liggr,
 bifðiz svági miqc, þá er í briósti lá. (Neckel 1962: 244)

⁹⁷ Waugh (1995) discusses the parallels between words and vomit as contents of the chest in Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic traditions. Words and the chest are treated by Jager (1990).

⁹⁸ *Borð váru upp tekin um kveldit, ok er frá því at segja, hvat spákonunni var matbúit. Henni var gorr grautr af kiðjamjólk, ok matbúin hjörtu ór ǫllum kykvendum, þeim er þar váru til.* (ÍF IV: 207)
 'That evening tables were set up and food prepared for the seeress. A porridge of kid's milk was made for and as meat she was given the hearts of all the animals available there.' (trans. Kunz 1997: 6) It is possible, though not clear, that she ate the hearts for the purpose of divination.

Then Gunnar, the glorious lord of the Spear-Niflungs, said:
 ‘Here I have the heart of Hogni the brave,
 quite unlike the heart of Hialli the cowardly;
 it scarcely quivers as it lies on the plate;
 it did not quiver even that much when it was in the breast. (trans. Larrington 1996: 214)

Lockett (2011: 148) writes that this episode differs from other medieval literatures by making the physical association between courage and cowardice, which is usually only known to the narrator and the person experiencing the cardiocentric sensation, known to a wider audience. However, what is particularly interesting is the apparently independent status of the hearts’ behaviour. Hjalli’s heart trembles even when excised from the body; the implication is that the heart is not just responding to emotional stimuli, but is responsible for them. This can be seen in the tale of Mǫkkurkálfi who is doomed from the beginning by being encumbered with a trembling mare’s heart.

The relationship between a person’s character and the nature of his or her heart is made explicit in Ch. 17 of the *Hauksbók* version of *Fóstbræðra saga*. Like *Atlakviða* it describes the excision and examination of a man’s heart, in this case the valiant Þorgeirr:

Svá segja sumir men, at þeir klyfði hann til hjarta ok vildu sjá, hvílíkt væri, svá hugprúðr sem hann var, en menn segja, at hjartat væri harðla lítit, ok hofðu sumir menn þat fyrir satt, at minni sé hugprúðra manna hjörtu en huglaussa, því at menn kalla minna blóð í litlu hjarta en miklu, en kalla hjartablóði hræzlu fylgja, ok segja menn því detta hjarta manna í brjóstinu, at þá hræðisk hjartablóði ok hjartat í manninum. (ÍF VI: 210-211)

Some people say that he had shown such courage that they cut him open to see what kind of heart lay there, and that it had been very small. Some hold it true that a brave man’s heart is smaller than that of a coward, for a small heart has less blood than a large one and is therefore less prone to fear. If a man’s heart sinks in his breast and fails him, they say it is because his heart’s blood and his heart have become afraid. (trans. Regal 1997: 268)

All versions of *Fóstbræðra saga* contain numerous digressions, and the *Hauksbók* and *Flateyjarbók* in particular, include numerous encyclopaedic and medical interpolations into the text, which means that the passage above may be representative of an imported rather than native and well-known tradition concerning the heart. Further, the description of Þorgeirr’s heart is presented in Christian terms; it is God who is said to have strengthened his heart. Nonetheless, this description of Þorgeirr’s heart is found in all five main manuscripts of the saga which suggests that it was an original feature rather than a learned

interpretation, even if in *Hauksbók* it is framed in a Christian context (see Jónas Kristjánsson 1972: 314). At the very least, it seems to confirm that the physical status of a person's heart was considered to be a determining factor in their behaviour.

However, the more specific claim that a brave man's heart is smaller than a coward's because it has less blood within it is not explicitly evidenced elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. For example, there is no indication that there is a disparity in size between the hearts of Hjalli and Högni. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the *Hauksbók* passage does align with some of the imagery of the heart elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic. For example, in Snorri's *heiti* list the heart is referred to in terms of small, hard objects such as *korn*, *hnot* and *epli*.⁹⁹ The association between something small and hard and the heart is seen in Eilífr Guðrúnarson's *Þórsdrápa*:

Ne djúp- akorn drápu
dólgs vammis firum gl[amma
stríðkviðjun]dum stöðvar
stall við rastar -falli.
Ógndjarfan hlaut Atli
eir[fjarðan hug] meira.
Skalfa fiórs né Þjálfar
þróttar steinn við ótta. (ed. Faulkes 1998: 28)

Their hostility-acorns [hearts] did not fail these people, firmly opposed to evil,
at the wolf-home-league's [mountain's] deep-fall [river-gorge]. Atli [Thor]
gained more battle-bold, relentless purpose. Neither Thor's nor Thialfi's
valour-stone [heart] shook with fear. (trans. Faulkes 1987b: 84)

In addition to such kennings, *hjarta* does not collocate or compound with adjectives meaning 'big' or 'large'. The 'big-hearted' metaphor, meaning generous or kind, familiar from Present-Day English does not form part of Old Norse-Icelandic idiom.

However, although there is not a tradition of referring to the large size of a person's heart, *hjarta* does not collocate with or compound with adjective meaning 'small' either. Except for *Fóstbræðra saga* there are no explicitly positive or negative references to the size of a person's heart. Instead, the salient feature is the heart's firmness, a property shared by almost all of the kenning determinates listed by Snorri. As an example, we can compare Mǫkkurkálfi's trembling mare's heart with Hrúgnir's heart of stone. von See (1978) argues that Hrúgnir's heart is firm as stone because it does not have blood flowing

⁹⁹ *Steinn* is obviously hard but could be any size and *mýl* need not necessarily be either. Kennings that refer to the heart in terms of *berg* or *hús* or *hugr* are not referring to the heart's size but rather its function as the container or environment of *hugr*.

through it to make it large and tremble. However, there is no such indication in the text that the size or anaemia of the two giants' hearts determines their character. It is not the size of the mare's heart which is the problem, but that it was *eigi stöðugt* 'unsteady'. Had the giants been able to furnish Mǫkkurkálfi with a large bear's heart, it is likely he would have acquitted himself better when Þórr arrived.

The notion that firmness is the primary concern of this idiom is shown by the numerous mentions of hard *hugr*, *hjarta*, *brjóst*, *geð*, *lynd*, *móðr*, *óðr* throughout Old Norse-Icelandic in reference to bravery and ferocity. By contrast, compounds with *blauð*, *lin*, and *hóg*, all of which means soft, connote weakness or passivity. Likewise, adjectives meaning small never collocate or compound with the nouns listed above for positive qualities. The only 'cardiocentric' compound with *mikill* 'large' *mikil-brjóstaðr* means courageous, rather than cowardly as would be expected if a large heart was associated with lack of courage. As such, the lexical evidence points clearly to an association between hardness of heart and bravery, but there is no suggestion that small size plays a part in this conception.

The notion that brave hearts are small is further problematised by the following verse by Einarr Skúlason recorded by Snorri in *Skáldskaparmál*:

En við hjaldr þar er hǫlða<r>,
hugprútit svellr, lúta
- Munninn drekkur blóð ór benjum
blásvartr – konungs hjarta. (Faulkes 1998: 91)

But the king's heart swells, bulging with courage in battle, where heroes sink down. Blue black Munin drinks blood from wounds. (Faulkes 1987b: 138)

Skaldic poetry does occasionally, if infrequently, feature incidents such as this where the heart swells in response to strong emotion in a manner similar to that of Old English texts.¹⁰⁰ Were the determining factor of a hero's heart its small size, such references would not make any sense. In light of this evidence, it does not seem likely that the description of a hero's heart as small in *Fóstbræðra saga* represents a widespread tradition in Old Norse-

¹⁰⁰ This verse is also notable for its apparent reference to *hugr* swelling. Faulkes translates *hugprútit* as 'swollen with pride', with heart as the object of the verb *svella*. The implications of this are not clear. It may be argued that the *hugr* is inside the heart causing it to swell, or that *hugr* here is being used synonymously with *hjarta*. Furthermore, as Einarr Skúlason also authored Christian poetry, where such imagery is common (see Chapter 4 §3.4), without further evidence it is difficult to assign the imagery of the *hugr* swelling to the native tradition. However, in light of the fragmentary nature of our evidence it cannot be fully ruled out either. Whatever the case, it is significant that although the heart, and possibly the *hugr*, is seen to swell in this verse, there is no associated hydraulic behaviour of the Old English type.

Icelandic. The author may have been drawing on the references to the heart as a small, hard object in the poetic tradition but these kennings prioritise firmness of the heart rather than its size. However, even if the small-heart motif was not a salient part of Old Norse-Icelandic psychological idiom, the passage from *Fóstbræðra saga* is nonetheless important for demonstrating, like *Atlakviða*, that the physical nature of a person's heart plays a prominent role in determining their character, and in particular how they respond to fear.¹⁰¹

4.5 *Hugr, hjarta* and courage

Whereas *hugr* is never used to refer to the heart's animating function, the two concepts do overlap when it comes to courage and fear. The similarity between *hugr* and *hjarta* in this domain is shown in effectively parallel constructions, concerning the *hugr* or *hjarta* of animals, when referring to a person's character, as in the following passages from *Finnboga saga ramma* Ch. 11 and *Kjalnesinga saga* Ch. 10:

"Svá skal vera sem þú vill, ok státt nú upp, ef þú hefir þat hjarta, sem líkligt væri, heldr þess kvikendis, er ragast er." (ÍF XIV: 274)

"it will be as you wish. Stand up now if you have the sort of heart one would expect, rather than that of the most cowardly of all beasts." (trans. Kennedy 1997: 233)

Kolfiðr kallar þá ok mælti: "Ef Búi má heyra mál mitt, þá gangi hann ór einstiginu, ef hann hefir heldr manns hug en berkykvendis." (ÍF XIV: 24-25)

Then Kolfinn called out and said, "If Bui can hear what I am saying, and if he has the courage of a man rather than a she-beast, then let him down from this narrow path." (trans. Cook and Porter 1997: 316)¹⁰²

Similarly, Sigurðr's statement in *Fáfnismál* 30 that *Hugr er betri enn sé hiðs megin* (Neckel 1962: 185) 'Courage is better than the strength of a sword', is paralleled in *Hárbarðzlióð* 26 where Þórr is said to have strength but no 'heart' *Þórr á afl ærit, enn ekki hiarta* (Neckel 1962: 82). These similarities show that at least when it comes to courage, *hugr* and *hjarta* are broadly interchangeable.

In addition to this synonymous usage of *hugr* and *hjarta*, there are occasional references to *hugr* 'shivering' or moving within the breast, paralleling descriptions of the

¹⁰¹ von See (1978: 76) also argues that the heart's physical nature is the cause rather than a symptom of a person's courage, but holds that smallness and anaemia are as important as its firmness.

¹⁰² Similar insults are made in *Fóstbræðra saga* and *Vatnsdæla saga*, see n. 89 above.

heart, as in the verse from *Ásmundar saga kappabana* referred to at the beginning of this section. For example, in Þórleifr jarlsskáld Rauðfeldarson's verse on the destruction of his ship he states that *Hrollir hugr minn illa* 'my mind shivers badly' (Heslop 2012b: 375-376). Likewise, in the following line from a verse in *Ketils saga hængs: sék þinn hug skjálfa* (ed. Finnur Jónsson 1967 vol. 2: 283) 'I see your *hugr* tremble'.

However, as von See (1978: 81) has noted, it is only in this semantic domain where *hugr* and *hjarta* cross over. It is very rare for *hjarta* to be referred to as the 'seat of emotions' in Old Norse-Icelandic and outside Christian contexts the heart does not have any cognitive faculties attributed to it. While von See perhaps goes too far in proposing that all references to the heart outside the domain of 'courage' and 'fear' are influenced by either Christianity or the language and style of French romance, there is a marked difference in the functions attributed to *hugr* in native texts compared to those given to *hjarta*. This makes pairing *hugr* and *hjarta* as functional synonyms difficult, as outside the context of courage and fear there is little overlap between the two. And as we shall see below, there is little to suggest that the other faculties of *hugr* were considered to have caused somatic responses. Compared to Old English *mōd*, *hugr* is depicted as a far less embodied context. In light of this, it seems reasonable to propose that *hugr* could be thought to reside in the heart, but was not considered to be identical to the physical organ.

5 Emotion and the body

The previous section established that Old Norse-Icelandic had a broadly cardiocentric psychology, where the physical heart had a prominent role to play in not only animating a person but in determining a person's character and, to some extent, their emotional and cognitive behaviour. This brings Old Norse-Icelandic psychology closer to that of Old English and Old Saxon and sets it apart from the ethereal, breath-based traditions of circumpolar shamanistic cultures. However, the most prominent feature of West Germanic vernacular psychology is not that it is cardiocentric, a feature shared by many cultures across the world past and present, but the extended physiological features of this cardiocentrism and its relationship with the rest of the body. This section will evaluate the nature of the body's relationship with emotion in Old Norse-Icelandic, focusing particularly on the features of Lockett's (2011) hydraulic model, in order to compare it to its West Germanic neighbours.

One of the difficulties in studying the relationship between emotion and the body in Old Norse-Icelandic is that comparatively little attention is given to characters' feelings. This detached and objective, unemotional tone has been noted by numerous critics and discussed in detail by William Miller (1992). As there is generally more emotion in Eddic poetry than in narrative prose, it has been difficult to determine the extent to which the 'cold' saga style is representative of cultural attitudes to emotion or if it is a literary device. As shown in Chapter 4 below, one way to determine the status of the cultural models presented in the native literature we have is to compare them to foreign sources which have been translated and adapted into Old Norse-Icelandic. Set against these, native prose and poetry present a broadly unified model of emotion and its relationship to the body which, despite some differences between text genres, can be legitimately considered to form a coherent whole. The most prominent of these shared features is a lack of interior focus and a reticence to express emotion in bodily terms. References to somatic expressions of such emotion are in the minority; in the vast majority of cases, if a person is angry, sad, or happy they are described in plain verbal terms. When somatic responses to emotion are mentioned, they are generally used to signal a character's true feelings in circumstances where they are being hidden from others in the text. There is little interest in a character's 'inner life' outside such situations.

The most common somatic reactions to emotion are consistent across the genres of native literature. These are weeping, trembling, and swelling (see Miller 1992: 97-98). Swelling differs slightly in early skaldic verse where there is more focus on the contents of the chest, whereas in later prose there are fewer references to any particular locus of swelling. Finally, blushing which is a common feature in the *Íslendingasögur* rarely occurs in poetry outside Christian contexts. However, in spite of these differences there is more that connects the emotional expression of these native genres than separates them. Each of these bodily expressions of emotion on their own could be integrated into a physiological system that parallels Lockett's (2011) hydraulic model which she has shown to have operated in Old English, Old Saxon, and to a lesser degree, Old Irish. The main aim of this section is to assess her claim that such a conceptual model also operated in Old Norse-Icelandic psychology.

5.1 Hydraulic physiology

Lockett's (2011: 62-63) hydraulic model has three primary components in addition to the localisation of the mind-like concept in the chest cavity. These are the generation of cardiocentric heat in response to intense (negative) emotional experiences; seething and swelling of the contents of the chest in response to this cardiocentric heat; and pressure exerted upon the chest and its contents because of this swelling. These key components are shared by both Old English and Old Saxon texts. However, Lockett's model allows for different peripheral conceptual extensions that need not be shared between languages that are considered to have conceived of cognition and emotion in hydraulic terms. For example, Old English elaborates upon the basic model by including mental roominess and coolness as a manifestation of emotional distress, whereas Old Saxon does not (Lockett 2011: 68-72; 135-146).

One step further removed from the Old English model is Old Irish, which prioritises external manifestations of emotion over the internal reactions of West Germanic (Lockett 2011: 146). Although Old Irish emotional experiences are characterised by cardiocentric heat, this does not lead to the constriction of the heart and internal pressure and swelling seen in Old English and Old Saxon. This lack of internal pressure appears to be linked to the numerous external responses to emotion that are seen throughout Old Irish. Lockett (2011: 145) considers that because cardiocentric heat could be dissipated through such processes, there was no way in which this heat could generate internal pressure and its associated effects. The fact that pressure could be dissipated has implications both for the psychophysiological mechanics of emotion and cognition, but also for the interpretation of moral behaviour. In Old Irish, there is prominence given to controlling the heart, or voluntarily constraining the chest as is seen in Old English in particular (Lockett: 146). In this respect, Old Irish does not exhibit a hydraulic model *per se*. It is a psychology which is based around cardiocentrism, and cardiocentric heat but one where the chest is not 'sealed'. Lockett (2011: 146) notes that a similar external manifestation of somatic features associated with emotion occurs in Old Norse-Icelandic texts, and suggests that this may be due to the prolonged contact between the two cultures.

However, Lockett (2011: 147) does not include a detailed study of Old Norse-Icelandic psychophysiology in her survey of the hydraulic model in medieval northern European cultures. Nonetheless, she states that "all of its key features are well represented in the literature: cardiocentric localization, heat, boiling, pressure and heaviness of the

breast” (Lockett 2011: 147) However, although the somatic expression of emotion in Old Norse-Icelandic features some of these components, they are not employed in such a way as to represent a fully functioning hydraulic model. Swelling and heaviness of the contents of the breast are well attested, but many features, notably heat, are entirely absent from native Old Norse-Icelandic texts. Furthermore, the external expressions of emotion do not correlate with the conceptual model of hot fluid in a sealed container, a feature which is also absent in Old Irish.

However, it is worth noting that Lockett (2011: 147) does provide one example from Old Norse-Icelandic as evidence that a hydraulic model of cognition and emotion operated in this culture. In Ch. 132 of *Njáls saga* Þórhallr Ásgrímsson is told of the death of his foster-father Njáll Þorgeirsson and reacts in a spectacularly hydraulic manner:

Þórhalli Ásgrímssyni brá svá við, er honum var sagt, at Njáll, fóstri hans, var dauðr ok hann hafði inni brunnit, at hann þrútnaði allr ok blóðbogi stóð ór hvárritveggju hlustinni, ok varð eigi stöðvat, ok féll hann í óvit, ok þá stöðvaðisk. Eptir þat stóð hann upp ok kvað sér lítilmannliga verða (ÍF XII: 344)

Thorhall Asgrimson was so moved when he was told that his foster-father Njal was dead and that he had been burned in his house that his whole body swelled up and blood gushed from both ears, and it did not stop until he fell in a faint, and then it stopped. After that he stood up and said that this had not been manly of him. (Cook 1997: 163)

However, dramatic as Þórhallr’s response is, it is exceptional in Old Norse-Icelandic literature; there is nothing which parallels the hydraulic *blóðbogi* pouring from his ears.¹⁰³ As discussed in the following chapter, this scene may well have been influenced by foreign medical traditions and is unlikely to represent a fully native conception of how the body responded to emotion. However, even if we concede that it is an example of genuine vernacular psychology, there is much that separates it from the West Germanic model of the mind. Notably, no heat is mentioned nor is there any reference to Þórhallr’s chest or its contents. Of course, it is not reasonable to expect every incident to exhibit all the features of a hydraulic model; however, as these are absent from the corpus of native Old Norse-

¹⁰³ *The Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* records nine unique records of *blóðbogi* in its twelve citations. Only four of these, including *Njáls saga*, occur in native Old Norse-Icelandic texts; the other citations come from religious or medical texts. Further, it is only in *Njáls saga* where this *blóðbogi* is the result of some ‘hydraulic’ process. In *Morkinskinna* King Harldr is shot in the throat by an arrow so that a ‘blood-bow’ pours out of his mouth (Finnur Jónsson 1932: 277). Similarly in *Svarfdæla saga* Ch. 24 Karl strikes Þorkell on the nose with a pouch, knocking out two of his teeth so that *stóðu blóðbogar úr andlitinu*. The final example, from *Ragnars saga ok sonu hans* Ch. 3 refers to a jet of blood that shoots from the serpent Ragnar has killed.

Icelandic texts as a whole, this passage becomes less persuasive as evidence for a hydraulic psycho-physiology.

5.2 Heat and fluid dynamics

The most prominent difference between the cardiocentric models of West Germanic and Old Norse-Icelandic is the absence of heat or any salient role afforded to temperature in Old Norse-Icelandic psychological idiom. Emotions good or bad do not burn, nor are the chest or its contents ever depicted as heating up or cooling down.¹⁰⁴ There are only three instances of which I am aware that feature any form of cardiocentric heat: *Víglundar saga* Ch. 12, *Guðrúnarhvöt* 20, and the second *lausavísa* attributed to Helga Bárðardóttir from *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss* Ch. 7. However, it is only the last of these which bears anything more than a superficial resemblance to the *hatheortnes* motif of Old English literature.

The first incident, from *Víglundar saga*, forms part of an extended discourse on the nature of true love. This stands apart from other depictions of ‘romance’ and desire in the *Íslendingasögur* and owes much more to the translated romances which began to be introduced to the Old Norse world in the thirteenth century. The saga is an unusual amalgam of bridal-quest romance and *Íslendingasögur* feud narrative (see Kalinke 1994, 2002).¹⁰⁵ And although the saga is an original work and not merely an imitation of a foreign romance, its discourse on love is fully indebted to the romantic tradition rather than the native one. It is so unusual that it is worth quoting in full:

En þau unnust því heitara með leyniligri ást ok fólginni elsku þeim í brjósti þegar í fyrstu, er þau váru uppvaðandi, svá at rætr elskunnar ok uppvöxtr ástarinnar, er aldri varð upprætt ór þeira hjörtum, eptir því sem náttúra er amorsins, at eldr yndisins ok logi elskunnar brennr því heitara ok sækir því meir brjóst ok hjörtu mannanna saman sem fleiri vilja þeim meina ok stærri skorður við settar þeira vandamanna, er áðr hefir ást ok elska saman fallit þeira á millum, sem nú þessara manna, Víglundar ok Ketilríðar, því at þau unnust alla æfi svá heitt, meðan þau lifðu bæði, at hvárki mátti af öðru sjá, þaðan af er þau sáust fyrsta, ef þau skyldu eptir því gera, sem hugir þeira stóðu til. (ÍF XIV: 82)

Víglund and Ketilrid loved each other even more ardently now than they had while growing up. They had such a secret love concealed in their hearts that

¹⁰⁴ As Sävborg (2013: 92-3) notes, grief is often expressed metaphorically as cold. However, there are no indications that such representations were thought to have any physiological significance, nor that there was a dynamic interaction of temperatures and emotions within a person’s chest.

¹⁰⁵ The problem of assigning *Víglundar saga* to any particular genre has been addressed by Pavan’s (2013) thesis.

their deeply entrenched love and the fruit of their affection could never be uprooted from their hearts, since this is the nature of true love. For the fire of affection and the flames of love burn all the more intensely, and weld together the hearts and minds of lovers all the more tightly, the greater the number of those who wish to injure them and the greater the obstacle that families place in the path of those whom love and affection have brought together, as was the case with these two, Viglund and Ketilrid. They loved each other so ardently all their lives that, if they could do as their hearts told them, neither ever wanted to be without the other from the time they first laid eyes on each other. (trans. Kalinke 1997: 421-22)

This manner of talking about the breast, heart and emotion is a hallmark of the translated Old French and Anglo-Norman romances commissioned by the court of King Hákon Hákonarson of Norway.¹⁰⁶ The cardiocentrism of this literature is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 §4 below. However, for now it is worth noting that even this imported motif of cardiocentric heat is somewhat different from the model familiar from Old English. There is little, if anything, to suggest that this depiction of the fires of true love is to be interpreted in literal, physiological terms; instead, this is a much more likely to be a symbolic means of talking about the ardent passion of lovers, rather than something based on somatic experience. Even if it were understood literally, the passage makes no mention of any concomitant physiological effects of this internal fire.

While the passage from *Víglundar saga* clearly draws from foreign models of emotional discourse, the remaining two examples of cardiocentric heat are not as obviously affected by any such influence. The first of these, from *Guðrúnarhvöt* 20 contains the image of sorrows melting around the heart, which bears a passing resemblance to the ebullient cardiocentric imagery of Old English. The verse is full of cardiocentric psychology: Guðrún's breast is filled with 'misfortune' *bql* and sorrow is located around the heart.

Hlaðit ér, iarlar,	eikikostinn,
látið þann und hilmi	hæstan verða!
megi brenna brióst	bqlvaflit eldr,
[<i>prungit</i> ¹⁰⁷] um hiarta	þiðni sorgir! (Neckel 1962: 267-268)

Nobles, build high the oak-wood pyre!
 Let it be the highest under heaven.
 May fire burn up the breast so full of wrongs,
 may sorrows melt, heavy about the heart. (trans. Larrington 1996: 237)

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 4 §4.

¹⁰⁷ I have supplied *prungit* 'heavy' as the collocation is well-attested elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic literature (see Dronke 1969: 137).

What sets this passage apart from the hydraulic models of West Germanic and Old Irish is that the burning of the breast is not generated by Guðrún's sorrow, but the pyre upon which she is placed. The fact that the breast is focalised is because it is the salient part of the body when it comes to feelings, motivations and behaviours. It is also far from clear if the sorrows 'melting' is seen as a physiological response to the heat of the flames. If the reference is understood in this way, it would be the opposite of the pattern seen in Old English where relief from emotional distress is accompanied by cardiocentric cooling. However, as this motif does not occur elsewhere in native Old Norse-Icelandic literature it is best seen as a metaphorical response to the heat of the pyre. Nonetheless, depression and despondency are often represented as cardiocentric heaviness or feelings that crowd the heart. In this respect, the image of sorrows melting may be seen as representing a physiological release of pressure around the heart.

The only text which unambiguously depicts the 'mind' as hot is Helga Bárðardóttir's *lausavísa* from *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*:

Braut vil ek bráðla leita,
brestr ei stríð í flestu
mér fyr menja rýri,
mun ek dáliga kálaz,
þvíat auðspenni unnak
alteit sefa heitum;
sorg má ek sízt því byrgja,
sit ek ein, trega greinum. (Finnur Jónsson 1967 vol. 2: 482)

Soon will I seek to leave.
My sorrow does not fade
for the waster of wealth.
I must wither away
for with passion hot and heavy
I loved the heaper of riches.
So my sorrow I cannot hide.
I sit alone, I tell my tragedy. (trans. Anderson 1997: 245)

Sefa, translated by Anderson here as passion, is a poetic synonym for *hugr*, and in the other principal manuscript version of the saga the phrase *heitum hug* is used in place of *sefa heitum*. Consequently, this verse stands out as the only clear example of either *hugr* or *hjarta* being characterised in terms of heat in an ostensibly native Old Norse-Icelandic textual tradition, though as with the passage in *Víglundar saga* it is worth nothing that again there are no hydraulic effects associated with this cardiocentric heat.

However, as this is the only example of the ‘mind’ being depicted as hot, there is reason to doubt that it represents a conception of desire that has not been influenced by either the language of romance or Christianity. Though attributed to a semi-legendary ninth-century poet, the texts of the saga are primarily preserved from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the verses are assumed to date from the fourteenth. Consequently, the most likely explanation for this unique depiction of *hugr/sefa* is that the author had been influenced by the romantic tradition of talking about ‘a hot heart’.¹⁰⁸

In addition to lacking any systematic imagery equivalent to the *hatheortness* motif, Old Norse-Icelandic also lacks the ubiquitous corollary of cardiocentric heat in Old English: seething, welling and boiling. Neither *sjóða* ‘boil, cook’ which is cognate with English ‘seethe, sodden’ nor *vella* ‘to well up, boil’, are associated with emotional or cognitive processes or the chest and its contents in a hydraulic sense.¹⁰⁹ Instead, both are almost exclusively restricted to the semantic domain of cooking.

Nor does heat extend to other areas of the bodily expression of emotion that could be potentially hydraulic. For example, in native Old Norse-Icelandic texts there is no motif of hot tears, which is common indicator of cardiocentric heat in Old English (Lockett 2011: 140-41). As discussed in the following chapter, hot tears are restricted to Christian contexts and do not appear to have formed part of the native Old Norse-Icelandic conceptualisation of weeping. As Meissner (1921: 131) outlines, the general pattern of speaking about tears is to refer to them in terms of rain or other weather phenomena.¹¹⁰ On some occasions tears are referred to as hail stones, as is the case with Þórhallr Ásgrímsson *Njáls saga* Ch. 142 and Glúmr in *Víglúms saga* Ch. 7. In these cases the temperature of

¹⁰⁸ The manuscript tradition of *Barðar saga Snæfellsáss* is associated with translated romances including the *Saga af Tristram* (Francini 2005: 250-251).

¹⁰⁹ *Sjóða* is used once in the sense ‘to mull over’ in *Njáls saga* Ch. 98 which is an extension of the word into a cognitive domain, but not in a hydraulic sense: *Bergþóra mælti: "Undarliga er yðr farit: Þér vegið víg þau, er yðr rekr lítit til, en meltið slíkt ok sjóðið fyrir yðr svá at ekki verðr af;* (ÍF XII: 252) Bergthora spoke: “You men act strangely – you kill when the cause is small, but in matters like this you digest and stew until nothing comes of it.” (trans. Cook 1997: 120) Both verbs occur rarely in the Edda and the skaldic corpus and neither are used in psychological contexts. McDougall (1983: 582-660) devotes a chapter of his thesis to the use of *sjóða* in reference to cogitation in Old Norse-Icelandic, noting its rarity compared to the range of extended senses its reflexes have in the modern Scandinavian languages. He draws on a range of medieval Germanic and classical sources in order to investigate whether ‘boiling’ psychological imagery may have been more common in Old Norse-Icelandic than is implied by the paucity of evidence we have for it in our remaining written sources. Although writing that “it is not impossible that this “boiling metaphor” is, in some form or other, the common heritage of many Indo-European peoples, perhaps based on shared notions of a connection between “internal heat” and heightened mental and emotional activity” (McDougall 1983: 610), the sources he draws together only serve to show the differences between Old Norse-Icelandic and West Germanic in respect to this imagery.

¹¹⁰ There are occasions where *laug* ‘bath’ or *lón* ‘lagoon’ are used as base words (Meissner 1921: 131).

the tears does not seem to be important; the salient feature is the representation of tears as a form of precipitation.

However, there is one example from the Poetic Edda which apparently refers to burning tears. In *Helgaqviða Hundingsbana II* 45, Sigrún is weeping over Helgi's burial mound. The verse tells us that *innfjalgt tár* fall onto Helgi's breast:

'Ein veldr þú, Sigrún	frá Sefafiðlóm,
er Helgi er	harmdög sleginn;
grætr þú, gullvarið,	grimmom tárom,
sólbiqt, suðræn,	áðr þú sofa gangir;
hvert fellr blóðuct	á brióst grami,
úrsvalt, innfiálgt,	ecca þrungit. (Neckel 1962: 160)

You alone, Sigrún, from Sefafell,
cause Helgi to be soaked in sorrow-dew;
you weep, gold-adorned lady, bitter tears,
sun-bright southern girl, before you go to sleep;
each falls bloody on the breast of the prince,
cold as dew, burning hot, thick with grief. (trans. Larrington 1996: 140)

Innfjalgr only occurs in this passage, and is derived from *fjalgr* or *válgr* 'hot'. However, the translation of the compound as referring to heat is problematic. Orchard (2011: 144) translates it as 'searing', rather than burning, which is proposed along with 'penetrating' by La Farge and Tucker (1992: s.v. *inn-fiálgr*). Considering that tears are nowhere else referred to as hot or burning in native texts, and that the verse also describes Sigrún's tears as *úrsvallr* 'cold, wet clammy', 'burning' seems inappropriate. Accordingly Cleasby-Vígfusson (1957: s.v. *válgr*) proposes that *innfjalgr* is a misreading of **úffjalgr* 'un-warm'. In light of the semantics, this emendation seems justified. However, if we follow the manuscript reading and accept the 'burning tears', there is no indication that their temperature is a product of Sigrún's heart.

Lockett (2011: 147) only offers one somatic feature which would suggest cardiocentric heat as a feature of the Old Norse-Icelandic psychological idiom: blushing. Blushing, or more appropriately 'reddening', occurs often in the *Íslendingasögur* and other prose genres, but is infrequent in poetry outside Christian contexts, as is the case in Old English. In Christian texts, blushing is linked to shame.¹¹¹ However, in the *Íslendingasögur*

¹¹¹ The noun *kinnroði* 'cheek-redness' is the only expression of blushing in the skaldic corpus and occurs in *Pétursdrápa* 43 (McDougall 2007: 834-835). The *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* has 29 citations for *kinnroði*, all of which are restricted to Christian texts.

it is associated with a wider range of feelings and refers most often to anger or frustration rather than shame or embarrassment-like emotions.

Like most somatic expressions of emotion in Old Norse-Icelandic, reddening serves to show a character's true feelings. The most well-known example of this is from *Njáls saga* Ch. 44, when Bergþóra is goading *Njáll* and his sons. Skarpheðinn responds as follows:

"Ekki hofu vér kvenna skap," segir Skarpheðinn, "at vér reiðimsk við öllu."
 "Reiddisk Gunnar þó fyrir yðra hönd," segir hon, "ok þykkir hann skapgóðr; ok ef þér rekið eigi þessa réttar, þá munuð þér engrar skammar reka." "Gaman þykkir kerlingunni at, móður várri," segir Skarpheðinn ok glotti við, en þó spratt honum sveiti í enni, ok kómu rauðir flekkar í kinnr honum, en því var ekki vant. (ÍF XII: 114)

We're not like women, that we become furious over everything," said Skarpheðinn.

"But Gunnar became furious, on your behalf," she said, "and he is said to be gentle. If you don't set this to rights you will never avenge any shame."

"The old lady enjoys all this," said Skarpheðinn and grinned, but sweat formed on his brow and red spots on his cheeks, which was unusual for him. (Cook 1997: 52)

This passage is also notable for mentioning perspiration which rarely features in Old Norse-Icelandic texts of any genre. However, there is nothing to suggest that heat, cardiocentric or not, is considered a salient part of Skarpheðinn's reaction. What is most important is that the reader is given an insight into what Skarpheðinn is hiding behind his grin, and that we are able to contrast his response with his brothers Grímr who stays silent and 'bites his lip' *var hljóðr ok beit á vörrinni* and Helgi who showed no change in his disposition whatsoever *brá ekki við* (ÍF XII: 114).

As well as reddening, there almost as many instances of characters losing the colour from their faces when they are distressed or worried. Like blushing, this reaction is never linked to any other physiological process. In fact, the face is referred to far more often than the heart in emotional contexts. Again, this seems to be part of Old Norse-Icelandic's concern with appearances as an indication of people's inner feelings, rather than with the mechanics of interiority.

Finally, it is significant that temperature does not form a major part of the metaphorical system of Old Norse-Icelandic in relation to cognition or emotion. Phrases familiar from English such as 'hot tempered', are not seen in native Old Norse-Icelandic

texts. ‘Cold’ features in some words meaning ‘cruel’ and ‘cunning’, such as *kali* ‘a cold gust; unkindness’ and *kaldráðr* ‘scheming’ but there is nothing like the extended metaphor system like the cool thinking as a physiological process in Old English.¹¹² Consequently, we have to conclude that despite a cardiocentric psychology, Old Norse-Icelandic differs from its West Germanic counterparts by not conceiving of this in hydraulic terms. Neither heat nor ebullience forms part of the Old Norse-Icelandic psychological idiom.

5.3 Heaviness, pressure and swelling

Although the lack of cardiocentric heat and any associated effects such as boiling and seething set the psychology of Old Norse-Icelandic apart from Old English and Old Saxon, there are some features which North and West Germanic appear to share. These include heaviness of the breast and its contents as a symptom of bad feelings and swelling as a response to strong emotions. Nonetheless, there are still noticeable differences even in these shared features. For example, it is hard to tell if heaviness of the breast is to be interpreted literally or metaphorically. Furthermore, the examples of swelling throughout Old Norse-Icelandic literature function separately from the system seen in Old English.

Perhaps the closest resemblance the two psychologies have is the characterisation of sadness and other such feelings as heaviness of *hugr* and its synonyms. This is primarily expressed through compounding with *pungt* ‘heavy’, in words such as *skapþungt* ‘heavy disposition’, *hugþungt* ‘heavy mind’ and *þunglyndr* ‘heavy character’. However, these words are rare, with only *skapþungt* occurring more than once in the *Íslendingasögur* and none featuring in poetry. The scarcity of references means it is difficult to establish whether they refer to a physiological sensation or are primarily metaphorical expressions. *Þungr* is used metaphorically in other contexts to refer to bad news, bad feelings and bad weather which suggests that *hugþungt* and other such phrases were coined in accordance with this metaphorical meaning of ‘heavy’ rather than referring to any particular bodily sensation. Further support for this interpretation is found in the fact that *þungr* does not compound with *hjarta* and *brjóstþungt* refers not to an emotional state but to asthma. In Old English, heaviness is linked with constriction of the chest, which has various moral and physiological implications, but in Old Norse-Icelandic *hugþungt* and its synonyms do

¹¹² *Kaldbrióstaðr* ‘cold breasted’ occurs once in *Trojúmannna saga*, and the similar *kaldriffaðr* ‘cold-ribbed’ in *Vafþrúðnismál* 10.

not appear to have extended psychological significance. For example, it is difficult to relate this heaviness to swelling as is the case in Old English texts.

Swelling is better attested in Old Norse-Icelandic texts than is heaviness or constriction of the chest and its contents. However, with very few exceptions swelling in response to strong emotion is expressed differently to the Old English system. It is only in Einarr Skúlasson's verse, quoted above, where the heart itself is represented as swelling; elsewhere, the person as a whole swells up rather than the contents of the chest. For example, in *Völuspá* 26 we are told that:

Þórr einn þar vá, þrunginn móði (Neckel 1962: 6)

Thor alone struck there, swollen with rage

And in *Laxdæla saga* Ch. 53 Halldórr responds to Þorgerðr's goading as follows:

Halldórr svarar hér fá um, ok þó þrútnaði honum mjök móðr til Bolla. (ÍF V: 162)

Halldórr answers with few words but nevertheless he swelled with anger at Bolli.

The antiquity of the association between swelling and strong feelings is suggested by the form *bólginn* 'angry' a stranded past participle of a now lost verb **belga*, cognate with Old English *belgan* which is used frequently in Old English in reference to swelling with anger. In fact, *belga* is one of Lockett's (2011: 59) 'ebullient' verbs, which along with *wellan*, she proposes refers to the effects of the heart seething and boiling. However, although swelling with anger is well established in Old Norse-Icelandic, *bólginn* does not carry with it the implications of emotional 'fluid dynamics' that Old English *belgan* does. Likewise, this swelling is never associated with any cardiocentric heat.

In fact, there are few occasions where swelling is mentioned as having any effect on the body; most often a person is said to swell with anger, or just to swell up with his or her emotional state left to be decoded by the reader, as in *Hrólfs saga kraka* Ch. 40:

Aðils konungr þrútnar nú í hásætinu, þá hann sér, at Hrólfs kappar brytja niðr sitt lið sem aðra hunda [...] (Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson 1943-1944, vol. 2: 71)

King Aðils now swells in the high seat when he sees that Hrólfr's champions are striking down his men like dogs [...]

There are occasions, as in Ch. 63 of *Laxdæla saga* when a shepherd describes Þorgils Hölluson to Helgi as ‘swollen from grief’ that might imply that such expressions were more than idiomatic, and did have a physiological effect:

[...] hann var ok ungligr maðr, svá at honum var ekki grön vaxin; sýndisk mér, sem þrútinn mundi vera af trega. (ÍF V: 187)

He was a young man who had yet to grow a beard. He seemed to me swollen from grief.

However, there are a handful of occasions where swelling up with emotion does have a demonstrable physical effect. For example, in *Egils saga*, Egill swells up with grief at the death of his son and bursts out of his tunic:

En svá er sagt þá er þeir settu Bøðvar niðr at Egill var búinn: hosan var strengð fast at beini, hann hafði fustanskyrtíl rauðan, þröngvan upphlutinn ok láz at síðu. En þat er sōgn manna at hann þrútnaði svá at kyrtillinn rifnaði af honum ok svá hosurnar. (Bjarni Einarsson 2003: 145)

It is said that when Bodvar was buried, Egil was wearing tight-fitting hose and a tight red fustian tunic laced at the sides. People say that he became so swollen that his tunic and hose burst off his body. (trans. Scudder 1997: 150)

A similar passage is also seen in the poem preserved in *Völsunga saga* Ch. 31, where Sigurðr is similarly said to swell up with grief, though it is described in more circumspect terms:

Út gekk Sigurðr
andspjalli frá,
hollvinr lofða,
oc hnipnaði,
svá at ganga nam
gunnarfúsom
sundr of síður
serkr járnofinn. (Finch 1965: 55)

Out went Sigurd
Leaving talk,
Heroes' worthy friend,
And grieved so deeply
That the heaving breast
Of the battle-eager one
Sheared from his sides
The iron-woven shirt. (Byock 1990: 88)

Gordon and Taylor (1956: xxxv) consider this to be an example of the detrimental influence of romance motifs on Old Norse-Icelandic poetry. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is also possible that the scene from *Egils saga* was influenced by Salernitan medicine, introduced to Iceland not long after its conversion. However, considering the long association between swelling and strong feelings in Germanic implied by *bólginn*, it may be that these examples of the chest swelling up and clothes tearing apart were part of the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition. Whatever the case, what is important for our purposes is that these incidents are set apart from swelling in Old English by referring to the body rather than the contents of the chest. However, there is one example, from *Ragnars saga* Ch. 16, where Ívarr the Boneless is said to swell up because of the *grimmleikr* in his chest:

En Ívarr spyrr at öllu sem gerst, en litr hans var stundum rauðr, en stundum blár, en lotum var hann bleikr, ok hann var svá þrúttinn, at hans hörund var allt blásit af þeim grimmleik, er í brjósti hans var. (Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson 1943-1944, vol. 1: 138)

When Ívarr found out all that was done, his colour changed from red to blue and to white, and he was so swollen that his skin was all bruised because of that savageness which was within his breast.

However, even this passage is still markedly different from Old English equivalents. Although anger is localised in his breast, it is Ívarr's body that swells up and changes colour. Other than the 'savageness' within his chest, we are told nothing of its contents or the nature of his heart. It is also important that in none of these three incidents of the body actually swelling do we see any hydraulic behaviour like the *blóðbogi* that pours from Þorhallr's ears.¹¹³

5.4 The chest as a container and internal pressure

In addition to lacking the physiological features of Lockett's (2011) hydraulic model, there is little in the Old Norse-Icelandic psychological model which could be characterised as belonging to the familiar cognitive metaphor EMOTION IS A HOT FLUID IN A SEALED

¹¹³ Incidentally, blood does spurt from Ívarr's brother Hvítserkr in the preceding lines. When told that their father has died all the brothers react physically. Björn grips his spear shaft so tightly that an imprint is left in it, Sigurðr listens so intently that he accidentally cuts himself to the bone while trimming his nails, and Hvítserkr crushes a *tafl* playing piece in his hands with such force that blood spurts out from under his fingernails: *En Hvítserkr hélt töfl einni, er hann hafði drepit, ok hann kreisti hana svá fast, at blóð stökk undan hverjum nagli* (Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson 1943-1944, vol. 1: 138). This reaction, while hydraulic in some respect, does not correspond to Lockett's (2011) model.

CONTAINER. Not only is heat not a feature, there are no fluid dynamic effects associated with constriction. It is not clear if this is because the chest was not thought to be sealed as in Old English, but rather like Old Irish was conceived of as permeable. This is because like Old English, there is a preference for keeping one's feelings hidden and not expressing them, but unlike Old Irish there are few occasions where 'emotional pressure' is physically released. Instead of reacting hydraulically characters in Old Norse-Icelandic literature typically become silent and withdraw from company. Nonetheless, there is a recognition that keeping one's feelings in can be an emotionally painful experience. *Hávamál* 121 describes the suffering caused by not having someone to open up to:

sorg etr hiarta, ef þú segia né náir
 einhveriom allan hug. (Neckel 1962: 36)

Sorrow eats the heart
 If you can't reveal your thoughts to anyone.

This situation is played out in *Ívars þáttur Ingimundarsonar* where there is a scene of what appears to be talking therapy. Ívarr has been glum because he has had no one to share his love-sick feelings with. This is identified by King Eysteinn who encourages him to talk, and his mood is much improved by telling the king what he is feeling.¹¹⁴ Likewise, as *Hávamál* 44-46 shows, keeping one's feelings hidden from all but the most trusted friends characterises almost all of Old Norse-Icelandic social interaction.

All of which provides suitable ground for developing a container metaphor for conceptualising emotional psychology, but despite this preference for hiding one's feelings and acknowledging the psychological trouble this can cause, Old Norse-Icelandic does not conceive of emotional pressure building up within a person. Although *sorg etr hjarta* when thoughts and feelings are kept in and unable to be shared, there are no associated effects of internal pressure. There is no indication that when people express emotion physically it is the result of a build-up of internal pressure, or related in any way to the activity of the *hjarta* or *hugr*. Perhaps the closest we get to this is in Oddr kíkínaskáld's tenth-century poem about Magnús góði, where men are crying because of the turmoil of their mind:

¹¹⁴ *Og nú gera þeir svo að jafnan er konungur situr eigi yfir vandamálum þá talar hann oft um þessa konu við Ívar. Og þetta hlýddi bragðið og bættist nú Ívari harms síns vonum bráðara. Gladdist hann eftir þetta og kemur í samt lag sem fyrr hafði verið um skemmtun hans og gleði.*
 < <http://www.snerpa.is/net/isl/th-ivar.htm> > last accessed June 2014.

And so, whenever the king was not occupied with business, he regularly talked about this woman with Ivar. This was the right approach, and Ivar got over his sorrow sooner than expected. He cheered up then and became just as entertaining and cheerful as he had been before. (trans. Jesch 1997a: 387)

Felldu menn, þás mildan,
 mǫrg tǫr, í grǫf bǫru
 (þung byrðr vas sú) þengil
 (þeim, es hann gaf seima).
 Deildisk hugr, svát heldu
 húskarlal grams varla
 — síklings þjóð en síðan
 sat opt hnipin — vatni.

Men shed many tears when they carried the generous lord to his grave; that was a heavy burden for those to whom he gave gold. The mind was in turmoil, so that the ruler's housecarls could hardly refrain from weeping, and often thereafter the prince's people sat drooping. (ed. and trans. Gade 2009b: 33)

However, as elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic there is no indication that this situation is in any way 'hydraulic'.

5.5 Embodied realism in Old Norse-Icelandic

Despite Lockett's (2011: 147) suggestion that the component features of a hydraulic model are present in Old Norse-Icelandic there is in reality very little in the psychological idiom of Old Norse-Icelandic which conforms to this model. Old Norse-Icelandic certainly had a cardiocentric psychology, and it is reasonable to assume that this was a system where the heart was understood to be physically rather than metaphorically involved in emotional expression. However, as discussed in Chapter 1 above, embodied realism provides languages and cultures with the building blocks around which to base their conceptualisations of any given phenomenon. In Old Norse-Icelandic, a different set of physical sensations has been prioritised from those that were considered important in Old English and Old Saxon. Although the heart is physically involved in emotional experience, it is the physical response of the heart to psychological stimuli rather than the constriction of the chest which is salient in the Old Norse-Icelandic system.

In fact, apart from the localisation of the 'mind' to the chest, the only prominent physiological feature shared between North and West Germanic is swelling in response to negative feelings. Were we to reconstruct a psychological model for the ancestor of the two languages it would be reasonable to presume that its concept of 'mind' would be located in the chest and that some form of swelling would be part of its somatic response. However, considering the differences between the physiological nature of this swelling in North and West Germanic, pinning down exactly what form it had would be difficult.

Although it is important to recognise Old Norse-Icelandic has much more in common with West Germanic and even Old Irish than it does with other circumpolar cultures, this should not detract from how different the Old Norse-Icelandic system is from the other cardiocentric cultures of northern Europe.

In light of this disparity, it is worth considering where the differences between the psychological systems of North and West Germanic arose. If we assume a shared model of cardiocentrism with some form of embodied response to emotion, the greatest differences between the two cultures is the presence or absence of cardiocentric heat, and its associated phenomena. However, there is a more general distinction between the concern shown to psychological interiority in Old English texts, and its absence from Old Norse-Icelandic. Jesch (2003: 272-273) shows that such inward focus is newly introduced into Old Norse-Icelandic poetry in the twelfth century by Markús Skeggjason's *Eiríksdrápa*. The fact that a difference in internal and external focus correlates with a difference in the conceptualisation of emotion and cognition suggests that there may be a causal link between the two.

It has been noticed widely that Old English holds a special place in Germanic for the attention it gives to psychological phenomena, and to the life of the mind and emotion. It is not that Old Norse-Icelandic is a fundamentally unemotional literary culture. Instead, it differs in how emotion is dealt with. People on the whole are secluded and withdrawn, but they are nonetheless still emotional. The difference seems to lie primarily in the attention given to the interior experience of this motion. In *Sonnatorek* Egill mentions his innermost being, but only in order that he can pull out words from his chest to explain what he is feeling. He has no concern for with the mechanics of what is going on in his chest.

Lockett (2011: 146-147) suggests that the reason Old Irish was not a fully hydraulic system is that the chest was permeable and that the same may hold true for Old Norse-Icelandic. However, the main difference between Old Norse-Icelandic and Old Irish is that in Old Norse-Icelandic there is not any build-up of cardiocentric heat or pressure to release from the chest in the first place. It is true that people do swell up, blush, and cry, and very occasionally spurt blood from their ears. However, this is not expressed in terms of reducing cardiocentric pressure. The reason Old Norse-Icelandic does not conceive of emotion in hydraulic terms is not because there is a means of releasing cardiocentric pressure from the breast, but rather because it is not focussed on the internal mechanics of emotional and cognitive processing.

Despite the similarities between the Old English hydraulic model and the psychological idiom of the Latin literature imported into Anglo-Saxon England, Lockett (2011: 108-109) considers it likely that Old English independently conceived hydraulic psychology. While this is certainly possible, it is worth considering whether the interior focus encouraged by Christianity contributed to the development of a more elaborated psychophysiological model in Old English and Old Saxon.

Whatever the case, cardiocentric heat and ebullient processes do not seem to have been part of the shared heritage of North-West Germanic. It is of course possible that Old Norse-Icelandic could have had them originally and lost them, but we would expect to find some hints within the lexicon along with the stranded past participle *bólginn*. However, there are no such linguistic fossils associated with cardiocentric heat or the ‘fluid dynamics’ which would suggest an indigenous North Germanic hydraulic model. In some respects this is doubly surprising because, as will be discussed in the following chapter, the medical and Christian texts to which medieval Icelandic was exposed after its conversion were filled with imagery of cardiocentric heat and emotional and physiological hydraulicism.

5.6 Conclusions

The purpose of this section was to evaluate the nature of the cardiocentric psychophysiology of Old Norse-Icelandic native tradition. The principal features of the system are that cognition and emotion were located within the chest, both of which were conceived of as being the responsibility of *hugr*. Further, the relationship between *hugr* and *hjarta* is such that in some cases it is legitimate to think of them as the same thing. However, *hjarta* more often than not performs roles that are not extended to *hugr* such as animating the person and determining the nature of a person’s character. How much a person’s *hugr* and *hjarta* were conceptually aligned is difficult to tell precisely because Old Norse-Icelandic is not as fully embodied as is Old English. However, there is no real indication that the heart was thought to be the most secret part of person’s mind, as is the case in Old English. Furthermore, the heart is comparatively rarely mentioned outside of its role as the animating part of a person, and when it is there is no special significance attached to it.

The most salient feature of a person's heart is whether or not it stays still in the breast. No other feature is as elaborated as this one. Instead of being characterised by a hydraulic model, Old Norse-Icelandic psychology is predicated generally on a distinction between hard and soft rather than hot and cold.¹¹⁵ Temperature and most of the features associated with the West Germanic psychological idiom are not lexically elaborated in the Old Norse-Icelandic system. However, the hard / soft dichotomy is not mentioned as frequently in Old Norse-Icelandic texts as the hydraulic features are in Old English. It appears, for example, in the legend of Hrungnir and Mǫkkurkálfi but does not have same structuring role as the hydraulic model does in Old English where it has legitimately been applied by Lockett (2011: 66-67) to *The Ruin*.

The differences between Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English psychology are broadly determined by the concern afforded to interiority. Whether West Germanic's interest in interiority is symptomatic or caused by the hydraulic model is unclear. However, the non-hydraulic psychological idiom of Old Norse-Icelandic is characterised by the lack of concern it shows for what is happening inside the chest. The Old Norse-Icelandic psychological model is nonetheless cardiocentric and embodied, but in a different way from West Germanic. However, this is not to be unexpected as cultures are free to elaborate shared physiological reactions to emotions in a variety of different ways. What is striking is that Old Norse-Icelandic is far less unusual than Old English in this regard.

6 Summary

This chapter has examined the vernacular psychological model represented in native Old Norse-Icelandic texts in order to assess its similarity to the models of its circumpolar neighbours and those found Anglo-Saxon England. Although it is reasonable to expect that Old Norse-Icelandic traditions would exhibit an amalgam of circumpolar and Germanic traditions given North Germanic's geographical position, this chapter has shown that in terms of psychology there is much more that connects Old Norse-Icelandic to its West

¹¹⁵ Clover (1993: 380) has argued that rather than being predicated on a male/female binary, gender and sexuality in Old Norse-Icelandic culture is organised in terms of "able-bodied men (and the exceptional woman) on the one hand and, on the other, a kind of rainbow coalition of everyone else". As she notes that softness is a key indicator of deviation from the prototype of able-bodied man, it is possible to interpret the hard/soft dichotomy in light of this. However, it is worth noting that Clover contrasts *blauðr* 'soft, weak' with *hvatr* 'bold, active'. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to investigate whether the opposition between hard and soft has a structuring role in other aspects of Old Norse-Icelandic society considering its prominence in psychology. I am grateful to Carolyne Larrington for this suggestion.

Germanic relatives than to its Sámi neighbours. However, it is also clear that there is much that separates the vernacular psychology of Old Norse-Icelandic from Old English.

The most significant similarity between these two cultures is the location of a unitary psychological concept in the chest, and associated with the heart. This identification of *hugr* as an embodied concept differs from most recent studies of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology, which see *hugr* as a sort of ‘wandering soul’ which is able to act independently of the body rather than an entity contained within the chest. As this chapter has shown, the evidence for *hugr* being able to leave the body is not evidenced in medieval sources and relies on cross-cultural comparison and the projection of later Scandinavian folk traditions into medieval contexts. ‘Mind-travel’ of a sort appears to be alluded to in Old English texts. However, here it is associated with memory and reminiscence rather than part of the person taking on a shape and travelling through physical space. Likewise, this sort of mind-travel is not evidenced in Old Norse-Icelandic sources. Consequently, it is not possible to argue that the ‘wandering mind’ of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* relies on a shared pre-Christian Germanic tradition. However, acknowledging *hugr* as a concept associated with the heart and unable to leave the body has more important implications for our understanding of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology.

Almost all previous studies of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology have been guided to some extent by Snorri’s link between *hugr* and *vindr tröllkvinna*. These have variously linked *hugr* to witches’ breath, to weather phenomena, or in the most elaborate case conceived of the ‘mind’ as a breathed entity which could be spun into a cord during sorcery and sent forth as an emissary. However, as has been shown such proposals have little evidential base in our medieval texts. There is much about the Old Norse-Icelandic anthropology of the person which is typologically marked in terms of a North-West European context, such as the concept of person’s *fylgja* and the notion of a transferable *hamingja* which do not have clear analogues in the rest of Germanic. However, in terms of *hugr* Old Norse-Icelandic is far more prosaic than the “epic and unsystematised” ‘mind’ alluded to by North (1991: 63) and bears no resemblance to the external or wandering soul traditions of circumpolar traditions which have influenced much of the recent work on Old Norse-Icelandic psychology.

Instead of being an entity which leaves the body and takes on either physical form, or proceeds as a spun cord, *hugr* has been shown to be primarily conceived of as an entity responsible for thought, emotion and volition. Not only does this set it apart from

circumpolar traditions, it suggests that Godden's (1985) interpretation of *mōd* in Old English as a wilful concept with a 'mind of its own' which needs to be controlled and calmed may be influenced more by Christian tradition than native Germanic ideas about how the 'mind' operated. However, the most significant implication for Old English to emerge from this chapter is the relationship between *hugr*, the body and cognitive and emotional processes.

Like Old English, Old Norse-Icelandic associates *hugr* with the heart. However, unlike Old English not only does the heart feature less prominently in Old Norse-Icelandic, the physical sensations prioritised are different as well. In Old Norse-Icelandic, the heart's most salient physical reaction is shivering or trembling. Unlike Old English, strong feelings do not generate cardiocentric heat or any of its corresponding effects such as seething, internal swelling and pressure. Other somatic responses to emotion such as blushing, weeping and the body swelling are never represented as being caused by the activity of the heart. Consequently, Old Norse-Icelandic can be considered to have a cardiocentric psychological model but not a hydraulic one.

Overall, *hugr* is a comparatively simple concept when compared to *mōd*. Like its Old English counterpart it is responsible for the cognitive functions of thinking and knowing. However, it does not respond to emotional stimuli in such an elaborate way as *mōd* does nor is it depicted leaving the breast during reminiscence. Its main components can be outlined as follows:

- hugr* (someone's *hugr*)
 - a. one part of this someone
 - b. people cannot see this part
 - c. it is inside the upper [M] part of this someone's body
 - d. people think about this part like this: "it is like a part of someone's body, like the *hjarta* [M]"
 - e. because someone has this part, this person can think about things
 - f. because someone has this part, this someone can know things
 - g. because someone has this part, when this someone thinks about something this someone can feel some things
 - h. sometimes, when this happens, this someone can feel the *hjarta* [M] move

These differences suggest that rather than representing an unmarked, common-sense elaboration of somatic responses the Old English psychological model is an elaborate and culturally specific conceptualisation of how *mōd* interacts with the body. Further, the similarities between the Old English hydraulic model with its focus on cardiocentric heart and the Biblical psychological idiom suggest that the Old English vernacular tradition may

have been influenced by it, and not represent a purely Germanic conceptualisation of relationship between emotion, cognition and the body.

However, as Old Norse-Icelandic texts date from many centuries after the composition of our Old English sources and their authors had been exposed to psychological traditions unavailable in Anglo-Saxon England, it is possible that the psychological model outlined above had been influenced by these traditions. It may be that the original North Germanic psychological model broadly matched that of Old English and Old Saxon but was gradually altered to align more closely with later medieval theories about the mind, soul and body. In order to assess this, the following chapter will consider the psychological models represented in three text genres that may have influenced what we think of as native Old Norse-Icelandic texts: medical treatises; Christian literature; and translated romances.

Chapter 4: Foreign Influences

1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the cultural model of cognition and emotion in Old Norse-Icelandic texts differs markedly from its counterpart in Old English. One of the most significant differences between these two models is the relationship between the part of the person responsible for thinking and feeling, and the body. Despite the fact that both cultures located this part in the chest, the somatic expression of cognitive and emotional processes is much more embodied in Old English than in Old Norse-Icelandic. In Old English there is an elaborate link between what someone thinks and feels and the activity within the chest cavity, and this principal difference manifests itself throughout the emotional discourse of the two languages. Old English texts pay far more attention to interiority and what individuals feel, whereas in Old Norse texts there are considerably fewer insights into the inner life of its characters.

However, as Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic texts are not contemporary, it is necessary to consider whether the Old Norse-Icelandic model differs from its Old English counterpart because of the influences of intellectual traditions not present in Anglo-Saxon England. In light of Turville-Petre's (1953: 142-43) claim that Latin models told the Icelanders not "what to say, but how to say it"¹¹⁶ it is worth assessing the role foreign models have played in shaping the representation of cognition and emotion in 'native' Old Norse-Icelandic literature. It is also worth considering the degree to which they represent cultural rather than literary differences. It may be that the psychological models and cultural scripts for expressing emotion are products of literary genre rather than indicative of social realities. The 'cold', unemotional world presented in the *Íslendingasögur* may be the product of genre conventions rather than anything else. Separating the cultural value of a society from the literature it produces is of course problematic; however, by comparing original Old Norse-Icelandic works with adaptations of foreign texts, we are better able to appreciate the degree to which Old Norse-Icelandic literature represents the cultural norms of the society that produced it. As Lönnroth (1965b: 3) has stated, it is only by comparing Old Norse-Icelandic literature with European literature as a whole that we can begin to establish where the real differences and similarities lie.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of this famous statement see Foote (1994).

In order to assess the degree to which the vernacular psychology presented in the previous chapter reflects the native Old Norse-Icelandic conception of psychological phenomena, this chapter will consider the impact of three separate foreign influences on Old Norse-Icelandic literature: medical texts; Christian poetry and biography; and Old French and Anglo-Norman romance. The first two of these provide useful comparative material for the assessment of the role of the Old Norse-Icelandic ethnopsychological construct *hugr*. From the eleventh century onwards cephalocentric medical traditions inherited from Greek and Roman authors began to circulate in Europe and to displace indigenous medical ideas and practice (Porter 1997: 106 ff.; Lockett 2011: 423ff.). However, in contrast to this, Christian writings prioritise the role of the heart in emotion and the individual's relationship with God; further, Old Testament literature conceived of a hydraulic model similar to that operating in Old English literature (Lockett 2011: 131-35).¹¹⁷ By considering the reception of these two sources of influence in Old Norse-Icelandic writing, it is possible to evaluate the extent to which the portrayal of *hugr* discussed in the previous chapter is native to Old Norse-Icelandic culture. The third part of this chapter considers the expression of emotion in the romance texts translated at the request of King Hákon IV Hákonarson of Norway (r.1217-63) in the thirteenth century (Cook and Tveitane 1979: xiv). The Old French and Anglo-Norman exemplars of these texts present an emotional world entirely alien to that seen in native Old Norse-Icelandic prose writing. Here, male heroes weep copiously, and express emotion somatically in ways not seen elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic texts; the reception of these texts provides valuable comparative evidence for the emotional norms represented in Old Norse-Icelandic literature.

2 Medicine

I have argued that Old English *mōd* and Old Norse *hugr* belong to distinct cultural models of psychology. In spite of their differences, however, these two cultural models of the 'mind' can be categorised together as broadly cardiocentric. Although *mōd* and *hugr* were conceived of in different ways, both were thought to be located in the chest cavity and both were associated, in a more or less direct way, with the heart. Toward the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, English began to move away from a literal, cardiocentric psychology to a cephalocentric one, whereby references to the 'mind' in the chest came to be interpreted as

¹¹⁷ For further discussion of hydraulicism in Biblical Hebrew see Lockett (2011: 132-135).

metaphorical (Lockett 2011: 110 ff.). This shift was gradual, and occurred in different textual communities and different rates. However, the change appears to have been predominantly the result of two factors. First, the concept of an immaterial soul came to be interpreted as orthodox in Anglo-Saxon England. As such, the cultural model of an embodied mind became untenable. And second, toward the end of the tenth century, cephalocentric medical texts were becoming available in England (Lockett 2011: 423 ff.; see also McIllwain 2006).¹¹⁸ Together, these originally learned theories became incorporated into the general cultural model of the ‘mind’ in medieval England.

It is because of the late date at which these theories gained general currency in England that we can be confident that Old English references to an embodied, cardiocentric *mōd* were literal, non-metaphorical representations of a native Anglo-Saxon cultural model of the ‘mind’. The same thing, however, cannot be said for Old Norse-Icelandic. With the exception of certain runic inscriptions, all of our recorded Old Norse-Icelandic texts date from a period when cephalocentric medical theories were common in England and continental Europe. As Iceland and the rest of medieval Scandinavia were in close cultural contact with major European centres of learning from its conversion (Cormack 2005: 29), and with England in particular (Abram 2004), the influence of these learned traditions on the vernacular psychology of Iceland needs to be considered.

Further, this medical context is particularly important for the present study as Lockett (2011: 147) has suggested that the hydraulic model seen in Old English and Old Saxon was originally part of Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology but was relocated from the heart to the head under the influence of cephalocentric medical traditions (p.c. Lockett 2012). Similarly, Lönnroth (1965a, b) has proposed that the rare incidences of swelling in the *Íslendingasögur* (such as Þórhallr Ásgrímsson in *Njáls saga*) represent the influence of humoral medicine in medieval Iceland, and by implication are not part of the Germanic tradition of swelling in response to strong feelings. It is therefore necessary to establish where Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology sits in respect to an assumed Germanic tradition and the influence of imported medical traditions. We need to assess both whether the rare instances of swelling are part of a shared heritage with Old English

¹¹⁸ McIllwain (2006: 105) has argued that such traditions were available to authors in the Anglo-Saxon period and as such the move towards the metaphorical interpretation of the ‘mind’ may have begun earlier than posited by Lockett. This position has been adopted by Harbus (2012: 30) who argues for the metaphorical interpretation of much of the embodied references to the ‘mind’ in Old English poetry. However, as Lockett (2011: 442) has shown, there are no references to the texts referenced by McIllwain in any extant Old English medical compilation.

or the product of imported medical traditions, and also whether such traditions altered an ‘original’ Germanic hydraulic model and moved it from the heart to the head.

2.1 Medicine in the Old Norse world

Compared with Old English, Old Norse-Icelandic texts have left little record of native medical traditions.¹¹⁹ Instead, the vast majority of the surviving evidence for contemporary medical theory and practice in medieval Scandinavia represents imported traditions, most of which can be traced to the Salerno school of medicine. Salerno was the site of the Medieval West’s reacquaintance with classical Greek and Roman medicine and the centre of its dissemination (Porter 1997: 106-109).¹²⁰ In particular, the school of Salerno reintroduced, in Christianised form, the medical theories of the Greek physician Galen. Galen’s writings were responsible not only for the formalisation of doctrine of the four humours, and concomitantly blood-letting, which was to exert a powerful hold over Western medicine well into the eighteenth century. Furthermore, Galen’s writings medicalised Plato’s concept of the tripartite ‘soul’, affording functions to the liver, heart and brain. In this system the liver was responsible for basic vegetative functions which were transmitted around the body via the veins; the heart transmitted heat and vital spirits via the arteries; and significantly, the brain was responsible for ‘consciousness’ transmitted through the nerves (Porter 1997: 73-77). Essentially, Salernitan medicine represented an entirely different concept of the body, emotion and cognition from the indigenous Germanic models discussed in the previous chapters.

This tradition was reintroduced into the medieval West by Alphanus (d. 1085), archbishop of Salerno, who had become familiar with Greek medical texts while travelling in Constantinople. His work *Premnon Physicon* helped to transmit Galen’s theories to a Latin reading audience. This Greek tradition was supplemented by Arabic sources by Constantus Africanus (c. 1020-87) who translated a great number of Galenic works which had been preserved in Arabic into Latin, including the *Liber Pantegni* of Haly Abbas (Porter 1997: 107-108). These texts contained the theoretical writings of Galenic and post-Galenic medicine, but were also highly practical works. The *Liber Pantegni* contains detailed surgical instructions as does the influential *Chirurgia Rogerii* (c. 1117). However, the most important Salernitan text, translated into several medieval languages and

¹¹⁹ On medicine in Anglo-Saxon England see Cameron (1993) and Meaney (2000).

¹²⁰ This renaissance had taken place some centuries earlier within the Islamic world (Porter 1997: 106).

preserved in hundreds of copies is the anonymous *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum*. This poem contains in its hexameters a concise and clear summary of classical medical teaching in the form of a prescriptive diet of health and exercise regimes (Porter 1997: 107-108).

The establishment of the school of medicine at Salerno and the dissemination of its key texts are contemporaneous with the production of Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts and there is strong evidence that Salernitan theories were known in the Old Norse world from a very early period. The surgical procedures from the *Liber Pantegni* and *Chiurgia Rogerii* are mentioned in numerous Old Norse-Icelandic texts, and the school of Salerno itself is included in the pilgrim's guide book composed in around 1150 by Nikulás Bergsson Bishop of Pverá, which records that:¹²¹

I ústsudr þadan er Salerni-borg, þar ero lekna beztir (Kålund 1908: 19, cited in Schwabe 2009: 202)

Southwest from there [Benevento] is Salerno, where the best physicians are.

The archaeological record also shows the influence of Salerno on medieval Scandinavia. Møller-Christensen (1963, cited in Whaley and Elliot 1994: 669) has shown that Danish skeletons from Øm and Æbelholt exhibit the signs of having undergone surgical techniques practiced at Salerno and references to such procedures are scattered throughout saga literature. These are particularly common in the *biskupasögur*, which frequently include accounts of the treatment of wounds, albeit filtered through the lens of divine intervention mediated by Icelandic holy men. Although obfuscated by their presentation as miraculous cures, Whaley and Elliot (1993, 1994) have shown that these instances provide valuable evidence for the identification of both ailments and their cures in medieval Iceland, all of which point to the use of Salernitan medical techniques.

Although such passages from the *biskupasögur* tend to be vague, Bishop Guðmundr Arason's saga contains a dramatic account of surgery which can be traced to Salernitan practices. In Ch. 88 a bird hunter falls from a mountainside and fractures his skull after falling against a boulder; he survives the injury and is carried to a woman's house for medical treatment:

hún skerr umbergis hausbrotið, ok tekr skeljanar, er muldar vóru í smátt, fægir síðan sárit ok hreinsar, sem hún þorði framast, all niðr á hinnuna; er þat verk þann tíma bægjast, eptir samlikri heims ok manns náttúru, sem floð er sjófar, þvíat þá gengr heilinn með hinnunni allt upp undir heila-bustina, en at fjöru er

¹²¹ For the text and translation of this see Magoun (1944) supplemented by Hill (1983). Magoun (1943) contextualises the work within Germanic tradition.

langt í milli. Var nú opit svá mikit í höfðinu, sem þriggja fingra hvern veg. En hvað er her at tala um áburð eða smy[r]sl til lækdóma, nema húsfúin tekr vatnmosa ór brunni herra Guðmundar ok fyllir með sárit, bindr síðan um, ok leysir ekki til fyrr en liðnar eru þrjár nætr, ok er hér at greina svá dýrligan hlut, at allri kom óðaverkr í, en mosinn var gróinn niðr í hausinn, svá sem múteraðr í beins náttúru, ok er frá leið tók jafnvel hörundslit, en var í þeim stað nökkuru linara átaks en í öðrum stað; var hann innan fárra daga alheill maðr. (Jón Sigurðsson *et al.* 1878: 180)

She cuts around the fracture and removes the splinters of bone which were crushed to bits, washes the wound and cleans it as well as she dares all the way down to the membrane. In keeping with the accord existing between the world of nature and the world of man, such an undertaking is most successful at the time of high tide, because at that time the brain and its covering reach all the way to the top of the skull, while at low tide there is a large space between them. The opening in the head was now as large as three fingers' breadth each way. Nothing was applied to the wound except water moss which the woman gathers from Bishop Gudmund's well. She packs the wound with the moss, puts on a bandage which she does not remove til three nights have passed. Now this strange thing must be told, that never came severe pain in the wound, and the moss grew fast in the skull as if it had become bone. When some time had passed, it took on the colour of skin, but was here a little softer than elsewhere. In a few days he was a well man. (trans. Reichborn-Kjennerud 1937: 326)

Reichborn-Kjennerud (1937: 326-27) has traced this procedure to Roger's *Chirurgia* and to Constantus Africanus's *Liber Pantegni*. In particular, the influence of the moon on the brain is directly traceable to Roger, which represents a development of Galenic theories (Reichborn-Kjennerud: 1937: 328).

Reichborn-Kjennerud (1937) has catalogued numerous other instances of Salernitan surgery, all of which point to the knowledge of these medical traditions in the Old Norse world. For example, the *Staðarhólsbók* codex of *Grágás* includes a section on wounds which specifies the use of a *køri* to identify the depth of flesh wounds, an instrument which is prescribed by the *Chiurgia Rogerii* (Reichborn-Kjennerud 1937: 322-23). Further to this, the *Grágás* classification of wounds into *heilund* (brain wound), *holund* (wounds of the body cavities) and *mergund* (wounds of the marrow) correspond directly to Roger's classification (1937: 323). There are also examples of the treatment of broken bones and fractures based on Salernitan practices, such as recounted in *Sturlunga saga*. For example, Bishop Guðmundr of Hólar is recorded to have had his ankle smashed while sailing. His deformed bone was later examined and treated following Salernitan practices (Reichborn-Kjennerud 1937: 326). Reichborn-Kjennerud (1923, 1924, 1936) lists numerous other incidences like this in prose texts, as well as highlighting the influence of Salernitan medicine on *Hávamál* and other Eddic poems.

In addition to such references to surgical procedures prescribed by the works of Constantus Africanus and the *Chiurgia Rogerii*, sections of text from the *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum* are included in the *Flateyjarbók* copy of *Fóstbræðra saga*. Evidence of just how well integrated this knowledge was is indicated by the inclusion of further passages from the *Regimen* in the Norwegian *Frostathing Law* of the thirteenth century (Reichborn-Kjennerud 1937: 322). However, perhaps the most remarkable evidence for the role of imported medicine in the Old Norse world is preserved in the saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson which forms part of *Sturlunga saga*. *Hrafn's saga* provides a window into the medical practices in late twelfth- and early thirteenth century Iceland and the role played by physicians. Hrafn's treatments include a wide range of sophisticated medical practices including a detailed account of penile surgery to remove a kidney stone and also, significantly for this study, performs blood-letting which points clearly to the reception of humoral medical theories in the Old Norse world (Reichborn-Kjennerud 1937: 330).

All this testifies to a well-integrated tradition of Salernitan medicine in the Old Norse period during the time saga literature was being committed to writing, and to knowledge of the school at Salerno itself from the mid-twelfth century when Nikulás Bergsson's guidebook was compiled. As such, Lockett's suggestion that cephalocentric medical theories relocated the hydraulic model from the heart to the head is entirely plausible. Salernitan medicine assigned a key role to the brain and, as we have seen, this school of medicine was firmly established in medieval Iceland. However, the connection between the brain and emotional and cognitive functions in native texts is notable by its absence. This is particularly striking considering that there are preserved, albeit in fragmentary form, the Old Norse-Icelandic medical texts by which Salernitan medicine was transmitted into the Old Norse world. These texts demonstrate that medical knowledge in medieval Scandinavia was not limited to surgical procedure, but included theoretical knowledge of the brain's function.

2.2 Medical texts

Although there is good evidence that Salernitan medicine was known and practised in medieval Scandinavia from the twelfth century, the surviving medieval Scandinavian medical texts trace their origin to the thirteenth century, and in particular to the Danish physician and canon of Roskilde, Henrik Harpestreng, who died in 1244 (Kværndrup 1993: 269-70; Johnsson 1921). Harpestreng's best known work is the middle Danish *Urtebogen*

‘Book of Herbs’, the earliest copies of which date to 1300. This work is based on the late eleventh-century *De vinibus herbarum* and Constantus Africanus’s *De gradibus liber*, and places Harpestrang fully in the Salernitan tradition. He is also likely to have been the author of the *De Simplicibus medicinis laxativis* and the *Liber herbarum*, which are attributed to Henricus Dacus. The Swedish Leechbook is also attributed to him, but it may be that this owes more to the strength of his reputation than any direct connection. In addition to these works, several other fragmentary texts in vernacular Scandinavian languages survive, which belong to the same broad textual tradition (Kværndrup 1993: 269-70).¹²²

However, a much more comprehensive collection of Scandinavian medical knowledge is preserved in a fifteenth-century Icelandic manuscript discovered in the early twentieth century by Edward Gwynn when cataloguing the Celtic manuscripts in the library of the Royal Irish Academy. This text was subsequently edited by Henning Larsen (Larsen 1931: 1). This volume¹²³ (henceforward referred to as D) contains almost all the information recorded in the other six main medical manuscript traditions known from medieval Scandinavia. Furthermore, it includes material not known from any other medieval Scandinavian source, including its antidotarium.¹²⁴

Although D is dated to the fifteenth century it has strong affinities with earlier medical texts which suggest that its contents are much older than the manuscript as we have it (Larsen 1931: 15-16). Furthermore, the language of the text, which shows that the compiler was working from exemplars based on both Danish and Norwegian sources suggest that its contents have a much longer manuscript tradition than recorded in the small number of extant medical texts from medieval Scandinavia (Larsen 1931: 23; see also Schwabe 2010). Therefore, although dating from the end of the period this study is interested in, D can confidently be assumed to represent the state of medical knowledge in the Old Norse world at the time when saga literature was being composed.

D consists of six sections: a brief list of charms; a book of simples; an antidotarium; a short lapidary; a leechbook; and a cookbook. The contents of each of these

¹²² Harpestreng’s principal works are edited in Kristensen (1908-1920). The textual tradition of Old Norse-Icelandic medical manuscripts has been treated most recently by Schwabe (2009, 2010); see also Finnur Jónsson (1912) for a general survey. The Old Norwegian manuscripts are discussed by Hægstad (1906) and Schwabe (2009); Old Swedish by Hægstad (1913) and Klemming (1883-1886); Icelandic by Kålund (1907) as well as (Larsen 1931); and additional Danish material by Kristensen (1908-1920).

¹²³ MS Irish Academy 23 D 43 (supplemented by Trinity College (Dublin)) L-2-27.

¹²⁴ There are sporadic references to information from an antidotarium scattered throughout Old Norse-Icelandic literature (see Larsen 1931: 46).

sections is fully in accordance with the medical theories of twelfth-century Salerno (Larsen 1931: 25-49); the charms may ultimately stem from pre-Christian Germanic tradition, but their form in D is immersed in Christian phraseology and theology (Larsen 1931: 25). The most interesting sections for our purposes are the charms, the antidotarium and the leechbook, as these include remedies related to the head and the brain.

The remedies in D consistently associate the head and brain with thinking, memory and other cognitive functions, madness and insanity, and epilepsy. This association of insanity and epilepsy with the head and the brain is not seen in native Old Norse-Icelandic texts. However, more significant are those passage where cognitive processes are linked to the brain and head, as these directly contradict the native cardiocentric model of *hugr* and its role in thinking. The following examples demonstrate the relationship these texts make between the brain and head with cognitive processes.

Section 2 of the charms contains a remedy which *ur hofdi flaug ok flærdarsamligar hyggir burt hrindur* “drives away fancies and false thought from the head” (Larsen 1931: 55; trans. 137). As discussed in the previous chapter, thinking is associated with *hugr* in native Old Norse-Icelandic texts, and is never located in the head or brain. Similarly, the brain is said to be the locus of memory in sections 28 and 69 of the antidotarium:

Buglossa. þroskreppa. elliga uxatunga [...] Dreckur madur med vin þat hun er sodinn j. þat er gtt vid heila. ok gefur gott minni.

Buglossa, þroskreppa or ox-tongue [...] If one drinks the wine it is boiled in, that is good for the brain and gives good memory. (ed. and trans. Larsen 1931: 62, 147)

Gariophilus nagla gras er tvifalldur. heitur ok þur[...] verdur hamm med kua miolk. tempradur. þa er hann godur vid omni ok styrkir heila.

Cariophyllus, cloves, twofold hot and dry [...] If it is tempered with cow's milk, it is good for forgetfulness and strengthens the brain. (ed. and trans. Larsen 1931: 74, 158)

Section 30 of the antidotarium again associates memory with the brain and head, but also includes fear and anxiety, emotions which in the native literature are located in the chest and associated with the *hugr* and the heart:

Electuarum pilris artoncithon heitir eitt tigurlið electuarium. þat hialpar þeim er hrygger eru ok kvidu fuller. ok þeim er eigi hafa styrkann mat magha. ok vid Vvi vanmegni. er ovit fylgir iduliga. þat bætir minni manz ok hvessir vit ok

ahyggiu. helpur vid brott falli. ok monnum þeim er med þeim hattum eru. Bætir ollu anmengi. hofuds ok heila.

Electuarium Pliris Artociton is the name of a precious electuary. That helps those who are sad and full of anxiety, and those who do not have a strong stomach and for that impotence from which fainting regularly comes. It mends man's memory and whets his wit and mind. It helps for epilepsy and the men who are afflicted therewith. It mends all weakness of the head and the brain. (ed. and trans. Larsen 1931: 102, 187)

While this passage does not make an absolute connection between the various ailments and the head and the brain, the classification is repeated in the leechbook, where ailments and their cures are discussed in relation to the body part concerned. The 'head' section of the leechbook not only includes remedies for headaches, epilepsy, madness and insanity but also those for 'witless' men: *Item ef madur er vitlaus* (Larsen 1931: 119); and for those afraid of the dark: *Enn þeir er hræddur eru. um nættur* (Larsen 1931: 120).

The only reference to the traditional Old Norse phraseology of the heart or 'mind' is in section 39 of the antidotarium which uses the familiar couplet *hugr ok hjarta* in reference to a positive emotion:

Stomaticon confortivum. heitir. þat er got era af þeim spizum er huggann gerir hug manz ok hiarta.

Stomaticon Confortativum that is called which is prepared of those spices which make a man's mind and heart glad. (ed. and trans. Larsen 1931: 105, 190)

Other than this, however, the cultural model of the 'mind' exhibited in the sagas and poetry is replaced throughout D with a cephalocentric psychology which relocates cognitive faculties such as 'memory' and emotional ones such as 'fear' to the head and the brain.

These passages make it clear that the cephalocentric traditions of Salernitan medicine formed part of the medical knowledge imported into medieval Scandinavia around the time saga literature was being committed to writing. This fact makes the lack of attention paid to the brain in native Old Norse-Icelandic literature even more remarkable. Whereas we have seen that Salernitan surgical methods were known by the saga authors¹²⁵ the well-established medical importance afforded to the brain is barely represented. There are only two instances in saga literature which refer to the medical theories concerning the

¹²⁵ Reichborn-Kjennerud (1923, 1924) argues that Salernitan medicine was also known to the compiler of *Hávamál*.

brain outlined in D. Before we consider these, it is worth briefly surveying the presentation of the brain elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic literature.

2.3 The brain in Old Norse-Icelandic literature

Old Norse-Icelandic, like the rest of the early Germanic languages, afforded the brain no psychological significance. Despite early claims to the contrary, the words for ‘brain’ in North and West Germanic (ON *heili* and *hjarni*, and OE *brægen*) have no etymological connection with the ‘mind’ or any similar psychological concept; instead, all seem to be derived from words for various parts of the head (Lieberman 2004).¹²⁶ This absence of a psychological component in the etymology of *heili* and *hjarni* is borne out in Old Norse-Icelandic texts. The brain gets incidental mentions in saga literature only in reference to head injuries, but is never discussed in detail. Even in the remarkable account of skull surgery recorded in the saga of Bishop Guðmundr Arason, the brain is only mentioned in passing and no link is made between it and cognitive functions (see above). Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 3, the phraseology of Old Norse-Icelandic never associates thinking, remembering, feeling or any other cognitive or emotional process with the head or the brain.

Hjarni does not occur at all in the *Íslendingasögur* and *heili* only eleven times. Apart from one example which we will consider shortly, the ‘brain’ in the *Íslendingasögur* is only mentioned in the context of head wounds; the following passage from *Heiðarvígasaga* is typical:

Nú ef þú mant eigi, þá mun hér vera váttrinn, þetta sama sverð; er enn eigi heilinn þorrnaðr á (ÍF III: 302)

And if you shouldn't remember, here is the witness, the very sword; the brains have not yet quite dried upon it. (trans. Kunz 1997b: 116)

¹²⁶ Early etymologies of the etymon of West Germanic ‘brain’ and its cognates connected it with Indo-European words for the ‘mind’, as in Kaltschmidt (1839). However, this theory was soon shown to be untenable. Lieberman suggests the etymon for Old Norse-Icelandic *heili* was taken over from Celtic with the meaning ‘refuse’ and only later acquired the meaning ‘brain’ (Lieberman 2004: 54). The etymologies for the North Germanic words for the brain, *hjarni* and *heili* are obscure but cannot be connected to any ‘psychological’ cognate in Indo-European (Lieberman 2004: 53-54).

The same pattern is observed throughout the *fornaldarsögur* and *Heimskringla*. Outside saga literature, the only reference to the brain in the Eddic corpus is in the version of the creation myth told in strophes 40-41 of *Grímnismál*:¹²⁷

Ór Ymis holdi var iqrð um scöpuð,
 enn ór sveita sær,
 biqrg ór beinum, baðmr ór hári,
 enn ór hausi himinn.

Enn ór hans brám gerðo blíð regin
 miðgarð manna sonom;
 enn ór hans heila vóro þau in harðmóðgo
 scý qll um scöpuð. (Neckel 1962: 65)

From Ymir's flesh the earth was made,
 and from his blood the sea,
 mountains from his bones, trees from his hair,
 and from his skull the sky.

And from his eyelashes the cheerful gods
 Made earth in the middle for men;
 And from his brain were the hard-tempered clouds all made. (Larrington 1996: 57)

Interesting as this passage is, it can only tell us as much about the cultural significance of the brain as it does about eyelashes, bones and the other body parts mentioned. References to the brain are similarly infrequent in skaldic poetry; *heili* occurs three times¹²⁸ and *hjarni* twice, once in *Haustlqng* and once in *Ynglingatal* in the kenning *ægir hjarna* 'sea of the skull = brain'.¹²⁹ In none of these examples is the brain afforded any psychological significance.

However, it can be shown that cephalocentric medial theories were known by the scribes producing saga literature. Of the eleven occurrences of *heili* in the *Íslendingasögur*, one passage stands out from the rest by assigning the brain a psychological function. The *Flateyjarbók* copy of *Fóstbræðra saga*, the same text which includes sections from the *Regimen sanitatis Salerni*, contains the following interpolation in a passage about Loðinn and Sigríðr:

¹²⁷ This passage is repeated in Snorri's *Gylfaginning* (Faulkes 2005: 12).

¹²⁸ In *Geisli* stanza 59 it occurs as a kenning for eyes: *heili himintungl* 'the heavenly bodies of the brains', (Chase 2007a); the other two examples come from stanza 3 of *Heilagra manna drápa VII* in the compound *heilasárið* 'brain-wound' (Wolf 2007) and in *Hákonarkviða* stanza 28 where it features in the compound *heilivágr* 'soothing balm' (Gade 2009b).

¹²⁹ *Haustlqng* stanza 19 (Finnur Jónsson 1967 vol. 1: 20). *Ynglingatal* stanza 15 Marold *et al.* (2012: 36).

[...] reiði hvers manns er í galli, en líf í hjarta, minni í heila, metnaðr í lungum, hlátr í milti, lystisemi í lifr. (ÍF VI: 226 n. 1)

every man's anger is in his gall and life blood in the heart, memory in the brain, ambition in the lungs, laughter in the spleen, desire in the liver.

Fóstbræðra saga is preserved in six principal manuscript traditions,¹³⁰ and this passage only occurs in *Flateyjarbók* (Jónas Kristjánsson 1972: 314), which was compiled at the relatively late date of 1387-94 (Rowe 2005: 11ff.). As such it is not considered to be part of the original composition, and is generally considered to be an example of a scribe exhibiting his learning, as there are other such 'learned' interpolations throughout his section of *Flateyjarbók*. Nonetheless, it does demonstrate that some scribes copying saga literature were aware of cephalocentric medical theories, and considered the brain to have a psychological function.

Perhaps more significant is the following passage from *Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*. Ch. 4 of the saga records a number of his medical interventions, including his treatment of the insane Þorgils:

Þorgils hét maðr, er tók vitfirring. Hann var svá sterkr, at margir karlar urðu at halda honum. Síðan kom Hrafn til hans ok brenndi hann í hofði díla nokkura, ok tók hann þegar vit sitt. Litlu síðar varð hann heill. (Guðrún Helgadóttir 1987: 6)

There was another man by the name of Þorgils who was subject to fits of insanity. He was so strong that several men had all they could to hold him. Hrafn came to him and burnt certain marks on his head and he immediately came to his senses. A little while later he was back to health.

Cauterizing was well established in the Middle Ages as a means of treatment for numerous ailments and is recorded in a handful of other passages in Old Norse texts (Guðrún Helgadóttir 1987: xcv-xcvi). More important than the reference to cauterisation, however, is the association with *vitfirring* and the head, which is a departure from the psychological model exhibited elsewhere in 'native' Old Norse texts. *Hrafns saga* has been dated to 1230-60 by Guðrún Helgadóttir (1987: lxxxviii) and thus pushes the knowledge of cephalocentric medical theories in saga literature back by a century or more.

As well as practising Salernitan surgery and medical treatments based on cephalocentric theories, *Hrafns saga* records that Hrafn also performs phlebotomy. This treatment is known from the archaeological record where surgical instruments associated

¹³⁰ The textual tradition of the saga is treated in detail by Jónas Kristjánsson (1972).

with the practice have been found (Kværndrup 1993: 270), and from the medical texts discussed above.¹³¹ *Hrafn's saga* demonstrates again that the practice was at least known by saga authors and made its way into saga literature, albeit rarely. In the saga, Hrafn reduces swellings by means of bloodletting, which is entirely in accordance with humoral medicine.

As remarked earlier, Lockett has suggested that the scene in *Njáls saga* where blood pours from Þórhallr Ásgrímsson's ears in a *blóðbogi* is the result of the hydraulic model identified in Old English and Old Saxon having been relocated to the head in Old Norse under the influence of cephalocentric medical traditions. Similarly, Lönnroth (1965a) has suggested that certain examples of characters swelling up have been influenced by humoral medicine. The evidence given above demonstrates that these proposals are certainly possible. Both cephalocentric and humoral traditions, unavailable in Anglo-Saxon England, have been shown to be well established in the Old Norse world by the time saga literature was produced, and both traditions have made their way into saga literature. However, although well established in medical literature and in medical contexts outside scientific texts, such theories do not appear to have influenced the traditional model of the person which locates psychological and emotional behaviour in the chest cavity and the relationship this has with the body.

2.4 Discussion

Lockett's suggestion that the hydraulic model was moved to the head from the heart assumes that a hydraulic model analogous to that seen in Old English and Old Saxon existed in Old Norse which could have been altered by cephalocentric medical traditions. However, as shown above in Chapter 3, there is very little evidence to support this hypothesis; hydraulicism does not seem to have formed part of Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology. The *blóðbogi* in *Njáls saga* is in fact the most hydraulic emotional episode in Old Norse-Icelandic that I have been able to identify, and as mentioned above is best considered an anomaly. For Lockett's proposal to hold true we need evidence both of hydraulicism as a well-established part of the Old Norse-Icelandic emotional model as well as evidence of the head and brain involved in emotional and cognitive processes, but apart

¹³¹ There is also a section on phlebotomy included in the encyclopaedic literature edited by Kålund (1908:83-84).

from a handful of exceptions we find neither. Cephalocentrism is restricted in almost all cases to what might be considered ‘learned’ contexts.

In relation to this it is worth returning to the interpolation in the *Flateyjarbók* version of *Fóstbræðra saga* where *minni* ‘memory’ is located in the brain. As mentioned above, *Fóstbræðra saga* exists in six copies, but this passage concerning the location of the ‘memory’ in the ‘brain’ only features in *Flateyjarbók*. This passage about the brain can be compared to a similar passage concerning the heart which also occurs in the *Flateyjarbók* version:

Svá segja sumir men, at þeir klyfði hann til hjarta ok vildu sjá, hvílíkt væri, svá hugprúðr sem hann var, en menn segja, at hjartat væri harðla lítit, ok hofðu sumir menn þat fyrir satt, at minni sé hugprúðra manna hjörtu en huglaussa, því at menn kalla minna blóð í litlu hjarta en miklu, en kalla hjartablóði hræzlu fylgja, ok segja menn því detta hjarta manna í brjóstinu, at þá hræðisk hjartablóðið ok hjartat í manninum. (ÍF VI: 210-211)

Some people say that he had shown such courage that they cut him open to see what kind of heart lay there, and that it had been very small. Some hold it true that a brave man's heart is smaller than that of a coward, for a small heart has less blood than a large one and is therefore less prone to fear. If a man's heart sinks in his breast and fails him, they say it is because his heart's blood and his heart have become afraid. (trans. Regal 1997: 368)

A version of this passage is retained in all redactions of the saga. It is even kept in a reduced form in the *Hauksbók* redaction, which removes almost all the interpolations, additions and digressions seen in the other versions of the saga. Jónas Kristjánsson (1972: 314) argues that on this basis the passage should be seen as original and integral to the saga, not just because it has such wide attestation across the textual record but also because it accords with cardiocentric phraseology elsewhere in the saga.

The implication of this and of the widespread cardiocentrism seen throughout native sources is that cephalocentric traditions, while known in medieval Iceland, had not altered the vernacular psychological model which located emotional and cognitive processes in the chest cavity. And unlike contemporary Middle English sources, there is no evidence that this cardiocentrism had begun the transition from literal, physiological references to a metaphorical understanding of the role of the heart.¹³² Although the various references to the role of the heart are somewhat inconsistent with each other, they nonetheless assign an active role to the heart. So while the passage in *Fóstbræðra saga*

¹³² On this see Lockett (2011: 423ff.) and Zimmer (2004) for an overview of the transition from cardiocentrism to locating the mind in the brain.

above presents the heart differently to *Atlakviða* (see Chapter 3), it is nonetheless firmly part of the Old Norse-Icelandic tradition of locating cognitive and emotional process with the physical heart.

As for the episode in *Njáls saga* itself, although Lockett's suggestion that the hydraulic model was moved to the head does not hold true for Old Norse-Icelandic as a whole, it is possible that cephalocentric traditions influenced this passage. Reichborn-Kjennerud (1937: 324) has shown that there are Salernitan features, such as the threefold classification of wounds mentioned above, present in *Njáls saga* and it is therefore likely that the author of these passages knew about the learned association between cognitive and emotional functions and the head and brain. Nonetheless, as the incident has no parallel elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic literature it has to be treated as an anomaly; it may be an anomaly influenced by cephalocentric traditions, but it is in no way representative of Old Norse-Icelandic literature as a whole.

Much the same can be said for Lönnroth's (1965a, b) suggestion that the instances of swelling in *Egils saga* and *Njáls saga* are due to the influence of humoral medicine. Lönnroth (1965a, b) makes the case that the following example could be influenced by this tradition:

En svá er sagt þá er þeir settu Bøðvar niðr at Egill var búinn: hosan var strengð fast at beini, hann hafði fustanskyrtíl rauðan, þröngvan upphlutinn ok láz at síðu. En þat er sagn manna at hann þrútnaði svá at kyrtillinn rifnaði af honum ok svá hosurnar. (Bjarni Einarsson 2003: 145)

It is said that when Bodvar was buried, Egil was wearing tight-fitting hose and a tight red fustian tunic laced at the sides. People say that he became so swollen that his tunic and hose burst off his body. (trans. Scudder 1997: 150)

These examples form part of Lönnroth's argument that the physiognomy of Old Norse-Icelandic is based upon classical sources and consequently should not be seen as part of a native Old Norse-Icelandic cultural model of the body and its relationship to personality.

As we have seen, humoral theory was integral to the medical works produced by the Salerno school and was transmitted through Henrik Harpestreng and the manuscript tradition associated with him. Consequently, it is entirely plausible that these theories did have an influence on Old Norse-Icelandic physiognomy. In light of the preceding discussion, it seems likely that the incident of Þórhallr Ásgrímsson's swelling up in *Njáls saga* could well have been influenced by the author or scribe's acquaintance with

Salernitan and humoral medicine. The case of Egill is less clear, however. As discussed in Chapter 3, swelling in response to strong feelings forms part of a shared Germanic physiognomy. Egill's swelling has none of the hallmarks of humoral medicine which are alluded to in the passage in *Njáls saga*, and in fact finds its closest parallel in the poem recorded in *Völunga saga* where Sigurðr's corslet bursts from his chest. It is of course possible that this incident was also influenced by imported medical traditions, as both are somewhat removed from the standard depictions of swelling in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, where there is very little reference to bodily responses. Nonetheless, the cases of Egill and Sigurðr have as much in common with the more typical instances of swelling in Old Norse-Icelandic than they do with the potentially 'humoral' swelling in *Njáls saga*.

Rather than showing that this behaviour was the product of learned medical traditions on the physiognomy of saga literature, it seems more plausible that Lönnroth's examples show that 'classical' motifs could coexist and be integrated into existing conceptual structures, without replacing them. This position has recently been argued by Tarrin Wills (2012) who has demonstrated that the physiognomy of the sagas owe far less to classical traditions than Lönnroth proposed. While certain motifs in Old Norse-Icelandic are shared by the classical tradition, most are not and are not mentioned in the Old Norse-Icelandic text *Physiognomics* (Wills 2012: 281).

The value of Wills's work for this thesis is that it demonstrates that two separate traditions may exist alongside one another, a popular one and a learned one, without the learned tradition ousting the popular one or encroaching upon its influence. This accords with Lockett's proposal that vernacular psychological traditions are not replaced by 'expert' theories until there is a cultural imperative for them to do so. The cases of swelling Lönnroth (1965a, b) identifies likely are due to the influence of learned theories (almost certainly in *Njáls saga*, perhaps less plausibly in *Egils saga*); however, they are not the source of the swelling with anger motif seen elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. The same goes for cephalocentric traditions. Whereas these displaced the literal, cardiocentric understanding of *mōd* in Old English which began to be treated metaphorically, the influence of brain-centred medical theories seems to have had little impact on the popular conception of *hugr*'s location in the chest and the localisation of cognitive and emotional processes there.

Consequently we may conclude that the vernacular psychology identified in the preceding chapter is not the result of medical traditions unavailable in Anglo-Saxon

England. Salernitan medicine was known and practised in medieval Scandinavia, but it does not appear to have changed the cultural model of the ‘mind’ outlined above. Instead of altering the native system, the learned medical tradition has occasionally been employed by saga writers for their own purposes. Crucially, the passage in *Njáls saga* identified by Lockett as indicative of the widespread influence of cephalocentric traditions has been seen to be anomalous within the corpus of Old Norse-Icelandic literature, as have the ‘humoral’ incidences of swelling identified by Lönnroth. Therefore we can be confident that the vernacular psychological system presented in Chapter 3 is not the product of imported medical traditions. However, it is possible that it may have been influenced by the psychological model imported along with Christianity, which is what the next section will examine.

3 Christianity

3.1 Introduction

Unlike the medical texts discussed above, Old Norse-Icelandic Christian texts survive in very large numbers spanning the full chronological range of the Old Norse period.¹³³ The earliest surviving manuscripts written in Old Norse-Icelandic are the collections of sermons contained in *The Old Icelandic Homily Book* and the *Old Norwegian Homily Book* which date from the middle of the twelfth century (McDougall 1993). These texts are invaluable for providing us with evidence of the theological influences that medieval Iceland and Norway were exposed to in the early centuries following their conversion (Hall 2000).¹³⁴ Further, the native and foreign saints’ lives, grouped together as Christian biography, represent the largest surviving genre of Old Norse-Icelandic prose, which, in Stéfan Karlsson’s estimation (unpublished lecture, cited in Cormack 2005: 29), outnumbers the combined total of the *Íslendingasögur* and *Sturlunga saga* by two to one. This substantial body of texts allows us to see how the didactic theology expressed in the earliest Christian literature was conveyed in a narrative mode. And in addition to this corpus of prose texts, there exists from the middle of the twelfth century onwards a large

¹³³ For an overview of this literature, see Cormack (2005), Attwood (2005), and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (2005).

¹³⁴ Sigurðar Nordal (1952: 17, cited in Marchand (1976: 1) remarked that “Even if the Icelanders had produced nothing else in this period, these translations would afford a remarkable witness to the literary interest and activity and are valuable sources for our knowledge of the old language. Now they are thrown into the shadow by the sagas, so that they are neglected by most scholars and their significance, and even their existence, is often almost forgotten.”

body of Skaldic poetry written on Christian subjects (Clunies-Ross 2007) which provides evidence of devotional behaviour rarely seen in the prose texts. Taken together, these texts allow us to assess the influence of Christianity on the ethnopsychological model of Old Norse-Icelandic.

Despite the opportunities it offers, very little research has focused on this body of texts and what it had to say about the cultural model of the mind in Old Norse-Icelandic, with previous studies concentrating rather on the native tradition and its connection with Germanic motifs.¹³⁵ The purpose of this section is to explore the nature of the psychology expressed in this Christian tradition, and to compare it with the native tradition. By so doing, we are able to assess whether the psychological model discussed in Chapter 3 owes anything to the language of Christian literature, or whether like the medical traditions, the psychology of Christianity existed as a cultural model kept separate from the native tradition.

Unlike the medical traditions, the conversion to Christianity did have a profound effect on the cultural model of the person in Old Norse-Icelandic by introducing the concept of the soul. The Christian soul as an entity which survives after death and which plays a role in the moral behaviour of the person had no analogue in the pre-Christian cultural model of the person.¹³⁶ Although this represented a profound change in the ethnopsychology of Old Norse-Icelandic, it is worth noting that the soul is rarely mentioned outside Christian texts. It also did not acquire any cognitive or emotional faculties which made it necessary to be used in secular contexts. The nature of the soul in Old Norse-Icelandic and medieval Germanic has already been studied in detail in two monographs so need not be rehearsed here.¹³⁷ For our purposes, what is of interest is how the Christianisation of medieval Scandinavia affected the native cultural model of emotion and cognition.

Like the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition, and in contrast to the medical texts discussed above, the language of the Old and New Testaments was thoroughly cardiocentric; neither the head nor the brain is afforded a psychological role. The New

¹³⁵ On the value of early Christian texts see Marchand (1976). Hall (2000) discusses the scholarly neglect of these texts.

¹³⁶ The introduction of the 'soul' to Germanic is summarised by Flowers (1983). This new concept was expressed lexically by the native words for 'breath' *andi* and *qnd*, but Old Norse-Icelandic also borrowed the etymon of English soul from Anglo-Saxon as *sál*. The concept of the afterlife in pre-Christian in Old Norse-Icelandic is addressed by Abram (2003).

¹³⁷ Becker (1964) studies the 'soul' words in Old Norse-Icelandic and Old High German, and 'body' and 'soul' in Germanic are treated by La Farge (1991).

Testament in particular locates not only cognition but also moral faculties within the heart, as seen in Matthew 9:15:

de corde enim exeunt cogitationes malae homicidia adulteria fornicationes
furta falsa testimonia blasphemiae¹³⁸

For from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications,
thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.¹³⁹

In parallel with the central role the heart played in the psychology of the Christian tradition, there is a focus on interiority, a feature absent from secular prose narratives, though occasionally seen in Eddic poetry. Furthermore, Biblical idiom combines this psychological interiority with hydraulic imagery of the sort identified by Lockett (2011) in Old English. For example, in Psalm 38 (vv. 2-4) David's sorrowful silence is accompanied with a burning heart, a feature which sets it apart from the representation of emotional silence in the Old Norse-Icelandic tradition:

dixi custodiam vias meas ne peccem in lingua mea custodiam os meum silentio
donec est impius contra me obmutui silentio tacui de bono et dolor meus
conturbatus est incaluit cor meum in medio mei in meditatione mea
incensus sum igni¹⁴⁰

I said: I will take heed to my ways: that I sin not with my tongue. I have set
guard to my mouth, when the sinner stood against me. I was dumb, and was
humbled, and kept silence from good things: and my sorrow was renewed. My
heart grew hot within me: and in my meditation a fire shall flame out.¹⁴¹

In light of this, we might expect to find evidence of 'hydraulic' features in the representation of emotion and cognition in Old Norse-Icelandic Christian texts. And as both the Christian psychological system and native Old Norse-Icelandic one were cardiocentric, it is necessary to establish how these relate to each other in order to clarify the status of the psychological model outlined in Chapter 3. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to describe the psychological model of the 'mind' represented in Christian literature in order to understand better the system outlined in Chapter 3. We have already seen that the cephalocentric medical traditions made little headway into the native model of *hugr*; however, it might be expected that as the psychological language of the Christian

¹³⁸ *The Bible: Latin Vulgate* <<http://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/www/Vulgate/Matthew.html>>. On the text of the Bible in Old Norse-Icelandic see Kirby (2000) and references there cited.

¹³⁹ trans. *Douay-Rheims Bible* <<http://www.drbo.org/chapter/47015.htm>>

¹⁴⁰ *The Bible: Latin Vulgate* <<http://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/www/Vulgate/Psalms.html>>

¹⁴¹ trans. *Douay-Rheims Bible* <<http://www.drbo.org/chapter/21038.htm>>

tradition is centred on the heart, this may have had more of an influence on the native psychological model.

There are signs of continuity between the Christian model of the mind and the one seen in secular texts. One of the few studies that has considered the psychological lexis of the Christian tradition has observed that both Christian and non-Christian poetry share a kenning system which locates the ‘mind’ in the chest (Nordal 2001: 273-77). More specifically, Nordal observes that the imagery of the body as a dwelling place for the spirit is common to Biblical idiom¹⁴² and that the doctrine that the spirit resides in the body and is intertwined with it is explicitly taught in the Old Norse-Icelandic translation of the twelfth-century didactic text *Elucidarius*:

Líkamr er hús andar eða klæði þat er hún elskaði meirr en skapara sinn, ok brenner þat af því [með hennia]t hún harmi bruna húss sins, þess er hún elskaði. Réttliga fyrðæmisk líkamr með [henna er þau er]u svá samtengð at líkamr sýnisk allt gera þat er ǫnd gerir.

The body is the house of the spirit or the clothing which [the spirit] loved more than its creator and it burns with it so that the spirit will grieve for the burning of its house, which it had loved. It is right that the body should be condemned with the spirit because they are so intertwined that the body is seen to do everything which the spirit does. (Nordal 2001: 257-58)

Nordal does not make an explicit connection between the two systems, but does suggest that the imagery of enclosure in *Elucidarius* and other early Christian literature could have served as a model for later secular poets. However, she does not draw a firm conclusion, instead opting to say that the kennings of enclosure demonstrate that in both Christian and secular literature the imagery of enclosure “supposes that the mind resides in the chest” (Nordal 2001: 258).

However, it is clear from early skaldic sources discussed in Chapter 3 that the location of the ‘mind’ inside the chest precedes the introduction of Christianity to medieval Scandinavia. In order to establish if there is any more connection between the two traditions it is necessary to go further than the ‘container’ imagery, and to look instead at the nature of what is contained within the chest. Further, it is necessary to consider this question in terms of both genre and chronology. There is a general trend for the earlier texts to show fewer embodied and ‘hydraulic’ features than later ones, and for poetry to show more of these features than prose. In order to outline the range of emotional and

¹⁴² For example in 2 Corinthians 6:16 where the body is compared to the temple in which God resides.

cognitive system exhibited across the corpus of Christian literature I look first at the psychological model presented in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* as indicative of the earliest Christian literature; then at a wide range of ‘Christian Biography’ in order to compare this to secular narrative prose; finally, I consider the representation of emotion and cognition in Christian poetry.

3.2 *Old Icelandic Homily Book*

The earliest evidence we have for the psychological system the conversion to Christianity introduced into medieval Scandinavia comes from the earliest complete texts written in Old West Norse: the Old Icelandic and the Old Norwegian Homily Books. These texts were written at the turn of the thirteenth century (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 3-4) and provide an invaluable resource for the study of the cultural psychology of the Old Norse world. The two homily books are composite works containing mostly sermons, but the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* also contains, for example, a fragment of a text concerning musical theory, excerpts from *Stephanus saga*, and a partial translation of pseudo-Ambrose’s *Acta Sancti Sebastiani* (McDougall 1993: 290-92). In all, fifty of the sixty-two texts which make up the collection are sermons (Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2005: 339). The *Old Icelandic Homily Book* and the *Old Norwegian Homily Book* share eleven texts in common, which pushes their date back into the twelfth century. Two shared texts, The Stave-Church Homily and a sermon for St Michael’s day, are found in the early Icelandic manuscript fragment AM 237a fol., which was written in c.1150, which suggests that the contents of homily books were circulating in medieval Icelandic and Norway from at least this date, and probably a couple of decades earlier (McDougall 1993: 290-92). Consequently, they allow us an insight into the very early stages of Christian influence on the psychology of Old Norse-Icelandic.

The value of these texts lies in the fact that their contents, or a form of them, were delivered to the laity in medieval Scandinavia. Unlike the didactic text *Elucidarius*, which serves as a work of theological instruction for churchmen, the sermons contained in the homily books were delivered to an audience not necessarily schooled in theology.¹⁴³ This is reflected in the style of these early sermons. Unlike later Christian prose, the Homily Books make little use of Latinate vocabulary and syntax, and share numerous stylistic

¹⁴³ On the Old Norse-Icelandic *Elucidarius* see Firchow and Grimstad (1989) and Firchow (1992).

features with the *Íslendingasögur*, including abrupt changes in tenses and frequent movement from direct to indirect speech. Occasionally they also make use of “native proverbs and everyday similitudes” (McDougall 1993: 290-92), all of which implies a commitment to communicating these ideas to the general population.

However, while concessions are made to native Old Norse-Icelandic style, the language of emotion and cognition in these texts is markedly different from that seen in secular prose texts. There are of course some continuities; for example, as is the case elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic Christian literature, thinking and feeling are not associated with the head or brain. Neither *heili* nor *hjarni* are mentioned once in the sermons contained in this text and none of the twenty-one references to the head, *høfuð*, has any psychological significance afforded to it. Although the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition can be characterised as cardiocentric, the psychological system of the *Old Norse Homily Book* differs from this tradition by giving the heart a much more prominent role in emotional and cognitive contexts.

In the *Íslendingasögur hjarta* occurs twenty-eight times compared to the 361 occurrences of *hugr*. In the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*, the two lexemes occur with effectively the same frequency: *hjarta* occurs 110 times, and *hugr* 124 times. This difference in the attention given to the heart reflects the prominent role it was afforded in the Christian tradition. Whereas in the native tradition, the only psychological function given to the heart is its role as the seat of emotions, in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*, the range of functions is greatly extended. The heart still serves as the location for bad feelings, as in the adaptation of Ecclesiastes 7:5:

Hiarta þpacra maNa heldr hrygþ. en héimþscra maNa hiarta hever gleþe. (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 29r22-23)

The hearts of wise men are sorrowful, but the hearts of foolish men have joy.

However, in these texts the heart also takes on cognitive functions, both as the seat of thoughts and as an entity responsible for thoughts itself. In the section titled *Póstola mál*, unclean or ugly thoughts are to be banished from the *hjarta* rather than the *hugr* as we might expect: *liotra hugreNinga ýr hiarta líno* (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 29r22-23) and later in a later sermon the heart is presented as the organ of thought: “hiarta. at hyGia. oc tunga at mæla” (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 98v13). Such examples are relatively infrequent, and *hugr* still fulfils the majority of cognitive functions in these sermons.

However, what we can observe is a much greater overlap between *hugr* and *hjarta* when compared to secular prose. This is true of other features attributed to *hugr* in the native tradition. For example the verb *elska* ‘love’ which collocates with *hugr* in the native tradition frequently occurs with the *hjarta* instead in the sermon literature: “*elfca goþ af aollo hiarta*” (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 47r15). The most frequent usage of *hjarta* in these sermons, and the one that differs most from the native tradition, is its moral and spiritual role, a faculty not attributed to the heart in secular prose. This focus on the purity of the heart is responsible for the most noticeable change in the language of cognition in the sermons.

Another salient difference from the native tradition is that internal thoughts are given a great deal of attention in the sermon literature. As a consequence of this there is much larger lexicon for thoughts. In addition to *hugr* the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* also makes frequent reference to *hugskot* ‘mind, soul’ and *hugrenning* ‘thoughts’. We are told that *hugrenningar* are the feet of the inner man, which carry the *hugr* to various places just as the feet carry the body:

Féotr enl íþra maNz ero hugrenningar þær ef bera hug en í ymfa staþe sem féotr bera licam. (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 86r16-17)

This focus on the inner man is entirely absent from secular prose and appears to be an innovation brought by Christianity. This concern with what people are thinking is manifested in the extended lexicon for inner thoughts. The sermons frequently speak of the *hugskotsauga* ‘the eyes of the mind:

þeir ef hugfcoz augom móttó fía haN oc elfca. (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 86r16-17)

those who could see him and love him with the eyes of the mind.

oc hefiom upp hugfcof aogo ór. at ver sém tálgrafar þær er óviNren grefr til þes at véla os í. (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 69r25-26)

and we lift up the eyes of our mind so that we see the pitfalls which the enemy digs to trick us into.

In addition to the ‘eyes of the mind’ the sermons also speak of *hugskotseyra* the ‘ears of the mind’ (85v17) and *hugskotshond* ‘the hand of the mind’ (86r12). However, what is striking about this interior focus is that it does not correlate with any particular interest in physical interiority. Despite an increased focus on the heart, the

sermons in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* do not feature any internal physiological responses to emotion. In these texts, the concern with the inner man focuses exclusively on thoughts and not on the heart's role in the somatic expression of emotion. In fact, these sermons when taken together show far fewer examples of physiological emotion than do the *Íslendingasögur*.

This is particularly striking as Christian texts provide models for this behaviour. For example, in Luke 24: 32 the heart is said to burn:

et dixerunt ad invicem nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis dum loqueretur
in via et aperiret nobis scripturas¹⁴⁴

And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in this way, and opened to us the scriptures?¹⁴⁵

Although this text is incorporated into the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* as follows, cardiocentric heat which plays such a prominent role in Old English and Old Saxon texts is not featured elsewhere in the homily book:

Brenanda vað hiarta í os þa ef han malte við os (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 88v9)

When burning, heat or fire is mentioned it does not refer to emotions, or to the heart, breast or *hugr*, nor is it ever associated with any hydraulic activity. Instead, when heat is referred to it is either with reference to the body and soul burning in the fires of hell, or more frequently when describing the nature of the seraphim, a topic which occurs regularly throughout the sermons. Such descriptions of seraphim account for the majority of occurrences of the verbs *branna* 'burn' and *loga* 'blaze':

feraphím þat ero breNendr eða logendr (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 18v24-25)

All other references to heat and burning in the sermons appear to be metaphorical, referring on the whole to the purifying fire of God's love.

In addition to this lack of cardiocentric heat from the psychological system of the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*, there is also a complete lack of hydraulic behaviour. On no occasion is either the *brjóst*, *hjarta* or *hugr* said to swell up, nor are people said to swell up

¹⁴⁴ *The Bible: Latin Vulgate* <<http://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/www/Vulgate/Luke.html>>

¹⁴⁵ trans. *Douay-Rheims Bible* <<http://drbo.org/chapter/49024.htm>>

when angry or sad, as is seen in secular prose. The verb *svella*, which is used, albeit infrequently, to describe characters who are angry in native texts does not occur once in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*. Nor do other familiar ‘hydraulic’ verbs such as, *belga* or its participle *bólginn*. *Vella*, whose Old English cognate *wellan* is frequently used in hydraulic contexts occurs only once, but in reference to the state of a dead body:

oc fara at fíla líket oc líta brátt at þat veLr mopkom aLt (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 71v5-6)
and go to see the body and see that it completely wells up with maggots

Likewise, the verb *þrútna* ‘to swell’ occurs only once, in reference to swelling with pride:

ef haN þrútnar i oftmetnaþe af lærdóme sínom. (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 89r11)

when he swells in pride from his learning.

In this respect, the psychological model of the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* differs not only from the Old English model where cardiocentric heat and swelling are key features of the somatic expression of emotion, but also the native Old Norse-Icelandic model where characters do, occasionally, swell up in response to strong feelings. Overall, the sermons present very few noticeably somatic responses to emotion, even compared with the markedly unemotional *Íslendingasögur*. However, there is one area where the sermon literature does focus on bodily responses to emotion: weeping.

Whereas weeping occurs only a handful of times in the secular prose literature (on average, around once per saga in the *Íslendingasögur* corpus), weeping forms an integral part of the emotional system of the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*. Not only does weeping occur often, tears are expressed in both joy and in sorrow, a departure from the model seen in native sources where tears are restricted to bad feelings.

Although weeping and references to tears occur frequently in this collection of texts, at no point is a causal link made between the contents of the chest or the body swelling up, as is seen in Old English and Old Saxon. As in the secular tradition, people are described weeping, but no additional physiological cause is provided. Nor are tears ever linked to the heart or *hugr*. There are two occasions where *hugr* is associated with tears, but in both these cases it is the thoughts of the *hug* or *hugskot* which are responsible for the person weeping; the tears do not physically proceed from the *hugr*.

Skirom ver hug várn itqrom en licam várn i meinlętom (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 38r8-9)

þa scolom vér lkira hug-řcot ór itórom. (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 29r28)

It is also notable that the temperature of the tears is never specified. In later Old Norse-Icelandic Christian texts, as in Old English and Old Saxon, tears are frequently characterised as being hot, which appears to be linked to the imagery of cardiocentric heat. This lack of temperature also sets the imagery of tears in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* apart from secular prose texts which associate tears with hailstones and ice.

On the basis of this sample, the language of the earliest Christian texts emerges as different both from the Christian idiom of Anglo-Saxon England and Old Saxon texts, but also from the medical texts discussed previously and the native tradition described in Chapter 3. In contrast to the medical texts, the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* is fully cardiocentric; the brain and head are afforded no psychological significance. However, the cardiocentrism of these texts is notably unembodied. Neither the heart, *brjóst* nor *hugr* is involved in the somatic expression of emotion. The heart does not burn, grow hot, express tears or swell up as it does in Old English Christian texts. Instead, these texts are concerned far more with the new language of thoughts and interiority, and the fate of people's souls. In this respect it is like neither the tradition of Old English or native Old Norse-Icelandic, but instead has features shared with both: the interiority of Old English, absent from saga literature, but none of the physiological correlations this focus on interiority has in Old English.

What is notable about the psychological model of these early Christian texts is that they appear to have made no impact on the psychology seen in secular texts. In the sermon literature, the heart is given a wide range of emotional and cognitive agency but little by way of physical attributes, whereas in the tradition discussed in Chapter 3 the heart responds physically to strong feelings by trembling and quivering but is afforded very few cognitive roles. In much the same way as the concept of soul makes little impact on the native tradition, the particular cardiocentric model of the sermon literature seems to exist as a separate psychological tradition, which has had little impact on vernacular psychology.

3.3 Christian biography

Although the psychological model of the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* does not appear to have influenced the conception of the heart in secular prose and poetry, the lack of emotional and spiritual agency given to *hjarta* in texts like the *Íslendingasögur* may be due to the fact that these do not concern themselves with spiritual matters. In order to see how the Christian model of the heart was received in Old Norse-Icelandic outside sermon literature, I have worked through a large body of Christian narrative prose. As these texts focus on Christian characters and topics, they serve as better comparison for the sermon texts than do secular sagas.

Christian prose forms a substantial part of the surviving Old Norse-Icelandic corpus and contains a wide variety of literature, ranging from native histories such as *Hungrvaka*, which records the lives of the early bishops of Skálholt, to the adaptations of Latin tales about the apostles contained in *Postola sögur* (Unger 1874). In spite of their various sources and topics treated in these texts, codicological evidence indicates they were grouped together as one genre in medieval Iceland (Driscoll 2005: 194), which Cormack (2005) names Christian Biography, so as to exclude instructional and didactic Christian works such as the Icelandic and Norwegian Homily Books and *Elucidarius*.

Although many of these texts are adapted from Latin sources, the genre as a whole is distinctly Old Norse-Icelandic in style and tone. While there are attempts at imitating some Latin rhetorical features (Jónas Kristjánsson 1981), the texts derived from Latin models are best considered as sense-for-sense adaptations rather than word-for-word translations (Foote 1994; Battista 2005). As with the early sermon literature, this appears to have been prompted by the need for easy comprehension by the laity as much as anything else (Cormack 2005: 29). The result is that while these texts often deal with foreign topics, they present them in a familiar, native style (Roughton 2005; Collings 1969).

However, although these texts read much like the *Íslendingasögur* in their narrative style, because of their subject matter they feature much more of a focus on interiority and people's thoughts and feeling. However, contemporary sources suggest that this literature was less popular than secular prose texts. For example, the prologue to *Flóres saga konungs ok sona hans* records that:

eru þeir þó fleiri men, er lítil skemtum þykkir at heilagra manna sögur.
(Driscoll 2005: 194)

There are many men who consider saints' sagas to be of little entertainment.

Likewise, Grímr Holmsteinsson, the translator of *Jóns saga babtista*, writes that foolish people:

allt þikkir þat langt, er fra Cristz köppum er sagt, ok skemtaz framarr med skróksögur. (Unger 1874: 849; cited in Cormack 2005: 305)

all think that everything which is told about Christ's champions is boring and would rather be entertained by fables.

However, it is not clear to what extent these comments accurately reflect the popularity of this literature (Cormack 2000: 304). Whether or not they were widely read, they represent a large body of evidence for analysing the psychological models that were current in medieval Iceland.

In order to analyse as many of these texts as possible, I created a corpus of citations from digitised editions of *Biskupa sögur* (Jón Sigurðsson *et al.* 1858, 1878), *Heilagramanna sögur* (Unger 1877) and *Postola sögur* (Unger 1874). Taken together, this sample represents 3941 pages of Old Norse-Icelandic, amounting to roughly 1.4 million words, which is almost double the size of Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's and Bergljót Kristjánsdóttir's (1996) digital edition of the *Íslendingasögur*. The primary purpose of studying this genre of texts is to explore how the model of cognition and emotion in early Christian literature was incorporated into narrative texts. However, the size of sample studied also augments the corpus of texts on which the study of native psychology in Chapter 3 was based. If the representation of emotion and cognition in this sample matches that presented in Chapter 3, it increases the likelihood that the model of ethnopsychology described there is accurate, as the number of potential counter-examples to it have been greatly reduced by analysing this large body of narrative texts. The digitised versions of the texts mentioned above were searched for occurrences of a number of key lexemes: *hugr*, *hjarta* and *brjóst*. 'Hydraulic' verbs such as *bryngva*, *svella* and *blótma* 'swell' were also searched for to see if this psychological model featured in Christian narrative texts.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ As the optical character recognition software (OCR) used in the digitisation of the texts is imperfect, it is unlikely that every occurrence of the lexemes searched for has been found. In order to maximise the number of hits returned, multiple version of the same text were searched where available, and predictable mistakes made by the OCR software were included in the search terms. For example, the indefinite accusative singular of *hugr* was searched for using the following forms: <hug, hvg, hng, bug, bvg, bng, huy, hvy, hny, buy, bvy, bny>.

In all *hugr* occurs 473 times, *brjóst* 303 times and *hjarta* 196 times.¹⁴⁷ The general pattern that emerges from these results is similar to that seen in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*. Compared to the *Íslendingasögur* and other secular texts, the heart (and the *brjóst*, which acts synonymously with it) is given a much wider range of psychological functions. For example, the heart is also portrayed as the container for *hugrenning* ‘thought’ in *Tveggja Postola Saga Jóns ok Jakobs*, as it is in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*: “Ok er þess hugrenning staðfestiz i hans hiarta” (Unger 1874: 708). Furthermore, faith and belief are attributed throughout these texts to the heart, as in *Andreas saga Postola I*:

Andreas svaraði: “Ef þu truir af öllu hiarta, þa mattu þat vita, en ef þu truir eigi, þa mattu þess alldri viss verða. (Unger 1874: 339)

Andreas answered: “If you trust with all your heart, then you may know that, but if you don’t, then you will you will never be certain about this.

This phrase *truá af öllu hjarta* is used frequently throughout these texts. However, although *hjarta* occurs frequently in cognitive contexts, *hugr* is still the primary part of the person responsible for thinking. Furthermore, *hugr* is also used in all the cognitive phraseology that *hjarta* appears in. For example, in *Agnesar saga* (Unger 1877: 16) we are told that the saint believed in her *hugr*: ‘Þviat hon hafði tru i hug ser’. In all cases where *hjarta* collocates with cognitive verbs, *hugr* does so as well. This suggests that in the psychological model of these Christian texts, the heart has had its function extended to cover the range of *hugr*, but has not replaced it. Additionally, *hugr* and not *hjarta* is used in cognitive phraseology when the topic is not explicitly religious. It appears that this cognitive use of *hjarta* is restricted to spiritual contexts.

This is true of the behaviour of *hjarta* elsewhere in these texts. The phrase to do something ‘with all one’s heart’ occurs throughout these texts. For example, in *Jóns saga Biskups*, people repent with all their heart and call upon Bishop Jón with all their heart:

Ok er Gyðingar sá þenna atburð allan jannsamán, þa gerðu þeir iðran af öllu hjarta ok snerust til guðs. (Jón Sigurðsson *et al.* 1858: 174)

And when the Jews saw this event all together, then they repented from all of their hearts and turned to God.

¹⁴⁷By way of comparison, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Bergljót Kristjánsdóttir’s (1996) edition of the *Íslendingasögur* contains 360 occurrences of this lexeme. Were the ratio of occurrences from the *Íslendingasögur* applied to this corpus of Christian biography, we would expect 681 hits: $(360 / 7.4 \times 10^5) \times 1.4 \times 10^6$. It is impossible to know how many occurrences of the lexemes searched for were missed, but this comparison suggests that the majority of them were found, and certainly enough to provide a representative sample.

Þá kallar hon á hinn heilaga Jón biskup af öllu hjarta (Jón Sigurðsson *et al.* 1858: 174)

Then she calls to the holy Bishop Jón with all her heart

Hjarta also collocates with the verb *elska* in passages such as the following from *Jóns saga Postola*: ‘enn elska nýa miskunn með aullu hjarta’. In the *Íslendingasögur* *elska* only ever collocates with *hugr*. The pattern that emerges is one of the *hjarta* used as the primary part of the person when thinking and feeling in spiritual contexts. However, outside such circumstances these functions *hugr* is used instead of *hjarta*.

In such spiritual contexts, the representation of *hugr* also occasionally deviates from its representation in the native tradition. For example, we are shown characters thinking and speaking inside their *hugr*, a feature not seen in the native tradition, but one that does correlate with the focus on interiority seen in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*:

Enn síðan er þeir vettr voru liðnir, þá treystiz hann gæzsku sinn ok hugdi, at engi maðr væri ianngodr sem hann var, ok hugdi i hug sér: Ek þarf eingis mannz þurfandi at vera (*Mariu Saga Egipzku II*, Unger 1877 vol.1: 495)

And afterwards, once the winters had passed, he then trusts in his own virtue and thought that there was no was as good as he was, and thought in his *hugr*: I want no one to be a poor person.

Þá mælir hann sva í hug sér: Ef hinn heilagi Jón biskups gerir svá, firir sinn verðleik, at ek finna fingrull þetta, er ek hefí glatað, skal ek hann dýrka ok færa honum nokkura fórn firir ástar sakir við hann. (*Jóns Biskups saga hin elzta*, Jón Sigurðson *et al.* 1858: 198)

Then he speaks thus in his *hugr*: If the holy Bishop John, by means of his worthiness, arranges it that I find the gold ring which I have lost, I will glorify him and bring him an offering because of my love for him.

However, such usages of *hugr* are rare and in the vast majority of cases the representation of *hugr*’s role in cognition matches that outlined in Chapter 3. Much the same can be said in relation to *hugr*’s role in emotional processes. Christian biography, despite its subject matter, in general displays the same unemotional tone as the *Íslendingasögur*; there are, however, a few areas in which the emotional role of *hugr* is clarified. In the *Íslendingasögur* the emotional phraseology of *hugr* is restricted to feeling good or bad things towards someone else. The rare occasions when an emotion is located in the body, it is attributed to the *hjarta* or the *brjóst*:

Hávarðr kvezk aldri hugsa um eptirmál; kvað lokit því héðan af, at hann myndi hafa nokkura sorg eða angr í sínu hjarta ok þykkja eigi þann veg vel, sem af reiddi hans mál. (ÍF VI: 335-336)

Hávarðr said he was not worried about prosecution. He said that from now on he would never have any sorrow or grief in his *hjarta* nor be dissatisfied with the way the case turned out.

Mun mér aldri sá harmr ór brjósti ganga, er ek hefi af því fengit, er þau báru mik á húsgang. (ÍF XIII: 34)

The grief I have suffered from when they took me begging will never leave my *brjóst*.

On the face of it this suggests that there was some division of labour between the *hugr* for thinking and the *hjarta/brjóst* for feeling. The corpus of Christian texts shows that this is not the case. *Hugr* collocates with emotions such as *angr* and *sorg* as often does *hjarta*:

Guðmundr prestri mælti: satt segi þér, at Kolbeinn er sjíkr, ok þo eigi likamligum sjíkleik, heldr at hugar angri ok sorg. (*Brot úr miðsögu Guðmundar*, Jón Sigurðson *et al.* 1858: 560)

Guðmundr the priest said: What you say is true: Kolbeinn is unwell, but not in terms of his body, but rather because of his *hugr*'s grief and sorrow.

Su var þriðja framtign, at þann angr ok otta, er fylldi hiortu postolanna allra, hof hinn sæli Johannes i frið (*Jons saga Postola IV*, Unger 1874: 466)

That was the third sign: the blessed John raised up the grief and fear which filled all the apostles' hearts in peace.

However, the most important finding in relation to emotional activity is the complete absence of a hydraulic model analogous to that seen in Old English and Old Saxon. The lack of evidence for such a model in the corpus of over two million words this thesis has explored confirms that this psychological model was not part of Old Norse culture. That there is no hydraulicism in the Christian biographies is particularly important; that not even those texts adapted from Christian exemplars show any trace of hydraulic psychology indicates that this model was inconsistent with native Old Norse psychology.

There are, however, two passages in the corpus of Christian texts examined which bear passing resemblance to the Old English hydraulic model, characterised principally by cardiocentric heat as a response to strong feelings. The translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, edited in *Heilagramanna sǫgur* (Unger 1877 vol. 1: 158-256), features the unusual image of the *hugr* burning with passion:

Kona var su in, sem enn illgiarni andi leiddi fyrir hygskotz augu honum ok brendi svo hug hans med girndar elldi i alite konv þessarrar, at hann matti trautt standazt. (Unger 1877 vol. 1: 160)

She was the woman who the malicious spirit had laid in front of his mind's eye and his *hugr* burnt with the fire of passion because of this woman's visage, so that he could barely stand it.

In a different rendering of this passage the *brjóst* burns, a similarly unusual idiom in Old Norse-Icelandic:

En sva micill girndar eldr brann i briosti hans i aliti cono þeirar, at hann hafði mioc sva einrabit at hverfa eptir munof sinni oc gange a bravt or evþimorc. (Unger 1877 vol. 1: 202)

And the fire of passion burned in his *brjóst* so strongly because of this woman's visage that he resolved to turn and leave the wilderness because of his lust.

Such passages are significant in part for drawing attention to the scarcity of the occurrence of cardiocentric heat in native Old Norse-Icelandic contexts, but they are also valuable because they show no associated hydraulic activity; the writers of these texts felt no need to elaborate on the physical reactions that may be caused by the burning inside the chest.

As in the *Íslendingasögur*, Christian Biography rarely describes emotional activity in relationship to the body, but where they do swelling is almost never mentioned. Numerous examples of the body swelling occur throughout these texts, but these are invariably medical ailments promptly healed the sagas' holy men. There is one instance of swelling in anger, however. This occurs in *Tveggja postola saga Jons ok Jakobs*, when the Jews grow angry at their neighbours' converting to Christianity:

þeir [Jupar] sea Ermogenem magum sniunn til rettrar truer með ollum sinum vinum, blogna þeir i mikilli reiði [...] (Unger 1874: 577-578)

when the Jews saw the Ermogen kinsmen had turned to the true faith with all their friends, they swelled in great anger.

Tveggja postola saga Jons ok Jakobs is based on a number of medieval Latin sources (Alfrún Gunnlaugsdóttir 2010). However, these sources have been extensively reworked and this particular description appears to be an unmotivated Old Norse-Icelandic description of anger, not an attempt to render an expression contained in the Latin text, as in the translations of Gregory's descriptions of the burning *hugr* and *brjóst*.

This pattern holds for the genre of Christian Biography as a whole. The physical expression of emotion matches that of the native tradition. As in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*, the increased concern with psychological interiority does not correspond to any more interest in the inner workings of the chest. The only major difference in the psychological model of Christian Biography compared to the *Íslendingasögur* and other secular literature is in the increased functional role of *hjarta*.

3.4 Christian poetry

Whereas the language of the early didactic literature and later Christian Biography conforms closely to the psychological model of secular literature, Christian poetry differs from this system in a number of important ways. These poems display a heightened emotional and affective register and pay more attention to the physiology of emotion than either secular texts or Christian prose. A fitting example of this is stanza 54 from the fourteenth-century poem *Lilja*, traditionally attributed to Eysteinn Ásrímsson (Chase 2007b):

Höfuðdrotningin, harmi þrungen,
hneigð og lút, er skálf af sútum,
færðiz nær, þá er fell ór sárum
fossum blóðið niðr á krossinn.
Þrútnar brjóst, en hjartað hristiz;
hold er klökt, en öndin snöktir;
augun tóku að drukna drjúgum
döpr og móð í tára flóði.

The supreme queen, filled with grief, who trembled with sorrows, bowed and bent, moved close, when the blood from the wounds fell in torrents down over the cross. The breast swells, the heart trembles; the flesh is weak, the spirit sobs; the eyes began to drown terribly, sad weary in a flood of tears. (ed. and trans. Chase 2007b: 624)

Although the individual components of this display of emotion are familiar from elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, the intensity of this emotional response is rarely seen outside of Christian poetry. This style of emotional language is found throughout *Lilja* and other fourteenth-century devotional poetry. There is a concern not only with psychological interiority: on what people feel, but also physiological interiority: what is happening within them. This is again exemplified in *Lilja*, stanza 11, where it describes the creation of Adam and his soul:

Breytti guð og brá til hætti
 blóð og hold af vatni og moldu,
 liettan blástr af lofti næsta,
 lífs heitleika af sólar reitum,
 önd og þar til síðan sendi;
 sú er skiljandi drottins vilja;
 leið kunnandi um líkams æðar,
 líf skínanda af helgum anda.

God transformed and changed his behaviour, blood flesh from water soil, the light breath the nearest air, the warmth [*lit.* warmths] of life the paths of the sun [SKY/HEAVEN], then he sent a soul there; it is discerning the Lord's will, knowing the path through the body's blood vessels, the shining life the Holy Spirit. (ed. and trans. Chase 2007b: 573-575)

This concern with interiority manifests itself in descriptions of somatic responses to emotion, many of which have much in common with Lockett's (2011) hydraulic model. In addition to a physically active heart and swelling with emotion which are seen elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic, Christian poetry also refers to cardiocentric heat and hot tears. However, these components do not appear to have been systematised to the same degree as they are in Old English texts. Although all the component features of a hydraulic model are evident, there is little evidence that this formed part of the psychological system of the Christian poetry. Instead, the psychophysiological system of Christian poetry only superficially resembles the hydraulic mode of Old English; in practice it does not deviate far from the emotional responses seen in the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition. Nonetheless, it does appear to represent a distinct psychological tradition, similar to the native one but not identical to it.

As is the case elsewhere in Christian literature, the psychological model represented in Christian poetry is thoroughly cardiocentric; nowhere is the head or brain afforded any psychological significance. Where this cardiocentrism differs from the native tradition is in the attribution of heat to the chest. As we have seen, this feature is essentially absent from the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* (barring the quotation from Luke 24:32) and only occurs occasionally in Christian narrative prose. What is not clear, however, is the extent to which these references are to be understood as metaphorical. This is because cardiocentric heat tends to be used in moral and spiritual contexts where the focus is on the person's behaviour rather than the physiological consequences of this heat. For example, in *Lilja* this cardiocentric heat is employed in the contexts of sin, as in stanza 76:

Af margfaldri synda saurgan
 sviðir brjóst og hefndum kvíðir

fyrir afbrigðin flestra dygða

My breast burns from the manifold defilement of sins fears revenge for deviation from most virtues (ed. and trans. Chase 2007b: 648-649)

In stanza 81, this heat of the *brjóst* is contrasted with the cold frost of sin:

Laust aldrigi lát mig, Kristi,
lastavinds í byljakasti;
tyfta mitt og tem sem oftast
tendrað brjóst með líknar vendi,
svá að grátandi fúss að fótum,
faðir skínandi, krjúpa eg þínum
hvert það sinn, er eg kulda kenni
í kostalausum glæpa frosti.

Never let me loose, Christ, in the sudden squall of the wind of vices; chastise and tame as often as possible my burning breast with the rod of mercy, so that, weeping, I may eagerly kneel at your feet, shining father, every time experience cold the barren frost of sins. (ed. and trans. Chase 2007b: 653-654)

In light of this, the cardiocentric heat might be interpreted as metaphorical, belonging to the imagery of the Christian tradition, but not actually referring to a physiological process. However, more specific references to the physical nature of this heat do occur. In *Lilja* stanza 84 burning pain is attributed the heart, rendered as ‘the seat of conscience’:

Hræðumz eg, að sárt muni svíða
samvizkunnar byggð af grunnum
sundruð öll, þá er syndir kalla
sína eign á hjarta mínu.

I fear that the seat of conscience [BREAST] will burn painfully, all sundered from its foundations, when sins claim their ownership of my heart. (ed. and trans. Chase 2007b: 656-657)

And in *Máríuvísur I*, stanza 8, cardiocentric heat is mentioned without reference to sin, but to anger:

Brann í brjósti hennar
bæði grimd og æði
fyld, er húsfrú vildi
forðaz slíku orði,
svá að af sorgum nýjum
sáran dauð með fári
— urðu illar gjörðir —
affíni ríeð sínum.

Both ferocity and pent-up frenzy burned in her breast when the housewife wanted to save herself from such a rumour, so that because of renewed sorrows she plotted the bitter death of her son-in-law with wrath; wicked actions ensued. (ed. and trans. Gade 2007b: 684)

However, this example from *Márvísur I* is the only example of cardiocentric heat associated with emotion in the corpus of Old Norse-Icelandic Christian poetry. On this basis, the above examples could be dismissed as a metaphorical rather than physiological description. Nonetheless, there is other evidence which suggests that heat may have been intended to be interpreted literally in this poetry. Unlike the native texts, in Christian poetry tears are represented as hot. As discussed in Chapter 3, when any descriptive attention is paid to tears in the native tradition they are associated with hailstones and ice. However, in both *Márvísur II* and *Lilja* the motif of hot tears is employed:

Vænni muntu várkunn
veita fyrir tár heit
brúði, þó að í barns nauð
bera kunni sorg hier.

You will grant the good woman forgiveness for her hot tears, when she could convey sorrow here in the plight of the child.’ (*Márvísur II*, stanza 17, ed. and trans. Gade 2007c: 713)

Hjörtun játi; falli og fljóti
fagnaðarlaug af hvers manns augum;
æ þakkandi miskunn mjúka
minn drottinn, í holdgan þinni;

Let hearts confess; let a hot spring [TEARS] of joy fall and flow from every man’s eyes, forever thanking mild mercy in your Incarnation, my Lord. (*Lilja*, stanza 32, ed. and trans. Chase 2007b: 600)

Taken together, such examples suggest that heat did form part of the psychophysiology of Christian poetry; however the number of attestations is too small to make this point with any certainty. Heat certainly correlated with ‘angry’ emotions in humoral medicine, a system which might be alluded to in stanza 77 of *Lilja*:

Reiðigall með sárum sullum
sviðrar mier um blásin iðrin;
hrygðin slítr af hjartarótum
harðan styrk í sútamyrkri.

The gall of wrath burns me with painful ulcers in my swollen bowels; sorrow tears the hard strength from the roots of the heart the darkness of despair. (ed. and trans. Chase 2007b: 649-650)

However, whether metaphorical or physiological, this poetry is set apart from the native tradition by prominently featuring cardiocentric heat as part of its somatic system.

Regardless of its metaphorical status, it does represent a distinct way of talking about emotional processes.

What is clear, though, is that this cardiocentric heat was not seen to cause any concomitant physiological responses. While such cardiocentric heat is the primary component of the hydraulic model of emotion in Old English and Old Saxon verse, heat in Christian poetry has no such effect. On no occasion does heat lead to swelling or the expulsions of tears. Although hot tears are a feature of Old Norse-Icelandic Christian poetry, there is no apparent causal relationship between cardiocentric heat and weeping, as there is in the hydraulic systems of West Germanic. Even in the most physically affective passage of poetry from *Lilja*, quoted at the beginning of this section, heat is not included as part of Mary's emotional response. As such, we can conclude that although containing similar components to the Old English and Old Saxon psychological models, an analogous hydraulic system of emotion and cognition does not form part of Old Norse-Icelandic Christian poetry.

Instead, when swelling is mentioned in the poetry it conforms to the pattern seen in the native tradition. Swelling is presented without reference to any causal factor; people swell up with strong emotions, but they do not do so because of any internal process related to *hugr* or *hjarta*. For example, when the angel in *Lilja* stanza 15 swells up in displeasure, no mention is made of heat or the conditions within his breast:

Þrútnar, svellr og unír við illa
eingill, bann það er hafði feingið

The angel who had received that ban swells, puffs up, and is displeased (ed. and trans. Chase 2007b: 580-581)

The same is true in *Pétersdrápa* stanza 53, where people are said to swell up in sorrow following the death of Tabitha:

Tábíta frú fljótan
fann dauða, það snauðum
öllum sárt nam svella
senn fyr missi þenna.

The lady Tabitha met a sudden death, so that all the poor did grievously swell with sorrow at once over this loss. (ed. and trans. McDougall 2007: 843-834)

The only occasion where there might be evidence of swelling leading to another physiological process comes from *Máruvísur I*. This poem like, those quoted above features swelling without any other physiological reference in stanza 22:

Enn gjörðu þeir annan
eld af harmi sveldir,
hyrjar, miklu meira,
mein bjóðandi fljóði.

Again they made another, much larger fire, bloated with anger, offering the woman harm from the burning. (ed. and trans. Gade 2007b: 694)

However, earlier in the poem, in stanza 11, Mary is said ‘to admit every word’, while bursting with grief: ‘Gjörði hun öllum orðum/angrþrútin við ganga’ (Gade 2007a: 687). The expulsion of words because of internal pressure in the chest is a feature of Old Saxon poetry, and is also part of the psychological system of Old Testament poetry (Lockett 2011: 131-141). However, aside from this isolated example this motif does not feature in Old Norse-Icelandic. It may be that there was thought to be a causal relationship between swelling and the expulsion of words, but on the basis of this one example there is not enough evidence to make this case. However, it is notable that earlier in *Máruvísur I*, in stanza 8 above, no hydraulic effects are caused because of the ‘ferocity and pent-up frenzy’ that burned in Mary’s breast. She does not swell up, change colour, weep, or express words. Overall, we may conclude that the examples of swelling in Christian poetry, like cardiocentric heat, do not form part of a hydraulic physiological system of emotion. Instead they are much closer to the example of swelling seen in the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition, where swelling is generally restricted to plain verbal description with no interest in what occurs inside a person’s chest.

However, although neither the heart nor *hugr* are represented as swelling up both the heart and soul are represented as being physically involved in emotional processes. In the stanza from *Lilja* quoted at the beginning of this section, the heart is said to tremble, *hjartað hristiz*, a reaction also seen in *Drápa af Márugrát*, stanza 21:

Hjarta mitt, er eg horfða á þetta,
hræraz tók, því son minn kæri
dýrliqr virði miklu meira
mína eynd en þíslir sínar.’

My heart began to tremble as I looked at this, because dear son, the precious one, heeded anguish much more than his own torments.’ (ed. and trans. Gade 2007a: 774-775)

Similarly, in *Lilja* the soul is said to convulse so hard that the body shakes:

Tárum rigni, en tungan þagni;
taki af mál, en þurftug sálin
beriz um fast, svá að búkinn hristi;

Let it rain with tears, but let the tongue be silent, let speech die away, and let the needy soul convulse hard, so that the body shakes; (*Lilja* stanza 75, ed., and trans. Chase 2007b: 647-648)

Here the contents of the inner chest are seen to play a physiological role in the experience of emotion, but like the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition this is restricted to quivering and trembling, rather than swelling up or heating up. Although the emotional system described above cannot be considered to be hydraulic like the Old English and Old Saxon systems, some of the poems from the corpus of Christian poetry do associate the trembling and agitation of the heart with crying, a feature not seen in the native tradition. In stanza 48 of the *Drápa af Móriugrát* tears are said to accompany the ‘agitation’ of the heart:

Mönnum eru slík heitin hennar
harðla væn, en tár og bænir
helgar láti hverr maðr fylgja
hjarta klökkku og iðran bjarta.

Such promises of hers are very hopeful for men, and may each man let tears, holy prayers, pure repentance accompany the agitated heart. (ed. and trans. Gade 2007a: 792)

This connection to the heart is made more explicit earlier in the poem, where tears are said to have their source in the chest:

Hneigið yðr fyrir lærðum lýðum
langa stund með skriftagangi;
bekkr iðranar ór brjósti klökkku
bragna laugi kinnr og augu.

Prostrate yourselves for a long time before learned men in confession; may the brook of repentance [TEARS] from the agitated breast wash the cheeks eyes of men. (ed. and trans. Gade 2007a: 787)

Tears are likewise located inside the chest, in the ‘enclosure of wits’, in stanza 45 of *Pétersdrápa*:

Metr líkn guðs og ljótan
löst sinn vánar trausti
smurðr af greina garði
gegn brásteina regni.

The upright man, anointed with rain of eyelash-stones [EYES > TEARS] from the enclosure of wits [BREAST], considers God’s mercy and his own ugly sin with the support of hope. (ed. and trans. McDougall 2007: 836)

Again, the extent to which the imagery is to be interpreted physically or metaphorically is unclear, as there are so few examples available to study. The fact that this imagery occurs so infrequently suggests that if it were a literal reference it was not an integral part of the psychology of tears in this tradition. Furthermore, the balance of evidence does seem to favour a metaphorical interpretation as the imagery is played upon in *Drápa af Móriugrát*. In stanza 49 the poet contrasts the dryness of the heart with the ‘pool of the eyelids’:

Purt er mior í hring um hjarta,
hvarma lón þó að renni af sjónum;
svik eru slíkt og synda auki
sárr, ef hrósa eg slíkum tárur.

It is dry around my heart, although the pool of the eyelids [TEARS] runs from my eyes; such is the deceit and bitter increase of sins, if I praise tears. (ed. and trans. Gade 2007c: 793).

This suggests that the imagery of tears in the chest was just that, and not part of the psycho-physiology of Old Norse-Icelandic Christian poetry. Nonetheless, like cardiocentric heat, it does represent a way of talking about emotional responses distinct from the native tradition.

This survey of Christian poetry has revealed a system of imagery that places much more attention on the body’s role in emotion than Christian prose literature and the native Old Norse-Icelandic system. However, despite featuring all the components we would expect from a hydraulic system of cognition and emotion, the poetic corpus does not appear to have conceived of the body operating in this way. Although featuring cardiocentric heat, swelling and a physically active heart, these elements do not combine in a systematised way. It is also difficult to ascertain the degree to which the affective language discussed above should be interpreted as metaphorical or literal. In spite of this, we can say that the language of Christian poetry discussed above does represent a distinct

way of talking about emotion and the body. This system shares some features with the native tradition, but also includes others that are not part of it, most prominently cardiocentric heat and the imagery it uses when describing tears.

However, there are two important points which need to be made when considering the significance of this language. The first is that although the psychological system differs from other texts already considered, the instances of these innovative features are still comparatively rare. Although the poetry shows a greater interest in psychological and physical interiority, this is only in contrast to the other Old Norse-Icelandic texts we have so far considered. Compared to Anglo-Saxon literature, the interest shown in interiority in Christian skaldic poetry is minimal. In all, the examples that this analysis is based on are drawn from only five out of the twenty seven poems edited in the volume *Poetry on Christian Subjects* (Clunies-Ross 2007). Considered as a whole, Christian poetry is not markedly different in its psychology from that seen elsewhere in Old Norse-Icelandic; *hugr* and *hjarta* serve as the seat of emotion and cognition, and in general these poems pay more attention to actions than to the inner world of their characters.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, the poems discussed above all date from the fourteenth century. The Christian poetry from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries does not share the same components as this later poetry. For example, cardiocentric heat does not play a role in the psychophysiology of Christian poetry outside the five poems discussed above. The same is true for tears; although weeping is a common occurrence throughout Christian poetry, hot tears are not found outside of fourteenth-century poetry. Even swelling, which has a parallel in the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition, occurs infrequently in the early poetry. When it does occur it is not in response to an emotional stimulus. For example, in *Solarljóð* stanza 5, sin swells up, but not the person:

Upp hinn stóð;
ilt hann hugði;
eigi var þarfsamliga þegit;
synð hans svall;
sofanda myrði
fróðan fjölvaran.

That one [the guest] got up; he had evil in mind; it [the host's generosity] was not received gratefully; his sin swelled up; he murdered the wise, very cautious sleeping man. (ed. and trans. Larrington and Robinson 2007: 299)

The only other notable example of swelling in pre-fourteenth-century Christian poetry is from stanza 39 of *Harmsól*. However, as in *Sólarjóð* no link is made between this swelling and the chest, nor are there any concomitant hydraulic effects:

Fnyk þola flærðar auknir
fleygjendr þrimu leygjar
— þar liggr elds á öldum
íma — frost með bríma.

Flingers of the flame of battle [SWORD > WARRIORS], swollen with falsehood, endure stench, frost with flame; there lie embers of fire upon men. (ed. and trans. Attwood 2007: 106-107)

The implications of this apparent chronological split are not clear. Considering how few instances we have to work with, it is not impossible that the split between fourteenth-century verse and the rest is coincidental. However, if we accept that the emotional language of the later poetry does differ from that of previous centuries we need to consider the influence of not a single psychological tradition represented by Christian poetry, but two. The earlier poetry, like Christian Biography and the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* appears to have conformed to the psychological system of the native tradition, whereas the later poetry begins to become influenced by contemporary trends in the devotional language of Continental Europe, which privileges the role of the heart.¹⁴⁸ It is therefore important to acknowledge that although both the native skaldic tradition and the Christian one locate the ‘mind’ in the chest, as Nordal (2001: 258) notes, the nature of the inner chest varies across the corpus of Christian skaldic poetry.

3.5 Conclusions

The purpose of this section was to establish how cognition and emotion are related to *hugr*, *hjarta* and the body in the psychological system of Old Norse-Icelandic Christianity, in order to assess its impact on the native tradition described above. What this study has shown is that psychological model of Christian texts, whether prose or poetry, does differ from the native tradition. Although both can be described as cardiocentric, the functions of the heart are represented differently in the two traditions. Early Christian texts, as represented by the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*, afford the heart a key role in the moral life of a person, as well as attributing cognitive functions to it not seen in the native tradition.

¹⁴⁸ On *Lilja*’s relationship with fourteenth century devotional language, see Chase (2007b: 561). For a survey of the role of the heart in later medieval Europe see Jager (2000) and Webb (2010).

Although *hugr* remains the primary cognitive part of the person, the heart overlaps with many functions that are exclusively attributed to *hugr* in the native tradition.

However, the cognitive, emotional and moral functions attributed to the heart do not appear to have influenced the *hugr*-focused cardiocentric system of native Old Norse-Icelandic texts. The texts from the genre of Christian Biography show that the heart was only given this expanded psychological role in spiritual contexts; outside them, *hugr* is considered to be the primary psychological part of the person. This situation resembles that of the cephalocentric medical traditions that were present in the Old Norse-Icelandic world. References to a brain-based psychology are only made in medical contexts; otherwise this psychological model is ignored and the traditional *hugr*-based psychology is employed. This seems to be the case with the heart-centred Christian imagery. It exists as a discrete way of talking about emotion and cognition, but is restricted to specific registers. Like the cephalocentric medical traditions, it is accommodated within Old Norse-Icelandic culture, but did not displace the traditional psychological model.

The differences between the native and Christian cardiocentric systems helps us to clarify the unique features of the native tradition. The fact that the heart is mentioned so often in Christian contexts but so little in secular ones highlights the primacy of *hugr* in the native tradition. The similarities between the two systems are also instructive. The lack of cardiocentric heart from all but the late Christian poetry confirms that this feature, essential to Old English vernacular psychology, was not part of the Old Norse-Icelandic system. Overall, we can conclude that in terms of the vernacular psychology of Old Norse-Icelandic, Christianity made very little impact.

4 Foreign and native romances

The final potential influence on Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology to be considered here is the Old French and Anglo-Norman romance literature which was introduced into medieval Scandinavia at the court of Hákon Hákonarson in the thirteenth century. As we have already seen in Chapter 3, there are indications that the emotional discourse of these romances did have a limited impact on native Old Norse-Icelandic compositions. However, passages like the one from *Víglundar saga* are the exception and on the whole there is a striking disparity between the representation of emotion in these romances and native Old Norse-Icelandic compositions. The value of considering these

texts comes less from establishing their influence on Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology, but in studying how the foreign motifs were accommodated by medieval Scandinavian literary culture. The differences between the psychological models in Old French texts certainly cannot account for the difference between Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English; like the Christian texts examined previously, the French texts' focus on psychological interiority and the central role of the heart is closer to Old English concerns than it is to those expressed in Old Norse-Icelandic literature.

In the broadest terms, the ethnopsychology of Old French is similar to that of medieval Germanic. The principal emotional and psychological entity is located in the chest, and is identified with the heart in particular; the brain is afforded little to no psychological function. However, apart from this general typological similarity the differences between cultural models of emotion in Old French and Old Norse-Icelandic are significant. Primarily, attention is given to the subjective experience of emotion as a privileged topic in its own right. There is a focus on psychological interiority like that seen in the Christian texts examined, but unlike these this interiority concerns the relationship between earthly lovers rather than between an individual and God. As Sif Rikhartsdóttir (2012: 64) has commented, in Old Norse-Icelandic texts emotional activity is used primarily as a motive for action, the real concern of Old Norse-Icelandic narratives. Furthermore, the open expression of this emotion is not considered unmanly as it is in Old Norse-Icelandic. Men are frequently depicted as not only weeping, but sighing, trembling and swooning from love-sickness.

Despite being so thematically different to the concerns of classical saga narratives, the romance genre was extremely popular in medieval Scandinavia and quickly spread from Norway to Iceland where original Old Norse-Icelandic romances were composed. These native *riddarasögur* survive in far more manuscript copies than do the texts which contemporary critics deem to be the greatest achievements of Old Norse-Icelandic literature (Driscoll 2005). However, in the transition from translated *riddarasögur* to native compositions the emotional style of Old French romance was left behind and styles of expression familiar from the native tradition were used instead. Examining the changes made within the various stages from the translation of Old French romances through to the composition of native romances allows us to see the areas which were most receptive to change in the native model and conversely which were most firmly engrained in the vernacular psychology. In so doing it clarifies the relationship between *hugr* and the heart,

somatic responses to emotion, and the cultural norms governing the display of emotion and the concern given to psychological interiority.

In order to explore this I will consider three groups of texts. Firstly I will look at the texts contained in the collection *Strengleikar*, a close translation of the *Lais* of Marie de France and similar material which we are told was commissioned by King Hákon himself. I will then consider longer texts which also show a greater degree of deviance from the Old French originals: *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* an adaptation of Thomas of Britain's version of the Tristan legend, *Möttuls saga*, an adaptation of *Le Lai du cort mantel* 'Tale of the Short Mantle',¹⁴⁹ and *Ívens saga*, *Erexs saga* and *Parcevals saga*, adaptations of works by Chrétien de Troyes. The third section compares the style of these texts to that of a selection of native Old Norse-Icelandic *riddarasögur*.

4.1 *Strengleikar*

Strengleikar is the name traditionally given to an Old Norwegian collection of translated Old French *lais*, including those of Marie de France. According to the collection's preface, the *lais* were translated for the court of King Hákon Hákonarson (r. 1217-1264).¹⁵⁰

Although a great number of Old French texts were translated into Old Norse during King Hákon's reign, *Strengleikar* is particularly useful for comparative purposes because it closely follows the text of surviving Old French works.

Strengleikar is preserved in the manuscript Uppsala De la Gardie 4-7 (DG). Four leaves, now in AM 666 b, 4^o were cut out the DG and used as part of the lining of the bishop of Skálholt's mitre, until they were rediscovered by Árni Magnússon in 1703 (Cook and Tveitane 1979: ix). DG dates to 1270 and as such cannot be far removed from the original text, thought to have been compiled around 1250. Until the late 1970s, it was thought that DG (including AM 666 b, 4^o) was the only surviving text; however, in 1979 Marianne Kalinke discovered an Icelandic copy of the work *Guíamar* preserving a version of the text earlier than that in DG (Cook and Tveitane 1979: xi; Kalinke 1980). As a result of this, it has been argued by Sanders (1993) that DG represents an attempt to collate in one edition various individual translations of Old French *lais*.

¹⁴⁹ Also known as *Le Mantel mautailié* 'The Ill-Cut Mantle' (Kalinke 1999b: 3).

¹⁵⁰ *<E>N bok þessor er hinn virðulege konongr ler norræna or volsko male ma hæta lioda bok* This book, which the esteemed King Hákon had translated into Norse from the French language, may be called "Book of Lais". (Cook and Tveitane 1979: 4,5)

Of the twenty two *lais* that make up *Strengleikar*, all but one of the twelve *lais* attributed to Marie de France are included. In addition there are included six other *lais* found outside the manuscript BL Harley 978 (H) of Marie de France's *lais* and four for which there now exists no original French source. The individual texts vary in the degree to which they follow the original French; the text of *Milun*, for example, only contains 50% of the original French material (Cook and Tveitane 1979: xxiii). However, even in spite of the various exemplars which were used to compile the DG text of *Strengleikar*, where comparison is possible DG follows the text of H very closely and competently (Cook and Tveitane 1979: xxx). DG was of course not copied directly from H, but the parallels are close enough to permit a lexical comparison between the two.

Studying the lexis of *Strengleikar* is valuable for this project for a number of reasons. At the most basic, it contributes a large amount of Old Norwegian text to the predominantly Icelandic material in the corpus of texts that form my database. More importantly, *Strengleikar* represents a distinct style of prose writing within Old Norse literature. Norse prose is traditionally divided into the 'saga style' of native prose, distinguished by its terseness and litotes, and the more florid Latin influenced 'learned style' of the ecclesiastical literature (Óskarsson 2005). The translated French material falls somewhere between these two poles, and has come to be known as 'court style' (Cook and Tveitane 1979: xxix).

This court style developed from the learned prose of ecclesiastic literature. It makes use of fewer Latinate constructions, and is instead characterised by a verbose style which makes use of synonymic doublets and alliteration. The benefit of studying a text written in this court style is that it allows us to examine the claim that the lack of emotion-talk in the *Íslendingasögur* is a stylistic rather than cultural feature. Furthermore, by studying how the psychological vocabulary of Old French is translated into Old Norse, we can examine the semantic range of the Old Norse lexemes used to render the French concepts. Old French is essentially a cardiocentric language when it comes to its psychological vocabulary, and by studying how its words for 'heart' *quors* and *curage* are rendered in Old Norse-Icelandic gives us an insight into the nature of cardiocentrism in the vernacular psychology of medieval Scandinavia.

In Old French *quors* refers to both the physical heart but also to the 'seat of emotions' and is also responsible for cognitive functions, such as remembering, as well. Its other ethnopsychological terms, such as *alme* 'soul' and *espirit* 'spirit' are not involved in

thinking and feeling (see AND s.v. *cors*, *alme*, *espirit*). Occasionally throughout the text of *H* the partial synonym *curage* is used in situations where *quors* may be expected. What is interesting from the perspective of this study, is that *quors* and *curage* are almost always translated in *Strengleikar* as *hugr* and not *hjarta*. In fact *hjarta* rarely occurs in *Strengleikar*. Of the eighteen citations returned by Menota's search feature, seven are as part of the alliterating synonymic doublet *hugr ok hjarta*. The only time *hjarta* translates *quors* outside of this context is where *quors* refers to the physical heart, or is used as vocatively in the sense 'sweetheart'; the heart sighing, a frequent response from love-stricken individuals in the *lais* is always translated as *hjarta* and not *hugr*. Likewise, the use of *quors* as expressing a person's life-force or vivifying quality is rendered *hjarta*, rather than *hugr* as seen in the following passage from *Deus amanz/Tveggia elskanda lioð*:

Sur le munt vint, tant se greva,
Ileoc cheï, puis ne leva;
Li quors del venre s'en parti. (Ewert 1995 [1944]: 80)

He reached the top, in such distress that he fell down and never rose again, for his heart left his body. (trans. Burgess and Busby 1999: 84)

ok komz hann þa upp a fiallit með henni með pining. þar fell hann niðr ok stoð alldri siðan vpp. ok ran hiarta allt or honum. ok la hann þar þa svabuit sprunginn.

[...] and got to the top of the mountain at great pain. then he fell down and never got up again. All his heart poured out of him, and he lay there in this way, dead from exhaustion. (ed. and trans. Cook and Tveitane 1979: 166, 167)

The general pattern throughout *Strengleikar* is to use native Old Norse-Icelandic lexis and phraseological patterns for expressing emotion. Not only does *hugr* generally translate *quors*, overt expression of emotion, romantic love and psychological interiority are curtailed throughout the text.

4.2 Arthurian romance

While *Strengleikar* is useful for showing how the emotional expression of the Anglo-Norman originals were curtailed and adapted to suite the norms of the native Old Norse-Icelandic tradition, it is important to stress that these texts do represent a significant departure from the 'emotional world' of the *Íslendingasögur* and other native sources. The

extent of this difference can be seen in particular in the larger corpus of translated Arthurian romances and the Old Norse-Icelandic version of the tale of Tristram and Isold.

These texts are also more explicit in localising feelings in the chest and the heart as well as the *hugr*, a feature which was more the most part absent from *Strengleikar*. Representative examples include these from *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* and *Ívens saga* respectively:

Fyrir því hann má ekki til mín koma, þá verð ek gegnum dauðann at ganga, því hans dauði drepr á mitt hjarta.

Since he cannot come to me, I must walk through death's door, for his death hammers at my heart. (ed. and trans. Jorgensen 1999: 48, 49)

[...] Íven reiddiz mjök með harmsfullu hjarta [...]

[...] Íven became furious with sorrow in his heart [...] (ed. and trans. Kalinke 1999a: 82, 83)

In addition to these, there is also more attention given to the physiological role of the heart. For example, the burning fire of love which is mentioned in *Guimar* in *Strengleikar* (Cook and Tveitane 1979: 25) and also in *Víglundar saga*, has in *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* a physical role which is absent in the others:

Ok sem hún sá hann [...] þá fell á hana svá mikil fhugan, at í því sneriz allr vili hennar ok fulkomin át til hans. Ok því næst andvarpaði hún af öllu hjarta ok skarz öll innan ok brann í hug sínum, ok hljóp ván skjótara sá hinn sam hugar brunni í andlit hennar, ok hvarf henna þá öllu náttúru fegrð, ok kendi hún þá þrening, en þó veit hún ekki, hvaðan slíkt kenr. Ok anvarpaði hún þá í öðru sinni ok þung megnaðiz nokkut, því hjarta hennar ok limir skulfu, svá at allr líkami hennar sveittiz.

When she looked at him [...] there fell then upon her a deep reverie in which all her desire and her love shifted to him. And then she sighed from the bottom of her heart as if her body had been pierced and her mind were aflame. Faster than imaginable that same burning desire rose to her face, and all her inner beauty left her. She knew only misery and distress, but did not understand where it came from. Then she sighed a second time and even felt troubled, because her heart and limbs quivered, and her entire body broke out in a sweat. (ed. and trans. Jorgensen 1999: 36, 37)

This is the most explicit reference to the role of heat in emotional experience in the corpus of texts I have examined. Unlike the other passages where the flames of love and desire are mentioned, an actual physical correlation is made between the heart burning and the external expression of blushing. As this is the only such reference, it is not clear

whether it was thought to be, or intended to be understood, as a literal physiological correlation of cardiocentric heat. Nonetheless, it is a significant departure from the native tradition and shows that such an idiom was not necessarily restricted to Christian contexts.

The same group of texts also includes the only example in any non-Christian text of hydraulic behaviour equivalent to the West Germanic model where a person's emotions boil within them. Elsewhere in these texts there are expressions roughly equivalent to a hydraulic models such as the use of *springa* 'burst, die' in reference to emotion in *Parcevals saga*:

Sem Kæi heyrði þetta, þá varð hann nær sem hann mundi springa af angri ok reiði.

When Kay heard this, he was close to bursting with anger and rage. (ed. and trans. Wolf and Maclean 1999: 120, 121)

There are also occasional references to grief and other emotions filling a person's heart and *hugr* and 'growing' (*vaxa*) within them as in *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*

Ok var allr hennar hugr angrs fullr ok sorga [...] (ed. Jorgensen 1999: 175)

And her whole *hugr* was filled with sadness and grief [...]

However, such expressions are rare and are too vague to correspond to the Old English psychophysiological system. However, in *Ívens saga* a knight is referred to as 'boiling' (*vellandi*) with rage, the only such use of the verb outside of the Christian verse of the fourteenth century discussed in the previous section.¹⁵¹

En fyrr en þeir luku sínum söng, þá kom þar einn riddari með vellandi reiði ok miklu ópi sem hann ræki með hundum hjört ór skógum.

But before they ended their song, a knight came riding boiling with rage and with much noise as though he were chasing a hart from the woods with dogs. (Kalinke 1999a: 46, 47)

¹⁵¹ This passage translates Chrétien's *Einz que la joie fust remeise, / vint, d'ire plus ardanx que breise, / uns chevaliers, a si grant bruit / con s'il chaçast un cerf de ruit* (Roques 1982: 25, ll. 811-814). *Vella* also occurs later in *Ívens saga*; however, here there is no indication that this is the result of psychophysiological hydraulic activity, but rather the natural consequence of spilling blood. Although Kalinke here translates the verb as 'boil', 'well up' may be a more appropriate rendering of the sense: *Þá váru þeir svá móðir at armleggir þeira gátu eigi upp lypt sverðunum ok var þeim svá heitt at blóðit vall í sárnum ok líkaði hvárigum at berjaz lengr, þvíat myrk nátt gekk yfir þá.* "They were no so tired that their arms could not raise their swords and they were so hot that their blood boiled in their wounds and neither wanted to fight any longer since the dark night was falling." (ed. and trans. Kalinke 1999a: 92, 93)

This passage is important for showing that such expressions were introduced into the Old Norse-Icelandic world in contexts outside of Christian devotional poetry. The fact that such expressions are nevertheless so rare again shows that this was a feature Old Norse-Icelandic was unreceptive to. *Ívens saga* is also notable for locating cognitive function in the ‘head’:

“Óttumz þar ekki um,” kvað frúin, “með guðs tilhjálp skulum vit at vísu ór koma höfði hans ok hug æðistormi þeim er hann kvelr, nema hann undan flýi. En nú skulum vit heim skunda, þvíat ek á smyrsl þau, er mér gaf Morgna hin hyggna ok sagði mér, aldri mætti æði né óvit spilla þess manns hug né höfði er smurðr yrði með þessum smyrslum.”

“Never fear,” said the lady, “with God’s help we shall certainly dispel from his head and mind the raging storm that is tormenting him, provided he does not flee. Now we must hurry home, since I have a salve which Morgan the Wise gave me, and she told me that never would madness or loss of the senses waste that man’s *hugr* or head who was rubbed with this salve.” (Kalinke 1999a: 68-70, 69-71)

However, like the example of ‘boiling with rage’ this is the only such example I have found in these texts, and again shows by its absence how resistant Old Norse-Icelandic was to cephalocentric traditions. Nonetheless, although both *Strengleikar* and other translated romances tend to curtail non-native features such as overt displays of emotion and the localisation of feelings to the heart, they do feature a range of emotional responses which set them apart from the representation of emotion in the native tradition. However, as we will see below, these features were not adopted by the authors of native Old Norse-Icelandic romances.

4.3 Native *riddarasögur*

The difference between the native tradition’s handling of emotion, cognition and the body and that of Old French and Anglo-Norman tradition is most clearly demonstrated when we consider its representation in originally composed Old Norse-Icelandic romances. These texts adopt the bridal-quest plots of Old French and Anglo-Norman romances but like other indigenous Old Norse-Icelandic prose are far more concerned with action than they are with emotion (on this see Sif Rikhardsdottir 2008, 2012: 60). And as in the native tradition, emotion is generally presented externally with little concern given to the psychological interiority of its characters. Whereas *Strengleikar* and the other adapted works discussed in the section above show a pronounced tendency to curtail the interior

focus of their sources and to limit the expressions of emotion unfamiliar from the native tradition, the originally composed romances effectively jettison these in favour of traditional Old Norse-Icelandic expressions of emotion.

The exact size of the native *riddarasögur* is not precisely defined due to the imprecise nature of modern genre classification. There are overlaps between what are considered native *riddarasögur* and *fornaldasögur* as well as some indeterminacy about what should be considered a translated or indigenous *riddarasaga* (Driscoll 2005: 192). Kalinke and Mitchell (1985) list 33 works in their *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic Romances*, which is a reasonable indication of the size of the genre. Many of these texts have been edited or summarised by Agnete Loth (1962-1965) in her five-volume collection *Late Medieval Icelandic Romances*, though a number of texts still lack modern critical editions. I have restricted this study to those texts with freely available digital editions to facilitate electronic searching of the texts. This amounts to a corpus of three sagas totalling approximately 20000 words, a relatively small fraction of the *riddarasögur* corpus as a whole. These texts are *Sigrarðs saga frækna* (Hall *et al.* forthcoming) (c. 12100 words), *Nítíða saga* (McDonald 2010) (c. 5700 words) and *Sigurðar saga fóts* (Hall *et al.* 2010) (c. 3250 words). As such, the remarks here are only suggestive of a tendency to revert to the native tradition of representing emotion in texts and does not hold for the genre of *riddarasögur* as a whole. However, although this is a small sample size it nonetheless shows that the emotional conventions of Old French and Anglo-Norman were not universally adopted.

The most noticeable difference between the emotional styles of these native *riddarasögur* and the adapted works considered above is the greatly reduced reference both to people's feeling and how these are expressed somatically. For example, weeping which is ubiquitous among men and women in *Strengleikar* and other translated works only occurs twice in these sagas, once in *Sigrarðs saga frækna* and once in *Nítíða saga*. In both cases the characters weeping are women; men are described as being upset, unhappy and angry throughout these texts but they are never depicted weeping. In *Nítíða saga*, the maiden king is represented as weeping because of her absence from her husband and children is upsetting her:

það veldur mínum gráti og þungum harmi að meykóngur hefur skilið mig
viðbónda minn og börn og mun ég hvorki sjá síðan

‘What causes my tears and oppressive grief is that the maiden-king has separated me from my husband and children, and I will never see them again’.
(ed. and trans. McDonald 2010: 133)

This passage is closer to the depictions of weeping in *Strengleikar* and other romances than it is to the native tradition, as she freely reveals her feelings to her company. There is no attempt to conceal her emotion, nor any implication that she should not. This can be contrasted with the maiden king’s behaviour in *Sigrarðs saga frækna* where she attempts to conceal what she really feels. In keeping with the emotional style of the native tradition, her true feelings are revealed to the reader and those around her by her physical reaction:

Fréttust þessi tíðindi nú víða. Þessi tíðindi komu austr í Taricia til eyrnanna meykoninginum en hún brosti við ok kvað margt skrökvat þó at skemmra væri at spyrja en þó sáu menn þá at hagl hraut ór augum henni rautt sem blóð.

Word of the battle spread widely. The news travelled east into Taricia to the ears of the Maiden King, but she smiled and said that many reports were untrue, even though they may be heard from nearer at hand. Even so, people saw that hail fell from her eyes, as red as blood. (ed. and trans. Hall *et al.* forthcoming: 58, 37)

However, as in the *Íslendingasögur* and elsewhere, such somatism is rare. Later in the saga occurs the only instance of blushing in the texts examined. This behaviour is indicative of a saga character attempting to conceal their feelings, but being unable to:

Sigrarðr gengr nú til borðs ok er bæði rjóðr ok reiðr af þeim svívirðingarorðum sem meykoningrinn hafði valit honum á allra manna færi,

Sigrarðr goes now to eat and is both blushing and angry from the mockery which the Queen has dealt him within earshot of the whole court. (ed. and trans. Hall *et al.* forthcoming: 54, 30)

The focus in these two examples is on how the emotions of these characters is shown to others in the company, rather than focussing on the internal nature of their own feelings. Likewise, in *Sigurðar saga fóts*, Signý’s feelings are revealed to those in the hall and to the reader by the simple description of her smile:

Og er menn voru sem kátastir, lukust upp dyr hallarinnar, og gekk þar inn maður furðulega stór og hafði mikla vigur í hendi. Öllum fannst mikið um vöxt þessa manns. Litlu síðar kom inn annar maður, og var sá sýnu meiri. Þá hljóðnuðu allir þeir, að inni voru, og urðu ókátir, nema brúðurin brosti lítinn.

And when everyone was at their merriest, the doors of the hall opened, and in walked an enormous man. He had a big spear in his hand. The size of this man

seemed remarkable to everyone. A little later another man came in, and he was much bigger. Then everyone who was inside fell silent and their spirits fell, except that the bride smiled a little. (ed. and trans. Hall *et al.* 2010: 79-80)

The silence in this passage is indicative of the usual response to bad news in the native traditions of characters becoming withdrawn and taciturn, and can be contrasted to the openly expressed grief seen throughout *Strengleikar* and translated *riddarasögur*. The reaction of the court in these sagas is markedly different from translated romances, where communal weeping is common. As seen in *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*:

Grétu þá allir svá ókunnugir sem kunnugir, útlenzkir sem inn lenzkir, ríkir ok fátækir, ungir ok gamlir. Allir kendu í brjósti um hana.

Everyone wept, acquaintances and strangers, countrymen and foreigners, rich and poor, young and old. Deep inside themselves everyone felt for her. (ed. and trans. Jorgensen 1999: 150, 151)

Similar events do not provoke such strong reactions in the *riddarasögur*, as when Nítiða appears to have been abducted from the court:

Hlaupa menn nú í höllina og segja kóngi þessi tíðindi. Kóngur og öll hirðin verður mjög hrygg við þenna atburð.

People then ran into the hall and told the king this news. The king and all the court became very sad after this incident. (ed. and trans. MacDonald 2010: 130-131)

When we are told, as we are here, about the emotional state of characters it is presented as is generally the case in the native tradition, without reference to the body; plain verbal description is used. The physical responses to, and indication of, emotion described above are the only ones which occur. There are no examples of sighing or fainting familiar from the adapted romances, nor are there any other somatic effects common to the native tradition such as trembling and swelling. However, considering how infrequently these occur within native Old Norse-Icelandic prose, it is to be expected that they should not occur in a small sample of sagas such as the one under consideration. Instead, we are only told that men are ‘gripped by fear’, rather than that their heart or their body trembles, in *Sigrarðr saga*:

[...] veðrvitar váru allir sem á gull séi en drekahöfuð váru svá grimmlig at mörgum helt við ótta er þau sá.

The weathervanes were all like gold to look upon, and the dragon-prows were so terrifying that many were seized with fear on seeing them. (ed. and trans. Hall *et al.* forthcoming: 51, 29)

Likewise, on all the occasions a character is described as being angry, no associated physical response is mentioned, as is generally the case in the native tradition.

As would be expected in the native tradition, there are no references to hydraulic expressions of emotion or to characters growing hot in response to their feelings. In addition to this, feeling are not localised in the *hugr*, *hjarta* or *brjóst*. The only time one of these words is used in an emotional context is in *Sigurðar saga fóts* saga where *hjarta* is used in the phrase ‘to love with all one’s heart’:

Þá reiddist konungur og mælti svo: ‘Þóttú unnir Ásmundi af öllu hjarta, þá skal hann þó aldri þín njóta né þú hans.’ Signý svarar þá: ‘Þú munt ráða, faðir minn, orðum þínum, en auðna mun ráða, hvern mann eg á.’

Then the king grew angry and said ‘Even if you love Ásmundr with all your heart, he will never get to enjoy you, nor you him.’ Then Signý replied, ‘You will control your words, father, but fate will control which man I marry.’ (ed. and trans. Hall *et al.* 2010: 79)

Aside from this example, emotions are not localised to the chest or its contents nor are there any hydraulic effects mentioned.

Instead of focussing on the internal emotional experience of its characters, in the sagas emotion is also followed by action, which is the primary concern. Unlike characters in the adapted romances who are frequently debilitated by their feelings, in these *riddarasögur* each time someone is described as sad or angry they are immediately described as adopting some form of action to rectify their predicament. A typical case is Ingi’s response to the news that Nítiða has humiliated him:

Fer þetta nú á hvert land hversu drottning hafði Inga kóng út leikið. Unir Ingi kóngur allilla við og hyggst aftur skulu rétta á frúnni sína smán og svívirðing.

The news then travelled to every land, how the queen had outwitted King Ingi. King Ingi did not like this at all and planned again how to set right the disgrace and shame he got from the lady. (ed. and trans. MacDonald 2010: 130, 131)

A similar situation occurs later in the saga:

Nú er að segja af Soldáni kóngi að hann fréttir lát sona sína; hann fyllist upp ferlegri reiði. Lætur ganga her ör um öll sín ríki og safnar að sér blámönnum og

bannsettum hetjum og alls kyns óþjóð og ill þýði. Ætlar nú að halda þessum her til Frakklands brenna og bæla landið nema meykóngur vili giftast honum.

Now it is to be said about King Soldán that he heard about the death of his sons and was filled with terrible rage. He ordered a swift army to go throughout all his kingdom, and recruited black men and exiles and all kinds of wild and evil people. He then planned to bring this army to France to burn and ravage the land unless the maiden-king wanted to marry him. (ed. and trans. MacDonald 2010: 136, 137)

This corresponds with Sif Ríkhardsdóttir's (2012: 64) observation on the Old Norse-Icelandic adaptation of *La Chanson de Roland* that emotion is pushed into the background and the social response is foregrounded.

4.4 Conclusions

The range of emotional behaviour, expression and discourse introduced into the Old Norse-Icelandic world from the beginning of the thirteenth century onwards is useful for showing how bare and minimal is the attention given to such topics in what I have termed the native tradition. The very fact that the emotional norms of the native tradition are so markedly different from those in, for example *Strengleikar*, and have not been assimilated to it show how ingrained these differences were in Old Norse-Icelandic society. The fact that indigenously composed romances correspond so closely to the emotional norms which form part of the native tradition strongly suggest that these were more than just literary features, but corresponded to cultural expectations as well. The native *riddarasögur* adopt very few of the emotional motifs seen in *Strengleikar* and the other Arthurian romances. Instead, emotions are stripped back to plain verbal descriptions and somatic expression is curtailed.

As importantly as this lack of an embodied expression of emotion, these native *riddarasögur* also avoid the frequent references to characters' inner feelings; the predominantly external focus familiar from the *Íslendingasögur* is adopted instead. As in the family sagas, descriptions of a character's emotional state are brief and in general are situated in a social context. When individual emotions are mentioned, without reference to how a person is behaving among his or her social group, it serves as a precursor to action, which saga authors are far more interested in. The fact that this interior focus is also reduced in the otherwise closely translated *Strengleikar* shows how resistant Old Norse-Icelandic culture was to this form of emotional discourse.

That Old Norse-Icelandic not only does not include any detailed depictions of psychological interiority but actively removes such features in its adaptations of its source texts demonstrates how deeply rooted the distinction between Old Norse-Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon was in this respect. This is the most significant implication of this section, as it provides the most persuasive evidence that the native model of cultural psychology in Old Norse-Icelandic represents societal rather than just literary concerns.

However, the texts reviewed in this section have also been important in confirming the relationship between *hugr* and *hjarta* and the status of the hydraulic model in Old Norse-Icelandic. In terms of cardiocentrism, it is significant that *hugr* is used in almost all cases to translate the Anglo-Norman word for ‘heart’ in *Strengleikar*. This again confirms that *hugr* rather than its physical seat was the most salient concept in Old Norse-Icelandic cultural psychology. Nonetheless, the two languages do share a common core of locating psychological and emotional activity in the chest. What is noticeable is that while Anglo-Norman and Old French refer frequently to love in terms of heat, sometimes metaphorically and sometimes apparently literally, this usage has not been adopted in Old Norse-Icelandic. The fact that cardiocentric heat is found in medical texts, Christian idiom, and romances but occurs nowhere in the native tradition proves how alien this conceptualisation of emotion was in North Germanic. The same is true for hydraulic behaviour. It is significant that although hydraulicism analogous to the Old English model was part of the cultural model of emotion in Old French romances, this was not incorporated into Old Norse-Icelandic adaptations. It is only in Christian contexts where Old Norse-Icelandic expresses emotion in hydraulic terms, which suggests that it was a literary device restricted to a particular context of use and not representative of wider vernacular psychology. The translated and original Old Norse-Icelandic romances show that outside of explicitly medical and Christian contexts, emotion and cognition are expressed in accordance with the native tradition.

5 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to contextualise the cultural model of cognition, emotion and the body established in Chapter 3 by comparing it to a range of non-native intellectual, spiritual and literary traditions. The fact that these traditions contain psychological models different from those discussed in the previous chapter allows us to speak of a relatively coherent native tradition, which can be defined by its differences from the medical and

theological beliefs prevalent in contemporary continental Europe. These differences enable us to draw into sharper relief those features of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology which set it apart from neighbouring cultures. Most importantly, they allow us to be confident that the disparity between Old Norse-Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon psychology is primarily the result of an independent divergence within Germanic, rather than the result of foreign influence.

Although Old Norse-Icelandic was introduced to a range of traditions not available in Anglo-Saxon England which it adopted in varying degrees, the most prominent feature of this comparative study is how resolutely the Old Norse-Icelandic native model of cognition and emotion was preserved against these influences. Old Norse-Icelandic did not adopt any fundamental psychological features which set it apart from the rest of Germanic. For example, one of the most significant differences between the psychologies of the medical texts examined and the native tradition is that cognitive and emotional functions were confined to the chest, and did not move to the head under the influence of Salernitan medicine. Despite being exposed to cephalocentric medical traditions unavailable in Anglo-Saxon England, these had little impact on the cultural psychology expressed in native Old Norse-Icelandic texts. There is no evidence that cardiocentric psychophysiology was displaced by the brain- and head-centred traditions of the imported medical texts. Instead, Old Norse-Icelandic remained, like West Germanic, thoroughly chest-focused in respect to cognition and emotion. Not only was cephalocentric psychology rejected outside of specific medical contexts, native cardiocentric beliefs do seem to have been influenced by medical writings on the nature of the heart. Heart is not adopted as a salient feature of the heart, nor is any other component of humoral medicine. The differences between the physiology of the heart in Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English, as with other psychophysiological features, cannot be attributed to sources outwith Germanic.

As for the physical expression of emotion, this chapter has shown that ebullient hydraulic psychology was not part of native Old Norse-Icelandic psychology. Furthermore, its absence from any early Christian texts suggests that the Old Norse-Icelandic tradition was actively resistant to it in the centuries immediately following the conversion. The fact that hydraulic imagery analogous to the Anglo-Saxon tradition only appears prominently in Old Norse-Icelandic in fourteenth-century devotional verse not only demonstrates that it was not a part of its native conception of the physiology of the person, but again suggests that West-Germanic hydraulicism may owe something to its Christian heritage. It is possible that the rare instances of apparently 'hydraulic' activity in saga literature, such as Þorsteinn Ásgrímsson's 'blood-bow' and Egill Skallagrímsson swelling up, may have been

influenced by imported theories about how the body processed emotion. However, it is difficult to identify clear instances of such behaviour which are directly influenced by imported medical traditions, as this somatic response seems to be common throughout Germanic. Nonetheless, whether or not these episodes reflect a native tradition, an imported one or an amalgam of the two, they are still distinct from Anglo-Saxon hydraulic activity.

Finally, the lack of interior focus on both psychological and physiological activity described in Chapter 3 was confirmed as an important feature of the Old Norse-Icelandic psychological idiom. Although the Old French and Anglo-Norman romances introduced the Old Norse-Icelandic literary tradition to emotional behaviour absent from the native model, not only was this curtailed in direct translations, when Old Norse-Icelandic writers began composing their own romances these features were not incorporated. The fact that interiority was reduced in direct translations strongly suggests that this was not just a literary feature of saga prose style, but part of the emotional culture of Old Norse-Icelandic. The reception of these romances in Old Norse-Icelandic is important in confirming that the Old Norse-Icelandic psychological model did not only differ from the Anglo-Saxon one, and other contemporary cultures, in terms of how cognition and emotion were thought to relate to the body but how emotion was valued and expressed by individuals and in society.

This chapter has shown that despite exposure to a wide range of traditions concerning the relationship between emotion, cognition and the body, the features of Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology which distinguish it from Anglo-Saxon – an absence of cardiocentric heat, hydraulicism, and a prominently interior focus – cannot be the result of changes caused by non-native influences. Not only is there no sufficient evidence that any of these features existed in skaldic poetry composed before the conversion and the introduction of non-runic literacy, they all exist in some form in the texts that were introduced into medieval Scandinavia. The fact that such features are present in foreign sources but not in native ones serves to highlight their absence from the native tradition. It is possible that North Germanic psychology at one point included these categories but lost them before its texts were committed to writing. However, the only reason for arguing such a case would be to align the psychology of Old Norse-Icelandic with West Germanic. The more plausible explanation is that the psychological model described in Chapter 3 is broadly representative of North Germanic in the centuries before the conversion of medieval Scandinavia and as such preserves an indigenous Germanic

model of emotion, cognition and the body. What this means for the reconstruction of Proto-Germanic psychology and the interpretation of the Old English vernacular psychological idiom will be discussed next, in the Conclusion.

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that Old Norse-Icelandic has a number of features which separate its vernacular psychology from both its Germanic and its circumpolar neighbours. At the most general level, I have demonstrated that Old Norse-Icelandic has less in common with shamanistic belief systems than has been previously proposed, and in terms of its psychophysiology show that it is less complex and elaborate than Old English. This has implications not only for our understanding of Old Norse-Icelandic culture but also for Old English, as it is generally assumed that Old Norse-Iceland texts preserve a Germanic tradition which can be used to reconstruct the pre-Christian beliefs of Anglo-Saxon England. However, in terms of emotion, cognition and their relationship with the body the Old English system is considerably more unusual from a Present Day English perspective than that of Old Norse-Icelandic. The two principal contributions to knowledge this thesis has made concern the assumed similarity between Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology and shamanistic traditions on the one hand, and West Germanic hydraulic psychology on the other. I have shown that the ‘wandering soul’ motif in Old Norse-Icelandic cannot be clearly linked to circumpolar traditions and that despite being broadly cardiocentric in type, the psychophysiology of Old Norse-Icelandic differs in a number of key components from that of Old English and West Germanic as a whole. A supplementary contribution has been the application and evaluation of the NSM methodology to the definition of concepts evidenced in historic sources.

Vernacular psychology in Germanic and circumpolar traditions

The feature of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology which has received most attention in comparative Germanic studies is the supposed ability of *hugr* to leave the body in animal form. This has been used to provide a Germanic context to the apparently Christianised examples of ‘mind-travel’ in Old English literature and as point of reference in studies linking Old Norse-Icelandic to circumpolar traditions. However, I have demonstrated that the evidence base for the belief in a wandering soul in Old Norse-Icelandic is almost non-existent. The majority of evidence comes either from post-medieval traditions, or from the spurious association with *hugr* and wind or with *hugr* and flight. Although it is possible that some form of mind-travel was thought to take place during sleep, this has very little in common with attested examples in Old English literature. The only instances of mind-

travel referred to in any detail in Old English literature are associated with memory and reminiscence, rather than dreaming, and have little in common with what we see in Old Norse-Icelandic. In light of these differences, there is little justification for interpreting the Old English imagery of a ‘wandering soul’ or ‘mind-travel’ by reference to Old Norse-Icelandic evidence.

While it clarifies the relationship between Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic traditions, this re-evaluation of *hugr*’s ability to leave the body has greater significance for the interpretation of *seiðr* and its practitioners. Much of the recent work on *seiðr*, from both advocates and sceptics of Old Norse-Icelandic shamanism, has been predicated on the concept of practitioners being able to send out their soul, or some ‘spiritual’ part of the person. Such work takes for granted that *hugr* was conceived of as breath, a belief apparently evidenced by Snorri’s list of *kenningar* in *Skáldskaparmál*. However, *hugr* as a ‘psychological’ or ‘spiritual’ entity is not represented in this way in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. There is no clear evidence that *hugr* could be separated from the person, let alone sent forth and controlled during *seiðr*. This is not to say that Old Norse-Icelandic magic did not have certain similarities with shamanistic practice; however, my research has shown that *hugr* has far less in common with shamanistic concepts than has hitherto been acknowledged.

Ultimately, as Tulinius (2009) points out, our knowledge of Old Norse-Icelandic paganism is filtered through its literary depiction in sources which date from centuries after such pagan belief and practice were outlawed in Iceland. As a result, we are always at least one step removed from the reality of pre-Christian ideologies. While archaeology can uncover the material culture of pagan Scandinavia, the study of such artefacts and their context of use is necessarily determined by the interpretation of the literary sources treated in this thesis. This is particularly true of the ‘*seiðr* staffs’ discussed by Price (2002, 2008), and Heide (2006a, b, c). The symbolic relationship between these ‘*seiðr* staffs’ and dipoles used for spinning in medieval Scandinavia is a matter which can be established by the study of material culture; however, the association between spinning yarn and spinning *seiðr* cannot be determined by archaeological methods alone. It is here where this thesis can contribute to the ongoing project of understanding *seiðr*. Despite the proposed etymological relationship between *seiðr* and ‘[spun] cord’, I have shown that there is nothing to suggest that either *hugr*, breath, or any other invisible part of the person was conceived as a cord in Old Norse-Icelandic culture, or that it was spun and sent out like a rope.

While these findings concerning *hugr*'s relationship to the 'wandering soul' concept are important for contextualising Old Norse-Icelandic beliefs within circumpolar traditions, the most significant contribution to knowledge this thesis makes is in regard to *hugr*'s role as psychological entity. This is because the nature of *hugr*'s embodied role in emotion and cognition has not previously been studied in detail but primarily because of the impact this has on our perception of Old English and West Germanic psychology as a whole. My research has shown that despite sharing a typologically similar psychological framework which locates a unitary psychological concept inside the chest, Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English differ in a number of key areas. The most striking of these is in terms of Lockett's (2011) hydraulic model. The core feature of this system, cardiocentric heat, does not form part of the Old Norse-Icelandic psychological idiom, nor do the principal concomitant features of internal pressure, seething and swelling. The only time such features occur in Old Norse-Icelandic texts are in the language of Christian devotion, in medical contexts, and very rarely in translated romances. Instead of a hydraulic system, the most important feature of Old Norse-Icelandic cardiocentrism is the firmness of the heart. The heart's most common physical response to emotional stimulus is to tremble or to beat faster, and it is this imagery which extends into the Old Norse-Icelandic lexicon. Instead of an opposition between hot and cold, Old Norse-Icelandic prioritises hardness and softness in its representations of *hugr*, *hjarta* and associated emotional and cognitive states. Furthermore, the heart plays a very minor role in Old Norse-Icelandic when compared to *hugr*. Unlike the Old English idiom, it is not represented as the innermost part of a person, nor the repository of a person's deepest thoughts and feelings. Again, when such references to the heart do occur in Old Norse-Icelandic, they feature in either Christian or romantic contexts, or are most probably influenced by such usage. These differences show the variety of conceptualisations which can exist in what are grouped together as cardiocentric systems and also demonstrate how much this label can obscure.

That the Old Norse-Icelandic model does not appear to have been influenced by foreign sources raises a number of questions about the Old English psychological system, and problematizes the reconstruction of proto-concepts. Lockett (2011: 54ff.) suggests that hydraulic models of cognition and emotion arise independently as a natural response to the universal physiology of emotion in cultures that have not been influenced by scientific, or learned traditions. However, by showing that the hydraulic features that characterise West Germanic psychology do not occur in Old Norse-Icelandic, the Old English and Old Saxon systems can be seen not as neutral developments of human physiology, but as complex,

culturally determined psychological models. Although some of the features of the Old English hydraulic model are typologically well attested, they are by no means universal or 'natural'. Instead, the highly elaborated psychophysiology of Old English should be treated as marked within the Germanic family. The unusual nature of the Old English psychological idiom has generally been downplayed because of its similarities to the metaphorical system of Present Day English which also speaks of boiling and seething with anger, and where heat imagery plays a prominent role in emotional discourse. Likewise, the use of such metaphors in English translations of Old Norse-Icelandic texts can give the impression of a shared pattern of speaking about emotion and cognition. However, such ways of conceptualising the relationship between emotion, cognition, and the body represent an important distinction between the two languages.

This difference inevitably leads to questions of origins. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to reconstruct the psychological system of Proto-Germanic, but there are indications that the Old English hydraulic model represents an innovation in Germanic rather than an original feature. The fact that Old Norse-Icelandic appears actively resistant to hydraulic imagery and cardiocentric heat during the first centuries following its conversion suggests that these components were not part of its Germanic inheritance, or were lost very early. This is bolstered by the apparent absence of such concepts from the reconstructed lexicon of North-West Germanic. The shared use of *bólginn* 'swollen' and its West Germanic cognates suggests that the association between anger and swelling may have formed part of the shared heritage of the two branches of Germanic. However, given the disparity between the swelling of the body in Old Norse-Icelandic and the swelling of the chest and its contents in Old English, there is no reason to suppose that this swelling corresponded to the West Germanic hydraulic type. It is also telling that the features which set Old Norse-Icelandic apart from Old English and Old Saxon such as a lack of cardiocentric heat, hydraulic imagery and a concern with people's 'inner life' all begin to be adopted towards the end of the Old Norse period, primarily in Christian texts. It is not impossible that the components of the Old English model formed some part of Proto-Germanic psychology, and were lost and subsequently readopted in a limited way in North Germanic, but it is more economical to assume that they were introduced in Old English following the conversion to Christianity. Nonetheless, there is no reason for such semantic and conceptual changes to be economical, and the reality of the situation will certainly be more complicated than the presence or absence of hydraulic features in Proto-Germanic. For now, all that can safely be reconstructed is a part of the person responsible for thinking and

feeling which was located in the chest. The evidence from this thesis shows that within these parameters there can exist considerable conceptual variation, and it is likely that the vernacular psychology of speakers of Proto-Germanic was as different from its daughter languages as the Old English system is from the Old Norse-Icelandic one.

Reflection on methods

The principal theoretical approach that guided this study was the NSM method of semantic decomposition and definition. It was selected because of the large body of work which has studied and exemplified the range of cross-linguistic differences in psychological and emotional concepts using this methodology. The problem of terminological ethnocentrism is of course recognised outside the NSM community; however, NSM has done most to provide a practical way of reducing ethnocentrism in the treatment of concepts from other cultures. Even if one does not accept all of NSM's theoretical positions, the semantic primes proposed as maximally isomorphic across the world's languages provide a valuable heuristic for assessing how much is obfuscated when using one's native language to define or discuss a concept. By working in terms of 'part of the person', 'body', 'think', 'feel' and other primes we are able to free ourselves of much of the conceptual baggage associated with the familiar terms 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit'. Framing analyses in such terms would be an important step forward for the study of medieval psychology. As Boyer (2004) has shown, using roughly equivalent concepts from the analyst's own language necessarily introduces a range of semantic connotations which distort the concept being studied. For example, both Flowers (1983) and Mundal (1974) discuss Germanic psychological concepts in terms of 'soul' and its Norwegian counterpart *sjel*. However, both are then required to state how inappropriate these words are as glosses for the lexemes under consideration. As 'soul' is a thoroughly Christian concept in the Middle Ages, when discussing other concepts it could usefully be replaced by definitions beginning from 'part of the person', with 'soul' reserved for the Christian concept.

In this respect, the comparative work carried out by the NSM research programme and the analytical resources it uses could be fruitfully applied to further study of medieval psychology, both by highlighting the diversity in apparently similar psychological concepts and by providing a 'linguistic toolkit' (cf. Fowler 1996) by which to study them. Although I think it is possible and theoretically justified to frame explications using the NSM framework, as argued in Chapter 1, I do not consider it as a necessity. NSM explications

were adopted as a means of defamiliarising the concepts under review, and thereby distancing them from their typical glosses of ‘mind’ and other such terms. Although this does allow for fine-grained comparison, the requirement for such explications to use both ‘universal’ syntax and concepts has the potential to make definitions more cumbersome than needed. Instead, I would advocate more naturally phrased explications, which make use of the relevant primes but which do not necessarily cohere to the universal syntax of NSM. This approach in fact can be seen throughout Wierzbicka’s work from early publications through to her most recent work (Wierzbicka 2014).

In part, the methodology employed in this thesis was an experiment in moving away from Conceptual Metaphor Theory which has dominated recent studies of medieval Germanic psychology. In this respect I think it has been valuable in showing the availability of a metalanguage that carries less associative baggage than the concepts typically used to frame such work. In itself this presents a useful contribution to this field of study, and with the qualifications made above, is one I would recommend future work considering. Nonetheless, much of the substance of the difference between the Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English vernacular psychology falls under the purview of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, namely the association between strong feelings and heat, and the implications of this heat being constrained by a sealed container. In light of such differences between Old Norse-Icelandic and other northern European medieval cultures, a comprehensive study of the metaphorical system of Old Norse-Icelandic in respect to cognition and emotion along the lines of Low’s (1998) thesis on Old English psychological metaphors would make an interesting companion to the work carried out here.

However, as Geeraerts (2010: 1-7, 42) notes in his review of contemporary theories of lexical semantics, cognitive linguistics has most in common with the traditional philological approaches to texts which integrated literary and linguistic methods to gain as wide a view of the subject matter as possible. In light of this, it would be most advisable for historical linguistics not to seek to apply one contemporary theory to a past text but to utilise as many as possible. Instead, it would be beneficial if certain features of the NSM approach were more widely recognised and used. Incorporating primes as a heuristic and a means of definition alongside other cognitive linguistic approaches could help contextualise the concepts studied in a typological perspective, and reduce the ethnocentric bias in their description.

Directions for further research

As I have shown that there are considerable differences between the psychophysiology of North and West Germanic it would be fruitful to pursue how far back this disparity can be traced. This could be investigated from at least two perspectives. First, and most important, the degree of influence the Christian, ‘classical’ tradition had on the vernacular Anglo-Saxon psychological tradition needs to be investigated further. Considering the similarities between the hydraulicism of Biblical idiom and that seen in Anglo-Latin and Old English prose texts compared to its relative scarcity in Old English poetry and its absence in North Germanic, it is possible that the Old English hydraulic model was influenced from traditions outwith Germanic. It is also conceivable that the similarity between the vernacular and classical traditions in this respect are coincidental, and that the hydraulic model seen in Old English and Old Saxon is a purely (West) Germanic innovation. Whatever the case, establishing the extent to which Old English and Old Saxon vernacular psychologies have been influenced by traditions from outside Germanic will enable us to appreciate better the differences between North and West Germanic and in turn the history of concepts like *mōd* and *hugr* in early Germanic. In light of the work carried out here, it may also be profitable to return to Gothic, which has received little attention in this domain since Flowers’ article (1983). Although the sample is small and heavily influenced by its exemplars, a comparative study of Biblical portrayals of cognition and emotion in their Greek and Gothic versions could prove enlightening.

Secondly, it would be helpful to extend this comparison beyond Germanic to the cultures of the medieval north Atlantic as a whole. By outlining the variations within the broadly cardiocentric vernacular psychologies of these cultures we would be in a better position to evaluate the status of the elaborate West Germanic model and its relationship to the North Germanic model. As Old Irish has been similarly influenced by Christianity it would provide a useful comparison to Old English. The differences between the Old Irish and Old English systems outlined by Lockett (2011: 140-146) suggest that the Old English hydraulic model was not wholly the product of Christian influence; investigating the similarities and differences between the cardiocentrism of these two cultures further would be illuminating. Furthermore, a study of Old Irish would provide illuminating comparative evidence for the study of Old Norse-Icelandic psychology. Lockett (2011: 148) has suggested that some features which Old Norse-Icelandic shares with Old Irish could be the product of the long and close relationship between these two cultures. In light of the evidence that Celtic Christianity was known in Iceland before its Roman conversion in

999/1000 AD, it would be useful to explore parallels between the Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular tradition and Old Irish psychology

As the psychophysiology of Old English and Old Norse-Icelandic differ within a typologically similar psychological framework it would also be interesting to compare the cultural models of related conceptual domains, and in particular emotional constructs. The semantics and cultural scripts associated with broadly similar emotional lexemes or semantic fields in the two languages could be usefully compared, particularly in cognate lexemes and those borrowed from Old Norse-Icelandic into English. As this study has focused on the differences in how emotions are expressed somatically it would be informative to assess how much variation existed between the emotional systems of the two languages. As well as comparison with Old and Middle English emotional lexis, a further study of the reception of French emotional lexicon in *Strengleikar* and other close translations of French works would be useful. The topic of emotional embodiment might also be fruitfully explored further in Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English, as both this study and Lockett's have focused mainly on those embodied features associated with the contents of the chest. In Old Norse-Icelandic, this might be usefully integrated with the study of other forms of visual semiotics such as gesture which is currently being developed by Kirsten Wolf (forthcoming).

It would also be interesting to extend the topics explored in this thesis past the traditional end of the Old Norse period in c. 1400 to texts produced later in Iceland. As so much previous work on *hugr*, its role in *seiðr*, and its ability to leave the body has been based on early modern Norwegian and Swedish folklore, it would be fruitful to track the development of similar traditions in Iceland itself. A detailed study of the chronology and geographical distribution of such traditions would hopefully help to clarify the relationship between the Old Norse-Icelandic concept of *hugr* and its reflexes in later Scandinavian languages. Although it has been seen that the *hug*-motifs of mainland Scandinavian folklore have very little in common with the medieval representation of *hugr*, it would nonetheless be worthwhile to track the evolution of the medieval concept throughout Icelandic sources. By so doing, we may be in a better position to contextualise the *hug*-motifs of Norwegian and Swedish folklore. It would also be interesting to apply a similar chronological study to the development of cardiocentric psychology in post-medieval Iceland and in Scandinavia.

Overall, this thesis has been motivated by concentrating on the differences rather than similarities between cultural construals of the world. As the general similarities between Old Norse-Icelandic and the rest of Germanic and its circumpolar neighbours have been established, and occasionally overstated, it would be worthwhile applying this approach to further study of Old Norse-Icelandic culture. Despite the apparent similarities between Old Norse-Icelandic and its Indo-European and circumpolar neighbours, this thesis has shown that there is much that sets Old Norse-Icelandic vernacular psychology apart from them. As we have seen, concepts such as ‘wandering soul’ and ‘cardiocentric psychology’ cover a great variety of conceptualisations concerning the relationship between the body, emotion, cognition and the parts of the person responsible for such activities. Such diversity is to be expected and by concentrating on the features which separate Old Norse-Icelandic from neighbouring cultures we are in a better position to appreciate its relationships with them. As Hutton (2011) has remarked, Old Norse-Icelandic culture is likely to exhibit features from both Germanic and circumpolar traditions; however, it is only by studying Old Norse-Icelandic culture on its own terms that we are able to assess the similarities between it and its northern and southern contemporaries.

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