

**Torture, Text, and the Reformulation of Spiritual Identity  
in Old English Religious Verse**

by

Christopher Richard Fee

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to the University of Glasgow

Department of English Language

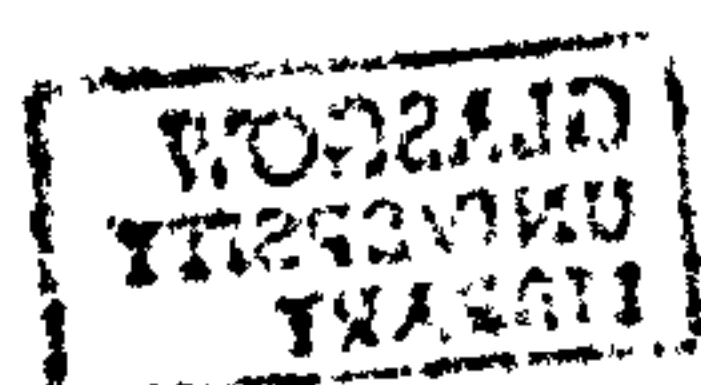
June

1997



**UNIVERSITY**  
*of*  
**GLASGOW**

© Christopher Richard Fee 1997



## THESIS ABSTRACT

Pain, in our culture, often is perceived as the enemy which we should spare no expense to eradicate; torture likewise is condemned universally as a barbaric throwback to earlier, more brutal, less enlightened times. As reductive as these axioms are, I have no wish to dispute their fundamental truths. One of the most interesting discoveries of my study, however, has been that, although we share certain understandings regarding pain and torture with Anglo-Saxon culture, we go too far when we assume that the Anglo-Saxons shared our most basic assumptions. Pain and torture are not evil in the literary contexts which I examine; indeed, they are quite the opposite, and they represent, in fact, both necessary and desirable physical and spiritual exercises. In my thesis I explore most especially those areas of Anglo-Saxon literary culture--regarding torture--which are most alien to the modern mind; I find that these areas often lurk just around the corner from those concepts which mesh most closely with our own. The Introduction to this thesis includes a brief discussion of various understandings of what torture is, and a statement of the definition of torture adopted for the purposes of this study. Torture, as it is examined in this study, is not so much an act of violence as it is a violent process; that is, torture is a means, not an end in itself, and torture always presupposes intent and causality. Chapter One provides the historical and legal contexts for later literary and theoretical discussions of torture. This chapter is divided into two parts, the first dealing with instances of torture which appear in Anglo-Saxon historical records, and the second dealing with legal codes which are concerned with torture. In the course of this chapter it becomes apparent that torture as a public act serves as a document of sorts, sometimes recording and sometimes interpreting

political realities. Any study of torture must be grounded in an understanding of pain, and Chapter Two is concerned with the nature of pain, and with its relationship to torture. The paradox of pain is that it is universal and at the same time isolating and inexpressible. In Chapter Two, a close examination of the language and structure of *The Dream of the Rood* serves to illustrate that the Anglo-Saxons understood this paradox. The graphic and sometimes almost loving detail with which the poet describes the passion of Christ functions as a language “of weapons and wounds”, and helps to convey, in some measure, the almost incommunicable nature of intense physical pain. Chapter Three explores the way in which torture acts may function as language acts, and the necessarily public nature of such performative language. This chapter begins with a discussion of linguistic theories concerning pragmatics and performative language acts. Then, drawing upon textual examples from such Old English sources as *Elene*, *Juliana*, and *Daniel*, this chapter examines how torture may be construed as a form of language, and how the performative nature of an act of torture articulates that act’s context of power and politics in the culture at large. Chapter Three concludes with an exploration of the transformative function of torture, a function which provides the foundation for the models of torture discussed in Chapter Four and in Chapter Five. Torture, as it is defined for the purposes of this study, is the deliberate and systematic application of pain used to forward a particular agenda. The model of torture explored in Chapter Four, that of inscription, involves productive acts of destruction; that is, in the context of such torture an act of reduction is the necessary precursor to an act of reformulation. This discussion of inscription draws upon evidence from textual acts such as Judith’s decapitation of Holofernes (in the Old English *Judith*) and Andreas’s torment at the hands of the Mermedonians (in the Old English *Andreas*).



In the inscription model of torture, through the application of pain upon the body, the identity of the victim is reduced to a blank slate which then may be written upon afresh. The writing of wounds upon the flesh echoes and explicates this spiritual transformation. Chapter Five moves from the realm of earthly, corporeal pain and torture to the related spiritual transformations wrought in Anglo-Saxon depictions of eschatology. This chapter is concerned with a model of torture which might be termed transmutation. The retribution of divine judgment in these poems both resembles and validates the acts of temporal torture examined earlier. Further, the language of metallurgic purification utilized by the poets further refines the image of the body tortured as a malleable surface or substance which may be altered in order to affect a spiritual transformation. Drawing upon several such instances of Old English eschatology for context, Chapter Five is concerned with manifestations of “spiritual metallurgy” which appear in religious poems (such as *Christ III*, *Judgment Day I and II*, *Phoenix*, and the fire of judgment scene in *Elene*) which are concerned with purgation, purity, and related issues of spiritual identity and transformation. The Conclusion of this thesis is concerned primarily with the role of the “other” in the terms of Anglo-Saxon torture. Such a conception of the role of the alien is not new to literary studies, but in the context of the function of the other in contemporary understandings of the nature and prerequisites of torture, this facet of Anglo-Saxon torture both illuminates and is illuminated by modern studies of the other and its place in an anthropology of torture. The Conclusion discusses the points of convergence and divergence between contemporary and medieval conceptions of torture, and examines how this study is significant in the context of both Anglo-Saxon studies and contemporary torture studies.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
INTRODUCTION: Torture, Text, and Context	1
INTRODUCTION NOTES	28
CHAPTER ONE: Torture in Anglo-Saxon England	
Part I: Torture in Anglo-Saxon History	34
Part II: Torture in Anglo-Saxon Law	91
CHAPTER ONE NOTES	138
CHAPTER TWO: Perceptions of Pain	174
CHAPTER TWO NOTES	222
CHAPTER THREE: Torture as a Language of Power	239
CHAPTER THREE NOTES	288
CHAPTER FOUR: Torture, Text, and Gender	296
CHAPTER FOUR NOTES	334
CHAPTER FIVE: Material Purgation/Spiritual Refashioning	348
CHAPTER FIVE NOTES	384
CONCLUSION: The Role of the "Other"	406
CONCLUSION NOTES	418
AFTERWORD	422
APPENDIX A	425
APPENDIX B	441
APPENDIX C	493
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY	499

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to many individuals and institutions for support, suggestions, and inspiration throughout the long and (pardon the pun) tortuous route leading from the first conception of this project to its culmination. Many of these debts are hard to define or to quantify, but broadly they may be divided into three kinds: financial support, intellectual inspiration, and personal encouragement. It is perhaps inevitable that most statements of gratitude seem either over-long or far too brief, and as I am unlikely to break new ground in this aspect of my thesis, I would rather stand accused of the former atrocity than of the latter. I have been grappling with several of the major ideas embodied in this thesis for the past six years; although it is impossible to recount all of the myriad sources of influence and support I have enjoyed during that period, I am grateful for them all.

I have been lucky enough to receive a great deal of financial support during the course of my research. First and foremost amongst these sources is the University of Glasgow, which awarded me a three year Postgraduate Scholarship to pursue this project; this fellowship, in conjunction with a three year Overseas Research Scheme Award granted by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, made it possible for me to live and to study comfortably in Scotland during the course of this project. I could not have completed my thesis as quickly and as pleasantly as I did without this support. I am indebted to the Graduate School of Arts and Humanities at the University of Glasgow for funding a research trip to Vercelli, Italy, to consult the major poetic manuscript concerning this project; I am also grateful to the same body for supporting my travel to Groningen, the Netherlands, in order to present an extract from Chapter

Four at a major interdisciplinary conference. I am likewise indebted to the Department of English Language at the University of Glasgow for funds for research trips to Cambridge and to London, and for covering all of the costs associated with attending two conferences at Leeds and one at Glasgow, at which I presented extracts from Chapter Two, Chapter Three, and Chapter Five. I began the research which culminated in this thesis while studying at Loyola University Chicago, and continued it at the University of Connecticut; I am therefore grateful to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Loyola, and to the Department of English, for the generous financial support with which I was provided. Likewise, thanks are due to the Graduate School at Connecticut, and especially to the Medieval Studies Program; the summer grants of the latter body were especially helpful and generous. I am particularly indebted to the University of Connecticut Research Foundation for funds to travel to two conferences in Illinois, at which I presented research which was later to form parts of Chapter Four. Likewise, thanks are due to the English Department, the Medieval Studies Program, and the English Graduate Student Association of the University of Connecticut for generous travel support to a graduate conference at Brown and two major international conferences at Kalamazoo, at which I presented research which was later to form the basis of Chapter Five.

My intellectual debts are no less extensive. The acorn which was to grow into the mighty oak which is my thesis was first planted at a Newberry Library Consortium seminar on the *Vercelli Book* taught at the Newberry in Chicago by Catherine Regan of Northwestern University in the spring of 1991. Some parts of Chapter Five dealing with *Elene* still reflect research carried out for that course. I am particularly indebted to the suggestions of my colleagues Andrew Cole,



Martin Foy, Gordon Sellers, Tom Tipton, Margaret Wesseling, and most notably Rich Johnson. At the University of Connecticut I continued to examine pain and torture as these manifested themselves in Old English poetic hagiography. Fred Biggs led a graduate seminar on the subject which was quite influential to my research; Fred and my colleague Gene Kannenberg offered criticism of my seminar paper which ultimately resulted in a conference paper on *Andreas* presented at the Illinois Medieval Association. Thanks also are due to Ray Rice and Jeff Cain for critical insights. I am indebted to Allen Frantzen for much input on that paper, and also for unstinting interest in my research more generally; I also appreciate his willingness to examine this thesis. It was largely Allen's insightful criticism, and that of Steve Harris, which led to the publication of that *Andreas* paper in article form. That article was later to become an important part of Chapter Four. It is appropriate to note that this article, "Productive Destruction: Torture, Text, and the Body in the Old English *Andreas*" appeared in *Essays in Medieval Studies* XI (1994), the publication of the Illinois Medieval Association. The copyright to that article is mine, and I am grateful to the editors of that journal for the retention of those rights. I also am grateful to the staff at the Students' Room of the Department of Manuscripts of the British Library for access to various Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and the staff of the Parker Library for access to the *Judgment Day II* manuscript, and to the Dean and Chapter of the Biblioteca Capitolare (and especially to the librarian, Msgr. Sergio Vercelli) in Vercelli, Italy, for access to the *Vercelli Book*.

The English Language Department of the University of Glasgow has been a wonderful place to work, and I am grateful to the department as a whole for constant support and helpful criticism. Specifically, Jeremy Smith, Katie Lowe, and Carole Hough have been interested and

sensitive critics, both informally in the stairwell and formally at departmental presentations of my work. Special thanks are also due to Christian Kay, Head, and Maureen McRobb, Secretary, for patience and for many kindnesses. Further, John Coyle and Robbie Maslen of the Department of English Literature at Glasgow have also been helpful and enthusiastic readers. The support of these colleagues and friends has done much for the quality of this thesis generally, and specifically for the final forms of Chapter Two, Chapter Three, and Chapter Five, which were presented at various departmental colloquia. An excerpt of an early draft of Chapter Five appeared as "*Swa Smæte Gold: Material Purgation and Spiritual Refashioning in Old English Visions of Judgment*" in *The Glasgow Review* 4 (Spring 1996). I am grateful to John Coyle and the other editors for the retention of my copyright. My greatest professional debt is to my supervisor, Graham Caie; Graham has patiently worked his way through every word of this thesis more than once, has been sensitive and tactful in his criticism, and has given me great freedom to find my own way without ever allowing me to feel abandoned or directionless. He is my role-model as a scholar, as a teacher, and as a person. I am, however, bigger than he is.

My debts to Graham are personal as well as professional, and thus it is fitting at this point to conclude with a few thanks of a more personal nature. I am grateful to many family and friends who have supported me throughout a long and sometimes trying graduate career. Susan Oldrieve and Ted Harakas at Baldwin-Wallace College convinced me that I could (and should) be an academic, while college friends such as Jeff Webb and Paul Wolansky have supported me steadfastly in my refashioning from scofflaw to scholar. I am grateful also to Helen Smith for many favors, especially in the crunch of the job search. I can't begin to thank all of the friends who have influenced and supported me, but those who



welcomed me in Glasgow and helped me make a life here are deserving of special mention. Carl and Donna Grindley took me into their home when I was alone and friendless; in that first year Todd Johnston, Stephen Harper, and T. J. Everest helped me to occupy the hours when I should have been writing. Later, the Senior Common Room crew at Queen Margaret Hall, most notably Mark and Pam Sanderson and Helen Dobson, really helped me to make the most of the opportunity of living in Scotland; I will miss this country, and them, terribly.

Pat and Emmy Fee have always thought me capable of anything, and I have not frequently enough thanked them for their love and support. To Pat and Skip Singley I owe many debts, and I hope that they know that their help is recognized and appreciated. Mine seems to be a family of engineering-types and teacher-types, and while I love them all, it is perhaps fair to say that the teachers have won the battle for my soul. My maternal grandmother and her sister, Martha and Jesse, both teachers, have always have been influential in our family mythos, as has my Aunt Betty. My father's family is not to be out done, however, and the fact that my paternal grandfather was an English professor has begun to loom large in my self-awareness. It is Gifford Doxsee, though, my mother's cousin and her hero, who has been the academic in our family who has had the most influence over me in recent years. I thank him for his encouragement and for his interest in my career. However, my greatest debts, personal and professional, are to my colleague, friend, and wife Allison Chandler Singley. She has supported me in all of my efforts since long before we were married, and has sacrificed personal and professional opportunities in order to do so. She is also a very fine editor, and so it is fair to say that this thesis would not have taken the form it has without her help. I hope that the end result was worth her effort and support.



## INTRODUCTION: Torture, Text, and Context

This thesis is a study about the nature and function of torture generally in Anglo-Saxon literature, and specifically in Old English religious verse. Its most fundamental focus, as the title suggests, is upon how pain and torture function in Old English poetic texts as a process of spiritual production, whereby the application of physical pain serves as a means by which identity is transformed. However, in a broader sense this thesis is a study of the nature of torture, and of pain. Torture, as shall become apparent, is not an unintelligible artifact from a bygone barbaric era, but rather an intelligible, albeit still barbaric, continuum of practices which remains widely prevalent today. The fact that torture is a contemporary phenomenon as well as an object of historical interest, therefore, necessitates that this topic be treated with respect and with empathy. Although the focus of this dissertation is on how Anglo-Saxon poetic explorations of the relationship between the body and the spirit led to exploitations of this relationship in the context of literary torture, similar models of torture are yet in operation today, and it would not do to hide from this fact behind musty definitions and historical examples. Rather, I will argue that an understanding of Anglo-Saxon perceptions of torture can illuminate to some extent the darkness which surrounds torture, medieval and modern. This study is grounded in that hope.

But just what is “torture”? “Torture” is a term in common use, but it has meant different things to different people in different times and places. Further, even amongst those historians, social scientists, and lawyers who have made an effort to codify and define torture, there is room for ambiguity, and even a fair measure of contradiction. In order to begin to understand the nature of Anglo-Saxon torture and its relationship to contemporary practices, it will be necessary to establish

some definitions. To develop a working definition of torture, I will begin this Introduction with a brief discussion of the various ways in which torture has been understood, and then describe the definition adopted here. Torture, as I will examine it, is not so much an act of violence as it is a violent process; that is, torture is a means, not an end in itself, and torture always presupposes intent and causality. Having established a working definition of torture in the light of the sociological, legal, and historical schools of thought on the matter, I will outline the place of this study as a whole within its larger critical context. I will conclude this Introduction with a brief overview of my thesis as a whole, focusing on the links which I have established between torture, pain, and issues of power and identity.

A useful point of departure for discussing what we understand torture to be is the history of torture as a legal concept, and the definition of torture from a legal historian's perspective. Historians and legal scholars define torture quite narrowly as a coercive process of gathering evidence. This process, which was most fully codified in Roman law, was developed during classical times, disappeared from European law with the fall of the Roman empire, reemerged with the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, and subsequently formed the basis of most European jurisprudence throughout the medieval period, and indeed well into the eighteenth century. Under this definition, "torture" is the term used to describe physical torment applied to the accused or witnesses in a criminal case, which is applied according to strict rules of procedure, and which is applied in order to extract evidence (and most especially confession) having to do with that case (the history of the law of torture is dealt with in detail in Chapter One). According to such a definition, punitive measures, and indeed, any other application of physical violence (even those which are overtly coercive and political), such as



execution and punitive mutilation, are not “torture”.<sup>1</sup> John H. Langbein offers a succinct analysis of the distinction which historians draw between torture and other forms of torment:

When we speak of “judicial torture,” we are referring to the use of physical coercion by officers of the state in order to gather evidence for judicial proceedings. The law of torture regulated this form of judicial investigation. In matters of state, torture was also used in circumstances not directly related to judicial proceedings. Torture has to be kept separate from the various painful modes of punishment used as sanctions against persons already convicted and condemned. No punishment, no matter how gruesome, should be called torture.<sup>2</sup>

This definition of torture is rather too narrow for our purposes, and would in fact make a discussion of “Anglo-Saxon torture” almost impossible. I am not the first to draw attention to the short-comings of such a definition of torture which is constrained by the boundaries imposed by legal history. Notwithstanding the common usage of “torture” as a general catch phrase for anything unpleasant, many contemporary journalists, sociologists, human rights advocates, and even scholars of international law utilize much broader, although still clearly defined, definitions of torture. Edward Peters takes exception to any broadening of our understanding of the term, arguing that to do so is legally redundant, and obfuscates jurisprudence through its gratuitous appeal to sentiment:

When journalists, and occasionally legislators (as well as international jurists and legal philosophers), use the term ‘torture’



to designate activities that may be (and usually are) already adequately and technically defined as assault and battery, or trespass, the term 'torture' itself becomes simply picturesque, its legal definition is gutted and in its place is substituted a vague idea of moral sentiment. It is then easy to argue torture away simply by applying to a higher moral sentiment than that of one's opponents or critics.<sup>3</sup>

Peters's argument, although not without merit, seems to be flawed precisely because it attempts to close off the law from a larger cultural analysis. As I will discuss in detail below, I define torture as I do in order to attempt to illuminate a unified conception (in philosophical, theological, historical, legal, literary, and linguistic terms) of the function of applied violence in an Anglo-Saxon cultural context. The definition of torture which allows me to do so is based upon the work of contemporary social scientists, as well as that of international human rights organizations and bodies concerned with international law; such organizations and individuals are interested, as I am, in a theory of torture which defines it as violence which extends as a cross-section of a culture, rather than a highly rarefied and discrete component thereof.

Various human rights organizations and bodies of international law have developed their own working definitions of torture, definitions which are, as a rule, more useful than that of legal historians in the context of this study. It is only fair to note, however, that although these definitions may be more inclusive than that of the legal historian, these conceptions of torture are, like that described above, limited and shaped by those fields of interest associated with those who are framing the definition. Thus, just as the definition above reflects the legal precision crucial to the historian of procedures of jurisprudence, the vision of

torture adopted by the United Nations, and that adopted by Amnesty International (both discussed below), each reflects the concerns and prejudices of that particular body. Further, as a study of torture published by Amnesty International has indicated, torture is difficult (both in practice and in theory) to define not simply due to the subjective values of those who would define it, but also due to the fundamentally subjective nature of the experience itself:

Everyone has an idea of what torture is; yet no one has produced a definition which covers every possible case. There is good reason why the concept of torture resists precise and scientific definition; it describes human behaviour, and each human being is unique, with his own pain threshold, his own psychological make-up, his own cultural conditioning. Furthermore, torture is a concept involving degree on a continuum ranging from discomfort to ill treatment to intolerable pain and death, and a definition must resort in part to qualitative terms which are both relative and subjective.<sup>4</sup>

The difficulties inherent in the task notwithstanding, a definition of torture is necessary, and not just for academic reasons. At the present time torture is commonly condemned, even by those who practice it. Because of the consensus against torture, contemporary practitioners of torture are careful to deny or carefully rationalize and redefine any activities which might run afoul of global opinion.<sup>5</sup> Torture is the object of much international discussion and concern, perhaps because it has been so universally practiced, on one level or another. Thus the United Nations has issued and revised a number of statements defining and condemning torture. The primary concern of the United Nations is in



governmental abuses, and in the institutionalization of practices considered illegal under international law; this concern is reflected in the statements issued by the United Nations regarding torture. The short-comings of such a position are really twofold: in the first place, by limiting attention to state-sanctioned actions, such a definition denies the fundamentally personal nature of the torture act; in the second place, the loophole provided by the “lawful sanctions” clause opens the door for regular, institutionalized abuse.<sup>6</sup> The definition of torture agreed upon by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its *Convention Against Torture*, adopted in December of 1984, is illustrative of the position of the United Nations:

For the purpose of this Convention, the term ‘torture’ means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.<sup>7</sup>

The definition offered by Amnesty International attempts to address those short-comings inherent in the convention of the United Nations, and thus while this definition maintains the emphasis on the systematic and deliberate nature of torture, and also recognizes that torture must always be a means to a specific end, it removes the political



and institutional stipulations which characterize the United Nations convention. The United Nations, of course, is interested in issues of international law, and in regulating the nature of the political behavior of its member states; Amnesty International, on the other hand, while sharing an interest in institutionalized and politicized acts of torture, is predominately interested in issues of fundamental human rights, and therefore views torture on an interpersonal, as well as an institutional, level. This interest with torture as, fundamentally and necessarily, a process which is conducted on the level of an extremely intimate and personal relationship (i.e. that between the torturer and the victim), albeit a perverse relationship, is particularly well-suited to my own examination and understanding of torture, and provides the basis for my working definition. The definition of torture adopted by Amnesty International is, therefore, a touchstone for this study:

Torture is the systematic and deliberate infliction of acute pain in any form by one person on another, or on a third person, in order to accomplish the purpose of the former against the will of the latter.<sup>8</sup>

It is of paramount importance that, as different as these definitions might be, both place pain firmly at the center of their discussions of torture; even the legalistic definition offered by Langbein, with its euphemistic reference to “physical coercion”, pays homage to the centrality of pain to torture. Pain is a necessary component of torture. Pain itself, however, is complex and difficult to define, and therefore complicates further our understanding of the nature of torture. Further, pain is a universal phenomenon, and therefore torture, as the deliberate

and systematic application of pain by one person upon another, taps into a universal vein of horror and repugnance:

...even in an age of violence, torture stands out as a special horror for most people. Pain is a common human denominator, and while few know what it is to be shot, to be burned by napalm, or even to starve, all know pain. Within every human being is the knowledge and fear of pain, the fear of helplessness before unrestrained cruelty. The deliberate infliction of pain by one human being on another to break him is a special horror.<sup>9</sup>

Pain is also a volatile social force because it bridges the gap between interiority and exteriority, and thus offers a window into the relationship between body and soul. I am especially interested in Anglo-Saxon conceptions of the relationship between the soul and the body, and, as shall be discussed in Chapter Two, this relationship further complicates not only our understanding of pain, but also that of the nature and function of torture. Any definition of torture, therefore, must be informed by a conception of the shifting and ambiguous nature of the pain which is its motive force; further, the importance of the relationship between the physical body and spiritual, mental, emotional, and other non-tangible aspects of identity and consciousness must not be underestimated.<sup>10</sup> Torture is difficult to understand and to define precisely because of the complex nature of the relationships between the physical, the spiritual, and pain, which are the very relationships upon which torture is founded.

It is in the light of such understandings of torture, pain, and the relationship between interiority and exteriority that I developed my working model of torture. "Torture", as I define it, is any deliberate and



systematic application of pain (physical, mental, spiritual) and/or destruction which is used to achieve some specific end; usually, in the contexts which I will examine, torture is concerned with issues of identity and power, and Anglo-Saxon torture consistently is utilized to exploit the bridge which pain provides between exterior body and interior consciousness. I define torture this broadly, and as opposed to the definitions offered by legal historians and others, because torture thus conceived affords a unifying conceptual framework (and metaphor) around which many Anglo-Saxon social structures (legal, historical, theological, philosophical, and literary) may be organized.

According to my definition, torture must be: *deliberate*--the agent must intentionally cause pain to and/or wreak acts of destruction upon the victim; *systematic*--the application of pain and/or destruction (e.g. judicial torture, punitive mutilation, dismemberment or other maiming, beheading or other physically-expressive acts of execution, etc.) must be organized around some guiding principle(s), aim(s), or need(s); and used to achieve some *specific ends*--these might be personal, political, spiritual, etc., but at least some such end must be sought deliberately by the torturer (whether consciously or unconsciously). Many acts which fall outside of this definition are violent and destructive, to be sure, but they are not torture; for example, acts which are not deliberate, or which do not seek to achieve some end, do not qualify as torture.

There are many different possible reasons or aims for torture; I will briefly list and discuss some examples which are relevant to this study, but this list should be considered suggestive, and not by any means comprehensive. Various types of torture acts may be loosely grouped together under the heading of the primary aim of such acts; although many, if not most, acts of torture have more than one purpose, quite often one such purpose seems dominant. An example already

touched upon briefly is that of *judicial torture*; that is, the application of pain utilized as a means of obtaining confession as part of a coherent system of jurisprudence, which is discussed in detail in Chapter One. *Punitive torture*, that is, the application of pain as punishment for actual, potential, imagined, or alleged civil, criminal, religious, spiritual, or political offenses is discussed at length in Chapter One, and is also of some importance (in spiritual terms) in Chapter Five. *Political torture*, that is, acts used as a means to gain or consolidate control through the removal of rivals to power and the public display of power over their bodies is discussed at some length in Chapter One, and has resonance with some acts of semiotic torture (I examine this type of torture at length momentarily) discussed in Chapter Four.

Two related and particularly relevant types of torture in the context of this project would be what might be termed *evidentiary torture* and *transformative torture*. The former includes physically painful and/or destructive acts which the victim is forced to undergo in order to affect a physical manifestation of spiritual nature upon the body of the victim, as in the ordeal, discussed in Chapter One; the latter includes physically painful and ultimately destructive acts which the victim is forced to undergo in order to manifest a transformation of spiritual identity, as in the fire of judgment eschatological model discussed in Chapter Five. In both cases, such acts overtly rely upon an understanding of spiritual identity as directly linked to the physical body. The transformative model of torture is of primary importance to my analysis of the function of torture in Anglo-Saxon England, and works in conjunction with the semiotic model, although they are not the same. I explicate the transformative model in Chapter Three, and it is of primary importance (along with the semiotic model) in my discussions in Chapters Four and Five. What we might term *semiotic torture* is also



of special significance to this study; this involves an act of torture and/or the physical results thereof which serves as a language act, that is, which conveys some message or meaning to those who witness the act or the results thereof. Further, such torture often also functions as a means of signifying identity; that is, the text of the act itself, and/or the text produced upon the tablet of the flesh of the victim through the act of torture, is representative of some personal, spiritual, and/or political truth concerning the victim, the agent, and/or the power hierarchies which they represent. The semiotic function of torture is a cornerstone of this project: I discuss at some length the semiotic nature of historical records of torture and laws pertaining to such acts in Chapter One; I examine in detail the linguistic model which is the basis for understanding the nature of such acts in Chapter Three; and I explore the semiotic significance of manifestations of what I have termed the transformative model of torture in literary examples in Chapters Four and Five.

This project draws upon a number of critical influences, both in the details of its construction and in its general organizing principles. The specific nature and number of the former debts are enumerated in the notes, and need not be repeated here; the latter influences are more implicit, and bear a brief examination. This work, dealing as it does with subjects which do not readily lend themselves to the traditional categories of academic study, is fundamentally and necessarily interdisciplinary. My area of specialization is Old English literature, and it was an interest in the literary aspects of torture in this context which led me to this project. I soon discovered, however, that the scholarship most pertinent to my work had little to do with literature, and less with Old English. The role of my fellow specialists in the formation of this project was more tangential than is usual, then, and while I do have debts to literary theorists (most notably feminist scholars of the body as

text, and semiotics experts), the most formative influences have been from the social sciences, medicine, and history. In the following paragraphs, therefore, I will discuss these influences in order to place this project in its critical context, to reconstruct my basic methodology, and to outline the nature of the sources and evidence upon which this study is founded.

No work on pain, the body, or torture written in the last decade is without its debt to Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Scarry's work was ground-breaking, and scholarship in this field is indebted to her in a number of ways. First and foremost, Scarry's systematic and thorough grounding of her subject in a series of disparate and yet necessary disciplines is a model for scholars interested in the points of contact between the arts and their larger cultural context. Second, Scarry's copious notes and extensive bibliography provide a foundation (although now a bit dated) for any study in the field. Third, Scarry's discussion of the transformative power of pain is fundamental to an understanding of the productive function of the destructive practice which is torture; indeed, such a conception is vital to an understanding of torture in an Anglo-Saxon literary context. As important as Scarry's work is in terms of groundwork, however, her focus and methodology converge with mine only at a few points. In fact, Scarry's interest in torture, although hardly tangential, is not central, and so the bulk of her work is not of immediate value to the scholar of torture. Scarry's first chapter, "The Structure of Torture: The Conversion of Real Pain into the Fiction of Power" deals with "the world destroying structure of torture," while the balance of the book deals with "the creative, world-making activities of human labor and imagination, where pain's transforming powers take a kinder shape".<sup>11</sup> Scarry's interest is primarily contemporary and political and



largely non-literary, yet elements of her discussion, especially those pertaining to *body* and *voice*, are particularly well-suited to an examination of the parallels between the infliction of pain (the destructive nature of torture) and the inscription of spiritual identity (the productive nature of torture) in the texts which I examine.

The two most notable scholars in the field of the history of judicial torture are Henry Charles Lea and Edward Peters. Lea's work on torture and the ordeal, although now more than a century old, is still useful, informative, and often cited. *Superstition and Force* is the compendium volume of Lea's work, available in separate modern editions (edited by Peters) under the titles *Torture* and *The Ordeal*. Peters, on the other hand, has carried the torch, as it were, into the latter part of this century, and is in many ways the self-styled successor to Lea, having edited the former's work in modern editions, as well as having authored the most seminal contemporary texts on the history of torture (most notably the book entitled *Torture*, not to be confused with the modern edition of Lea's work; at the time of writing Peters's book has just been re-released in a new edition). The contributions of these two men to this field cannot be over stressed; neither, however, can the limits of the value of their works to the present project be overlooked. As I have already outlined, what legal scholars term "torture" comprises only a small fraction of the complex cultural organism which is of concern to me; further, the history of Anglo-Saxon law is such that this narrow legalistic definition of torture is of little or no use in our study of applied violence and pain in this context. Lea's study of the ordeal is much more useful, however, as the ordeal was a primary mechanism of Anglo-Saxon law from the earliest Germanic invaders right up until the Norman Conquest; indeed, Lea's work on the ordeal brings together many concepts and records which are invaluable to the study of the

Anglo-Saxon conception of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual.

The most pertinent contemporary work on torture which has a direct bearing on this study, however, is that of Amnesty International. Through a series of regularly updated reports, Amnesty International keeps abreast of the most current material pertinent to this field, from first-hand victim reports of torture practices to current international legislation governing such abuses. Two particularly useful and accessible works are *Report on Torture* and *Torture in the Eighties*. The working definition upon which I base this study of torture is indebted in large part to that adopted by Amnesty International. Amnesty International is a human rights organization, of course, and so the focus of these works is contemporary and non-literary. Further, this organization's work is by nature highly specific, graphic and unsettling, and not always easily removed from the real world of torture into the theoretical one. However, that is the greatest strength of this material, and has indeed done much to ground my personal conception of the nature of torture in the reality of horrific bodily mutilation. It is too easy for a study such as this one to remove itself into the realm of the academic and the theoretical, and to substitute a highly evolved conceptual model for a real attempt at understanding human suffering. The work of Amnesty International is crucial for any scholar who wants a practical window into the world of torture to balance historical records and philosophical arguments.

Any study of torture must begin with a study of pain, and any study of pain must begin with a knowledge of Melzack and Wall. Melzack and Wall are medical writers whose works, including *The Textbook of Pain* and, most notably, *The Challenge of Pain*, are required reading for medical students, laymen interested in the nature and



function of pain, and scholars of torture alike. In 1965, Melzack and Wall were responsible for a revolution in medical conceptions of the nature of pain with the development of the "gate control" theory of pain. Further, their emphasis on the nature of pain as an affective state which relies upon emotional and psychological components as well as physical stimuli is directly related to the work of contemporary theorists of pain such as Scarry, as well as to very medieval conceptions of the nature of the relationship between the body and the spirit. Much of their work is of more interest to the student of physiology than to the scholar of torture, but at least a passing knowledge of the various physiological factors involved in pain is desirable for such scholars.

This study conceptualizes torture as a rational process utilized to achieve specific ends, and in many of the cases which I examined these torture acts seemed designed to express, on some level, information regarding the individuals involved, the hierarchies of which they were a part, and the nature of the power structures in conflict which resulted in the act. Both the acts themselves and the bodies upon which they are wrought can serve such a semiotic function. The linguistic model which I developed in order to articulate such functions is based upon the work of a number of linguists, notably Carol A. Kates and most especially Geoffrey Leech; for my understanding of pragmatics I am especially indebted to Kates's *Pragmatics and Semantics: An Empiricist Theory*, and to Leech's *Principles of Pragmatics*. Pragmatics is that field of linguistics concerned with how signs are utilized to convey meaning within a particular cultural and linguistic context; pragmatics is therefore distinct from semantics in that the former is context-sensitive while the latter has to do more generally with the relationship between signs and meanings, and therefore is not context-sensitive. My understanding of the function of torture as language act is rooted in this

understanding of the conventional and contextually-sensitive nature of both torture acts and language more generally. The study of pragmatics has much to offer scholars of torture and related cultural phenomena which utilize physical acts to convey political, personal, and social meanings.

The concept of torture as language act is clearly related to post-modern critical models of inscription and the body as text; the work in this field is immense and ever growing, but there are a few names which are undoubtedly central. In general terms, Ann Rosalind Jones provides a good introduction into the concept of gender as a cultural construct in "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l'Ecriture feminine", while Susan Gubar offers a similar introduction into the concept of the body as text in "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity". For a more in-depth study of the former concept, the seminal text is probably Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. For the latter concept, a very good and thorough study is Sheila Delany's *Writing Woman: Women Writers and Women in Literature, Medieval to Modern*. To my mind, however, the most central text concerning inscription and the body as text in the field of medieval English literature is Carolyn Dinshaw's *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*. Dinshaw sees all language as gendered in a patriarchal society. She draws upon the work of Levi-Strauss and Lacan to provide examples of what she sees as a male historical-intellectual trend regarding the passive role of women as signifiers. Building upon this assumption, she posits that when Chaucer wrote about writing, or about other signifying activities, he did so in such a way that we can apply Dinshaw's concept of gender to the agents, recipients, and vessels of those activities. Dinshaw draws upon an impressive body of texts ranging from Aristotle, through the Church Fathers, and into the twentieth century, in order to



demonstrate the philosophical basis for this model; she also illustrates how such a concept of gender fits within the power structure of a patriarchal culture. Further, she argues that Chaucer was aware of such gendered constructions, and of the social mechanisms which operated to keep them in place. Although Dinshaw is of course interested in Chaucer and Middle English literature rather than a culture-wide survey of the nature of inscription upon the body in early England, her theoretical construct of inscription, as well as her notes and (now dated) bibliography on the subject make her an invaluable source for fellow medievalists interested in the subject.

Anglo-Saxon studies has produced few works with direct influence over a project such as this. However, Anglo-Saxonists with an interest in the application of contemporary theoretical models to Old English texts are indebted to Allen J. Frantzen for the insights into the changing nature and function of the field outlined in his book *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition*, and for the discussion of the role of contemporary literary criticism in medieval studies in his collection of essays *Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies*. Further, any scholar of medieval English literature with an interest in history should have at least a passing knowledge of Lee Patterson's *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature*, although Patterson's interest is in Middle English, and so his work is not directly related to Anglo-Saxon studies. These texts are, in any case, of general interest in the context of this project; the two works on Old English literature most directly related to this one, however, are Graham D. Caie's *The Judgement Day Theme in Old English Literature*, and John P. Hermann's *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry*.

Caie's conception of the metaphorical relationship between the transformation described in the doomsday fire and the spiritual nature of the individual Christian believer helps to explicate the fundamental philosophical construct of the link between the body and the spirit. This construct is central to Anglo-Saxon sensibilities, and is thus important to the model of torture which I describe. Further, Caie's is the most important work on Old English doomsday sequences, and the model of the fire of judgment upon which he focuses so much attention is crucial to our understanding of the relationship between spiritual identity and physical torture. Thus, while a work on Old English eschatological poetry might not seem, to scholars of torture, immediately related to the subject at hand, the resonances between spiritual purgation and applied physical abuse are such that the former, in this context, does much to inform the latter. Caie does not deal specifically with torture, of course, and his interest is strictly literary; the points of contact between his work and this one, then, are likewise limited. Caie's work, however, concerns the spiritual equivalent of physical duress, and so helps to elucidate the transformative function of torture in an Old English poetic context.

Hermann's work is a milestone in Anglo-Saxon studies for two reasons which are of primary significance to the present study. First, in his book Hermann attempts to determine the points of convergence and divergence between traditional philological analysis and post-structuralist critiques of the very basis of such philological techniques as source studies, iconography, exegesis, and allegoresis. While not rejecting such traditional approaches, Hermann questions the uncritical acceptance of their theoretical assumptions. Second, Hermann analyzes the relationship between violence and spirituality in Old English poetry by defining and examining the dichotomous nature (Good vs. Evil,



Church vs. Devil, Soul vs. Body, Spirit vs. Letter) of spiritual warfare in this context, and the rhetorical borders between such opposites. Such an approach is of obvious interest in the light of my project, and in fact my Conclusion discusses just such a dichotomous nature (Self vs. Other) in the function of torture, which is itself a form of spiritual violence in Old English poetry. *Allegories of War* is a deftly argued and theoretically sophisticated approach to Old English literature, and indeed serves as a manifesto of sorts for post-structuralist studies of both medieval texts and the traditional methodologies associated with them. My own project is not nearly so theoretically astute, but the nature of Hermann's critical apparatus was in any case an influence in the conception of this project. However, the greatest impact of Hermann's work upon my own has been the significant presence of absence. Hermann, concerned as he is with rhetorical strategies, and aware as he is of the limitations of historical contextualization, makes no effort to contextualize literary violence within its larger cultural milieu. The violence which is torture is by necessity context-bound; that is, although we may never fully understand the complex social process which is torture, we may only begin to understand it within its historical, legal, spiritual, and anthropological environment. A linguistic or thematic analysis of torture outside of such an environment is a semiotic game, a vain attempt to attribute meaning to a sign. It is only by contextualizing such acts of conventional and ritualized violence that they begin to signify at all. Further, such signification has as much to tell us about ourselves as it does about Old English literature, and this seems to me, in the terms of the study of torture, no bad thing.

This project is by nature interdisciplinary and by necessity eclectic, in that torture and pain are events which occur and recur constantly across and throughout cultures, demanding attention as they

simultaneously defy definition and collapse traditional generic boundaries. The perspective of any given discipline allows one to perceive these entities only as those cross-sections thereof which are pertinent to that particular discipline. Each torture act represents a vast complex of organizing principles and functions (legal, political, historical, sociological, psychological, linguistic, literary) which is crystallized in the moment of the act, but which is not easily reconstituted into its component parts. The focus of this study is torture as this phenomenon manifests itself in Old English religious verse, and it is clear that my treatment of material from other disciplines and genres is secondary to this primary focus. I do not claim that my survey of Anglo-Saxon culture is by any means exhaustive, nor do I claim that my literary poetic model of torture is representative of the phenomenon in Anglo-Saxon culture at large. Still, by examining a number of historical records, legal codes, philosophical and theological works, medical texts, psychological, sociological, and anthropological studies, linguistic models, and semiotic theories, and by attempting to compare medieval with modern models of many of these, I have attempted to contextualize (to a limited extent, and within the parameters of my poetic focus) the violence of torture in Anglo-Saxon literary texts. While interdisciplinary studies are nothing new, I believe that the contextual approach to a cultural phenomenon such as torture which my study suggests offers a valuable direction for further scrutiny by Anglo-Saxonists. Further, I believe that an in-depth examination of multiple cultural facets of torture within a single culture would be of great value to scholars of torture. Hence, I hope that this work, and the model for further study which it suggests, will be of interest and of use to scholars of Anglo-Saxon England and scholars of the history and practice of torture alike.



A note on sources and evidence is in order at this point. My primary sources are poetic, and I rely upon standard edited editions of such works throughout this study; exact citations appear in the notes the first time a particular text is cited, and also in the General Bibliography. The texts to which I most often refer include *Elene*, *Andreas*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *The Dream of the Rood* from the *Vercelli Book*; *Juliana*, *Phoenix*, and *Christ* from the *Exeter Book*; *Judith* from London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A xv; and *Judgment Day II* from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201. My work is not paleographical, but I did consult the *Vercelli Book* and CCC 201 concerning minor editorial matters. For a sense of the character of any given term throughout the Old English corpus, and for examples of usages in various contexts, I have relied upon the *Microfiche Concordance to Old English*. *A Thesaurus of Old English* is likewise a vital resource for determining semantic overlap in the use of terms regarding pain and torture. In the cases where I have pursued a detailed linguistic or semantic study drawing upon the *Concordance*, I have tried to take into account orthographic irregularities, and have relied upon Bosworth-Toller and Clark-Hall for the variations to be expected. In all cases of citations drawn from poetic texts, in all cases of supporting texts drawn from the *Concordance*, and in all cases relying upon a high degree of linguistic analysis, I have cited the original Old English text first, and added a translation for the convenience of the reader. In such cases my argument always rests upon the original language (as it appears in the edited text cited), and not the translation. These translations are based upon the edited glossaries (where available), and Bosworth-Toller, with occasional reference to Clark-Hall; however, all translations are ultimately the author's own.

The historical and legal examples cited in Chapter One are the exception to my general rule regarding the nature of texts and their translations. Except where noted, all such references are drawn from *English Historical Documents*, volumes I and II; *English Historical Documents* is the standard compendium source in the field, and while not exhaustive, it is suitable for the limited context which I have sought to provide. The primary historical source upon which I have relied is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, from which I have culled every identifiable example of torture; under my working definition torture must be to a specific end, and thus I have included examples only where a case for causality and intent may be made. Where there are variances between the available *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* texts, I have made reference to such in the notes. Citations from historical records other than the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are specifically noted in the text. In cases where I found the need to present a cogent narrative of historical events, or where I needed any other such clarification, I turned to Sir Frank Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England*, the standard secondary reference work. The primary legal sources upon which I have relied include the laws of Ine, Alfred, Athelstan, Cnut, and William, although I cite from many other sources as well. My primary focus in my study of legal records was identifying those laws concerning, for instance, the ordeal, execution, penal mutilation, etc., which imposed painful and/or destructive acts for a stated or implicit purpose. Each historical and legal reference is individually cited in the notes, with reference both to the specific text involved and to the page and volume number of *English Historical Documents*. Since very little of my argument in historical and legal cases rests upon linguistic analysis, since the few such suppositions I do make are amply supported in later chapters, and since the sheer bulk of the passages involved would make double entries unwieldy, in such



cases I have included only the translated text. These translations are to be credited to the editors of those works.

Although I have made a distinction in form in my use of this historical material, I do not generally consider Anglo-Saxon historical sources to be “non-literary”. That is, I subscribe to the tenet that texts are texts, and the generic boundaries which we impose upon them delineate our understanding of their function, and not the functions themselves.<sup>12</sup> In the Anglo-Saxon period, particularly, it is often hard to distinguish between “history”, “hagiography”, “literature”, etc., and it is not clear that we should try to do so.<sup>13</sup> In the case of Anglo-Saxon historical records and legal codes which pertain to torture, I have found evidence of an overwhelming resonance between these texts and “literary” texts concerned with the same issues. It is only fair to emphasize, however, that the focus of this project is poetic, and I am interested most specifically in Old English poetic hagiography and eschatology. This focus is valuable to a study such as mine for a number of reasons. It is in the poetry (and most specifically hagiography and eschatology) that we find the most detailed and developed descriptions of pain and torture in the Old English corpus. Along the same lines, the development of the themes underlying pain and torture in which I am interested is most fully and self-consciously manifested in such works. Further, in Old English poetry we find a deliberate and often self-conscious use of language and modification of source texts which illuminates for us the authors’ sensibilities concerning pain and torture much more clearly than in any other contemporary genre. Although my focus is poetic, however, I do look at a large number of non-poetic texts to provide some context for poetic torture, and to show the semantic range of some of the terminology involved. Further, I consider physical acts, legal principles, philosophical constructs, and religious poetry all to

be equally valid texts for the purposes of this project, although my most intense interest is more traditional and literary. In short, I will attempt to discover what torture “means” in Anglo-Saxon poetry by conflating a great deal of poetic and non-poetic information into what Michel Foucault termed “a sort of great, uniform text”:

One shows how the different texts with which one is dealing refer to one another, organize themselves into a single figure, converge with institutions and practices, and carry meanings that may be common to a whole period. Each element considered is taken as the expression of the totality to which it belongs and whose limits it exceeds. And in this way one substitutes for the diversity of the things said a sort of great, uniform text, which has never before been articulated, and which reveals for the first time what men ‘really meant’ not only in their words and texts, their discourses and their writings, but also in the institutions, practices, techniques, and objects that they produced.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of this project, Foucault’s “uniform text” is that unified conception of the nature and function of torture to which I earlier referred. I turn now to an overview of the stages through which I hope to achieve this conception.

Chapter One provides the historical and legal components of my larger cultural exploration of Anglo-Saxon torture. This chapter is in two parts, the first dealing with instances of torture appearing in historical records, and the second examining legal codes dealing with torture. Throughout both sections I develop conceptions of the roles (legal, political, spiritual, popular) and the significance of torture in Anglo-Saxon England. In the second section, in addition to the laws



themselves, I discuss the development of Anglo-Saxon legal models and practices from early Germanic customary law through the changes wrought after the Norman Conquest. In both discussions, issues of the relationship between the body and the spirit, the nature of spiritual identity, and the function of torture as a symbolic and political force come up again and again; these same issues are central to my larger discussion. Symbolically, the body may act as a page upon which the torturer composes, for example, the text of the victim's criminal guilt, or the nature of a power relationship; conversely, spiritual identity may manifest its nature on the tablet of the victim's flesh through such practices as the ordeal. Chapter One confronts the relationship between philosophical models and practical consequences in law and act.

Pain is central to torture, and thus it is fitting to ground an exploration of torture in an understanding of pain. In Chapter Two, therefore, I discuss the universal experience of pain as an isolating and inexpressible force. I begin this chapter with a discussion on the nature of pain, exploring the links between the modern and the medieval. Examining carefully the language and imagery of *The Dream of the Rood*, I illustrate that the Anglo-Saxons understood the paradox of pain and the linguistic and intellectual difficulties in communicating its nature. The Anglo-Saxons understood pain to be a largely affective state, closely related to spiritual matters. Further, in a way that modern psychologists, anthropologists, and physicians are just beginning to understand and define, the Anglo-Saxons utilized a language "of weapons and wounds" in order to confront these difficulties in communicating between individuals the diverse and intensely personal phenomena which we group together under the rubric "pain".

In Chapter Three I discuss the nature of torture acts as language acts, and explore the necessarily public nature of such a language of

weapons and wounds. I also examine the role of the body as document, and develop more fully the transformative model of torture which allows such a document to be inscribed upon. I begin this chapter by developing a linguistic model for understanding the function of torture as language; I do so by drawing upon the work of linguists interested in pragmatics. Having laid out my conceptual model, I discuss at length the overtly public nature of torture acts in Old English poetry, and the necessary relationship between witnessing and signification to which this public nature attests. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the transformative function of pain and torture, a function which is of primary importance to the following two chapters.

In Chapter Four I examine the significance of this transformative model of torture in the context of the concepts of "inscription" and "the body as text". I discuss at length the philosophical basis for both conceptions, and illustrate that these contemporary critical models are grounded in analogous traditions which span from classical through medieval times. I then examine at length the model of torture as "writing" upon the body, especially in terms of spiritual identity. I discuss a number of Old English texts which exploit such models, and I also uncover an Old English linguistic tradition which links the concept of literal engraving upon a surface with metaphorical inscription upon the soul, and which conversely equates literal burying with the metaphorical concealment of a spiritual reality.

In Chapter Five I move from the realm of earthly, corporeal pain and torture to the related spiritual transformations wrought in Anglo-Saxon depictions of eschatology. In the fire of judgment model we find a conception of spiritual transmutation expressed through a metaphor of material purgation. This model is particularly well-represented in Old English literature, and helps to explicate the nature of the Anglo-Saxon



perception of the relationship between the body and the soul, a relationship which is crucial to our understanding of the function of torture in this culture. I begin this chapter with an exploration of the roots of the transmutative tradition, move into an analysis of the development of the related fire of judgment model, and conclude with a statement concerning the relationship between this model and our larger discussion of torture.

I begin my Conclusion by re-examining the unified conception of torture which I have attempted to describe, drawing attention to the parallels between Anglo-Saxon and contemporary models and practices of torture. Building upon this foundation, I discuss the significance of this study, both in terms of its value to scholars of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and in terms of its place in contemporary torture studies. I conclude by examining the nature and function of the concept of the "other" in Anglo-Saxon models of torture. Such a conception of the role of the alien is new neither to literary studies, nor indeed to medieval scholarship; in light of the function of the other in contemporary profiles of torturers and the necessary pre-conditions of torture, however, this facet of Anglo-Saxon torture is particularly telling, and indeed, chilling. Anglo-Saxon perceptions of pain and torture were, in some ways, in stark contrast to our own: these were often perceived as necessary and desirable processes, a perception due in large part to the spiritual models associated with torture. These very perceptions and associations are at the heart of the Anglo-Saxon conception of the other, however, and the nature of the rationalization inherent in the perceptions of these processes is a valuable object of study to those interested in the nature of torture, medieval or modern.

## INTRODUCTION NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See John H. Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof: Europe and England in the Ancien Régime*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976. Pages 3-4. Langbein refers to punitive mutilation, execution, and the like as "blood sanctions". See also Edward Peters, *Torture. New Perspectives on the Past Series*, R. I. Moore, gen. ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985. Pages 1-10; see especially his discussion of the necessity of a precisely narrow definition for torture, page 2, and the distinction between torture and what Langbein calls "blood sanctions", page 4. Peters offers a very precise summary of Roman through modern definitions of torture, its methods and components; see especially pages 1-2 and 28.

<sup>2</sup> Langbein, page 3. In his first chapter, Langbein provides a useful overview concerning the jurisprudence of torture under Roman-canon law, the abolition of the ordeal in favor of such a system of jurisprudence, and the origins of judicial torture (pages 4-8). See also Langbein's citation of Pouillet, note 3, page 145:

"Torture was not a punishment...; it was not a mode of proof, which some writers on criminal law call it; it was a *mode of procedure* which the judge employed to obtain...proof...."

<sup>3</sup> Peters, page 153. See also page 152:

The term torture now exists almost wholly in a generalized vocabulary. And because it does, it is easy for torturers to deny that what they do is torture...on the other hand, it is difficult for people who use the term for anything that seems synonymous with cruelty to carry much conviction when they use it for something close to its original meaning.

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, *Report on Torture*. London: Duckworth in association with Amnesty International Publications, 1973. Page 33;



see also pages 35-37 for legal and political problems regarding any definition of torture.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Amnesty International, *Report*, page 21:

It is significant that torture is the one form of violence today that a state will always deny and never justify. The state may justify mass murder and glorify those that kill as killers, but it never justifies torture nor glorifies those that torture as torturers.

A lot depends, of course, on who is doing the torturing, their rationalization for doing it, and, most importantly, in what terms and with what identity the torturers construe the victims; see my discussion of the "other" and torture in the Conclusion.

<sup>6</sup> Such abuses which take advantage of this loophole are discussed in Amnesty International, *Torture in the Eighties*. An Amnesty International Report. Oxford and London: Martin Robertson & Company, Ltd., and Amnesty International Publications, 1984. Pages 14-17. Amnesty International cites two examples of governmental actions which, under the auspices of this loophole, may seem to be legal, but which seem to contradict the spirit of the convention as a whole. Amnesty International condemns the United Kingdom for their interrogation methods of prisoners in Northern Ireland, and Germany for certain cases of the solitary confinement of prisoners. Cases of capital punishment, such as are common in the United States, also could be construed as legal only by the grace of this loophole in international law.

<sup>7</sup> The World Alliance of Reformed Churches, *Against Torture*. With a preface by Allan A. Boesak and Edmond Perret. Vol. 8, Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1987. Page 4; see also the explication offered of the terms of the convention adopted by United Nations, pages 5-8. The

authors point out that as a legal instrument this definition contains four basic elements. These are that an act of torture: 1. must be inflicted by a public official; 2. must comprise severe pain and suffering; 3. must be intentionally inflicted; 4. must be inflicted for one of the categories of purposes listed. Under the terms of the convention, all four of these elements must be present for an act to qualify as torture. Further, there are four categories of purposes listed within this document: a. discrimination; b. the securing of information; c. punishment; d. intimidation. Each of the four elements and the four categories is discussed in some detail. See also Amnesty International's explication of the 1975 United Nations's declaration against torture: Amnesty International, *Eighties*, pages 13-14. The explication of Amnesty International's definition of torture is more useful to this study, and so is included in its entirety below.

<sup>8</sup> Amnesty International, *Report*, page 35. See also the explication of these basic principles offered on pages 34-35:

There are certain essential elements which give torture its particular meaning and which should be incorporated in any comprehensive definition. In the first place the nature of torture assumes the *involvement of at least two persons*, the torturer and the victim, and it carries the further implication that the victim is under the physical control of the torturer. The second element is the basic one of the *infliction of acute pain and suffering*. It is the means used by the torturer on the victim and the element that distinguishes him from the interrogator. Pain is a subjective concept, internally felt, but is no less real for being subjective. Definitions that would limit torture to physical assaults on the body exclude 'mental' and 'psychological' torture which



undeniably causes acute pain and suffering, and must be incorporated in any definition. The concept of torture does imply a strong degree of suffering which is 'severe' or 'acute'. One blow is considered by most to be 'ill-treatment' rather than 'torture', while continued beatings over 48 hours would be 'torture'. Intensity and degree are factors to be considered in judging degrees. Thirdly, there is implicit in the notion of torture the effort by the torturer, through the infliction of pain, to make the victim submit, to 'break him'. The *breaking of the victim's will* is intended to destroy his humanity, and the reaction to the horror of this finds expression in various human rights instruments in such phrases as 'respect for the inherent dignity of the human person'. Finally, torture implies a *systematic activity with a rational purpose*. The unwitting, and thus accidental, infliction of pain, is not torture. Torture is the deliberate infliction of pain, and it cannot occur without the specific intent of the torturer. Inherent in this element of purpose are the goals or motives for employing torture, and while torture can be used for a variety of purposes, it is most generally used to obtain confessions or information, for punishment, and for the intimidation of the victim and third persons. The first two motives relate directly to the victim, while the purpose of intimidation, in wide use today as a political weapon, is intended to be a deterrent to others as well as the victim.

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International, *Report*, page 21.

<sup>10</sup> This complex of relationships between the body and the spirit, and between these, pain, and torture, are discussed extensively in Chapters

Two and Three; for a cogent introduction into the complexities of such relationships, however, turn to Amnesty International, *Report*, page 39:

An analysis of the effect of torture inevitably involves a study of human tolerance to pain or stress. This raises two preliminary difficulties of a theoretical as well as a practical nature. First, pain or stress produces biological responses in man which are best understood in terms of a combination of mental and physical processes. Secondly, it is virtually impossible to discuss isolated torture methods and their effects without reference to the context in which the torture is being administered. The second difficulty is particularly relevant to the problem of relating results from laboratory stress situations to actual torture environments themselves. The first difficulty, particularly that of discussing experiences of pain, arises from the traditional and convenient habit of considering the 'body' and the 'mind' as discrete entities. This theoretical separation has been, by and large, axiomatic in cultures with religious and philosophical roots as diverse as the Judaeo-Christian and the Hindu. But, however appropriate this concept of a mind-body dichotomy may appear to be in the development of moral and behavioural norms, it poses severe obstacles to a proper understanding of certain human phenomena such as pain. In spite of the research which yet needs to be done in this field, it is nevertheless significant for the purposes of this report that contemporary pain studies, as well as research into psycho-somatic illnesses and stress, point to increasing acceptance of a synthetic (i.e. unified) concept of the body/mind relationship. It has become unacceptable to insist upon a division between 'physical' and 'mental' experiences of pain. This development



prevents one from cataloguing torture methods and effects

according to discrete categories of the physical and psychological.

11 David B. Morris, "How to Read *The Body in Pain*." *Literature and Medicine* 6 (1987): 139-155. Page 142.

12 By "texts are texts", I mean that all signifying activity is subject to the same sort of analysis. In this context I am referring to narrative written texts. For an argument that we must apply conceptions of textual analysis to all symbolism, see Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*. Richard Howard, trans. Sussex: Harvester P, 1981. See especially page 71.

13 For a discussion of the relationship between history ("fact") and literature ("fiction"), see, for example, Linda Orr, "The Revenge of Literature: A History of History." *New Literary History* 12 (Autumn 1986): 1-22. For seminal sources concerning the subjectivity of all narratives (including history), see Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983. See especially page 178. See also Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & the Discourse on Language*. A. M. Sheridan Smith, trans. NY: Pantheon Books, 1972. See especially page 8. The literature on this subject is immense.

14 Foucault, page 118.

## CHAPTER ONE: Torture in Anglo-Saxon England

### Part I: Torture in Anglo-Saxon History

Torture, ordeal, dismemberment, and execution tend to be matter-of-fact common-places in Anglo-Saxon historical narratives; most of the references to violent death and disfigurement (and there are many) stick to a minimum of facts and avoid graphic description and specific detail. This is, of course, indicative of the chronicle genre in general; while the later entries tend to be more informative than the early ones, chronicles are by their very nature sparse and understated. A striking early example concerns one Mul, the brother of Ceadwalla (the latter for a short time between 685 and 688 laid claim to the throne of Wessex). A chronicle entry for the year 685 makes mention of Mul's death by burning some two years later, but this death is mentioned as an afterthought to a passage that reads much more like an Old Testament series of "begats" than the description of bone-bursting conflagration which we might expect from a tradition which has left us *Phoenix* and the graphic pyre scenes of *Beowulf*.<sup>1</sup> Here the author is far more interested in genealogy than in the consumption of a body by fire so luridly recorded by some Anglo-Saxon poets:<sup>2</sup>

In this year Ceadwalla began to contend for the kingdom.

Ceadwalla was son of Cenberht, the son of Ceadda, the son of Cutha, the son of Ceawlin, the son of Cynric, the son of Cerdic; and Mul, who was afterwards burned in Kent, was Ceadwalla's brother.<sup>3</sup>



The entries for 686 agree that in this year Ceadwalla and his doomed brother "ravaged Kent and the Isle of Wight",<sup>4</sup> and though the only information given for the following year has to do with these same two brothers, all that is recorded are the most basic facts:

In this year Mul was burnt in Kent, and twelve other men with him, and that year Ceadwalla again ravaged Kent.<sup>5</sup>

This matter-of-fact recitation of the basic information is indicative of many such descriptions; deaths in battle are hardly ever recounted in any detail, while execution and dismemberment tend to be recorded generically: in other words, although--for instance--decapitation and blinding are mentioned with some regularity, they generally are not described in any detail. We simply learn of the means by which a particular individual was put to death or dismembered; we are offered precious little insight into the details of the practices involved, or indeed into the specifics of any particular occasion. Thus, for example, we learn that in 792 Ethelbert (king of East Anglia) lost his head, although we are offered no other information, either regarding Mercian practices of execution, or concerning the political significance of this particular act (or of decapitation in general):

In this year Offa, king of the Mercians, had Ethelbert beheaded.<sup>6</sup>

Even in the longer, much more detailed narrative entries, this economy of description tends to be the rule regarding acts of torture and violent death. In the entry for 896, for example, we are told of the devastation of a group of marauding Danes: most of the information is fairly vague, although we do learn that the king's reeve Lucuman--along with a

handful of other named notables--fell at their hands; some of the Danes, however, had the misfortune to be captured as they attempted to make their way to the open sea, and the king ordered them to be hanged.<sup>7</sup> We are left to draw our own conclusions as to the specific arrangements involved in such an execution, or indeed as to the actual number of Vikings put to death in this manner; further, the significance of this particular form of execution (often reserved for thieves and common criminals--see my discussion of the Anglo-Saxon laws, below) is something which we are left to discover from other sources.

My point in citing these examples is to underscore that they are, in fact, representative of the bulk of such instances which come to us through such sources as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*; this is not to say that there are not more descriptive examples which have much to tell us about the functions and significance of torture, dismemberment, and execution in the context of Anglo-Saxon historiography. I turn now to dozens of examples which offer us ample evidence for reconstructing just such functions and significance. It is crucial to begin, however, with an understanding of the bland, common-place nature of many of these descriptions, which serve to throw their more graphic and informative counterparts into sharp relief. In other words, those accounts which do contain background information or more vivid descriptions are notable for this very reason, and are therefore worthy of special scrutiny. I am concerned with examples which help to illuminate issues of intent, causality, and the relationships between such violent acts and political, legal, and socio-economic realities. I will focus most specifically on *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (hereafter ASC) and extracts from the vernacular laws. I cite many other sources--both vernacular and Latin--in support, but the ASC offers a unique vernacular historical resource which is of particular interest to the scholar of specifically Germanic and



Anglo-Saxon cultural systems. Furthermore, as a scholar of Old English literature and language who focuses on vernacular poetic traditions, I am of course most interested in related vernacular historical and legal traditions. I therefore focus on these vernacular traditions while supplementing this evidence with appropriate information from other sources. Taking my cue from Stenton, however, I focus most especially on material from before the death of William the Conqueror, with the exception of the ASC, which continues as a peerless vernacular source up to the time of the ascension of Henry II in 1154. In the following chapters I demonstrate how pain, torture, and violence are utilized in Old English poetry as a language of spiritual and political power which helps to elucidate the nature of perceptions of such power in an Anglo-Saxon poetic context. In this chapter I will focus on how some of these same issues manifest themselves in the political, social, and spiritual significance of "real-life" acts of torture, ordeal, dismemberment, and execution in the context of Anglo-Saxon historical writings.<sup>8</sup>

In my discussion of Anglo-Saxon law codes in the second half of this chapter, I will explore the significance--in the context of Germanic traditions, and most especially in the terms of the evolution of the concepts of trial by ordeal and judicial torture--of prescribed penalties such as dismemberment, castration, blinding, and decapitation for the commission of certain crimes. In the first half of this chapter, however, my interest is in examining actual recorded examples of such acts of physical mutilation in their historical, political, and social contexts, and to attempt thereby to determine wherever possible what was signified through the performance of particular acts upon particular bodies in particular settings and circumstances. It is self-evident that many such acts are politically and socially significant. Further, however, I argue that many of these acts served to convey specific messages--sometimes

consciously on the part of the perpetrators, sometimes not--regarding personal relationships, political realities, and the nature of power in the world which generated them. These acts, in effect, served to articulate a language of power, and this language was often as intelligible to the chroniclers of these events as it is to us. In Chapter Three I discuss at length just how physical acts may function as language, and I develop theoretical linguistic models which help to explicate literary examples thereof; in Chapter One my model of interpretation is more rudimentary, and is founded on the basic assumption that physical acts can convey relatively explicit meanings regarding power relationships. I begin the present section of Chapter One by describing the relationship between punitive torture and dismemberment and perceptions of treason, oath-breaking, and criminal acts; I move on to explore how acts such as decapitation and castration serve to explicate the political realities of power transfers, and then note how similar acts are utilized as a means of consolidating--and illustrating the consolidation of--political power. Next, I analyze how a pattern of such acts was sometimes perceived by chroniclers as an indication of the stability and strength of existing power structures, while an inconsistent or non-existent pattern conversely was viewed as an indication of political weakness and lack of direction. Finally, I look at how traditions of ritualized bodily affliction--such as the ordeal--were organized around central philosophical principles concerning the nature of the relationship between the spirit and the flesh.

Many examples of torture, dismemberment, blinding, and execution which are mentioned in the annals are performed as punitive acts for serious offenses--most notably treason and oath-breaking--sometimes even including criminal acts (such as thievery) which a modern audience might perceive of as relatively minor transgressions.



Such punitive torture serves a number of social functions, and each act offers a text concerning cultural assumptions and mechanisms of social control which may be read on a number of levels. The enactment of highly visible maiming--such as the loss of limbs, ears, noses, etc., and most especially decapitation and castration--does much more than simply cause the victim to suffer; such maiming serves as a highly symbolic way of communicating the very nature of crime and punishment in this cultural context.<sup>9</sup> It is in this sense a form of writing, and the broken bodies produced through such acts of composition thus may be categorized as texts. The disfigured bodies of such transgressors act as signs which articulate the sins of the bearers of these signs (or--in the case of hostages--of the faithlessness of those whom the hostages represent), and which simultaneously articulate the power of those who exact such bloody retribution. Both living and dead bodies may serve as texts, and disembodied limbs--and most especially heads--offer highly evocative and easily portable tokens of sin and power. Living survivors of visible torture offer long-term witness; thus, a living testimony to power and to the consequences of faithlessness and sin could prove a stronger agent of social constraint than a corpse or a head. Such punitive acts of torture are distinct from the other practices which I will detail below, but they do have important traits in common. The practice of equating sin with mutilation, spiritual state with physical body, for example, has philosophical resonance with the relationship between body and spirit which is crucial to the practice of the ordeal; likewise, the utilization of the body parts rendered through torture to articulate a message about power is related to political acts of decapitation which I will examine presently.

Blinding was a common form of punitive mutilation in Anglo-Saxon England, and it was often meted out for treason. Such

punishments were sometimes carried out upon the kin of offenders; responsibility for one's kin was a cornerstone of Germanic culture, and such punitive practices would extend the symbolic text of the mutilated body onto a further level of signification (see my discussion of the mutilation of hostages, below). In the account for the year 992 we learn of the treason of one Ealdorman Ælfric, who--according to the "F" chronicler--was "one of those in whom the king trusted most".<sup>10</sup> This Ælfric--along with Earl Thored, Bishop Ælfstan, and Bishop Æscwig--was to lead a naval expedition against a force of marauding Danes. On the night before battle was to be joined, however, Ælfric warned the Danes and fled under cover of darkness; due to his treachery all but one Danish ship escaped unscathed. Evidently the English caught up to the retreating Danes and captured the very ship upon which the traitor was, but the Ealdorman himself escaped.<sup>11</sup> The punishment for the sins of the father may have been exacted upon his son, however, as we learn in the following entry--which is quite brief and offers little indication as to motive or causality--of a blinding carried out according to royal orders:

...In this year the king had Ælfgar, son of Ealdorman Ælfric, blinded.<sup>12</sup>

We are not specifically informed that this Ælfric is the traitor of the previous year, or for what reason this blinding was carried out. It is extremely common in these annals, however, to describe implicitly the relationship between two events through simple juxtaposition. It is logical to assume in this instance that the Ælfric mentioned casually in the entry for 993 is the same one who played such a large role in the events described for 992. In addition, given that blinding was a common enough penalty for treason (see, for example, the entry for 1075,



discussed below), and that hostages were routinely dismembered or executed for acts of treachery by their kin or lord (see, for example, the entry for 1014, discussed below), it is not unreasonable to assert that this act of blinding may have been a result of the aforementioned betrayal by Ælfric.

Treason against a sworn lord is the most serious kind of oath-breaking, and the punishment of traitors must necessarily serve a symbolic function which emphasizes the magnitude of this offense. In the annal for 1075 we learn about a plot against King William and of the consequences to the conspirators. Both the "D" and "E" chroniclers agree that Earl Roger and Earl Ralph were "the ringleaders in this foolish plot",<sup>13</sup> which was hatched at the wedding of Earl Ralph to Emma, the daughter of William fitz Osbern. We are informed that both Earl Roger and Earl Waltheof were in attendance, along with a number of bishops and abbots, and that all were in agreement to expel William from England. The plot unraveled almost as quickly as it was devised, however, and soon all of the conspirators were attempting to flee or to make terms with William, or--as in the case of Earl Waltheof--both. Earl Roger--kinsman to the king--was seized and imprisoned, but Earl Waltheof--who had the good sense to flee the country and attempt to pay out a cash settlement from there--was duped into returning to England, and interred to await a harsher fate the next year. Concerning the many conspirators the outcome is somewhat vague, although we do learn that all of the Bretons who were seduced into treason at the wedding feast were "destroyed",<sup>14</sup> and that the penalties for most of those involved included banishment, blinding, and public humiliation:

Some of them were blinded

And some banished from the land

And some were put to shame  
 Thus were the traitors to the king  
 Brought low.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of “shame” here is particularly enlightening, as it underscores the public nature and purpose of such punishments: the victims of shaming and blinding serve as living testaments to their treason, as well as to the power of the king against whom they so futilely rebelled. Those who are banished serve the same symbolic function, although they are “empty” signs, who--by the presence of their conspicuous absence--reinforce these very same messages. Earl Waltheof was the only named conspirator to suffer capital punishment, as we learn in the annal for 1076 that he was decapitated:

...And Earl Waltheof was beheaded at Winchester on St.  
 Petronella's Day; and his body was taken to Crowland; and he is  
 buried there.<sup>16</sup>

As we shall see in other, similarly politically significant examples, the severed head itself serves as a particularly potent sign. We learn that Earl Waltheof's body is buried at Crowland, but no specific mention is made of the head; throughout English history, traitor's severed heads have been displayed to signify the nature of their crime and the power of the monarch against whom they plotted, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that the same may have been the case with Waltheof. In any event, as we shall see shortly, beheading is an act of notable political valence, and it is therefore pertinent to note the manner chosen for Waltheof's disposal.



It is not simply the acts of torture and dismemberment themselves which serve to assert executive power and to provide a means of social and political control. Although the implicit threat of such mutilation is inarguably a powerful coercive force, an explicit threat--in a context in which such acts are regularly carried out--offers an extremely potent tool for exerting pressure in particularly volatile instances. In the annal for the year 1095 we find an example where a threat of blinding serves as an effective means to a short-term military end, staves off a potential rebellion, and serves as a warning to others who might question royal authority in the future. In Easter of that year, King William II held his court at Winchester and expected all of his nobles to be in attendance; Earl Robert of Northumbria refused, however, to the fury of the king. When Robert again refused to attend the king at Windsor at Whitsuntide, the king summoned his army and marched on Northumbria. The royal forces took the fortresses at Newcastle and Tynemouth quickly enough, and with them many of the earl's retainers and kin, but when the king turned to Bamborough--where the earl was encamped--he had less luck and had to make do with a siege. Earl Robert removed himself one night with some retainers, however, and made his way towards Tynemouth; he had the bad luck to be captured, though, and William thus was able to use the threat of the blinding of his prisoner to reduce the besieged castle at Bamborough:

When the king came back he ordered Earl Robert of Northumbria to be seized and taken to Bamborough, and both his eyes to be put out, unless those who were within would give up the castle. His wife and Moræl, who was his steward and his kinsman, too, were holding it. Through this scheme the castle was then given up, and Moræl entered the king's court; and through him were discovered

many people, both clerics and lay, who had been instigators of rebellion against the king, some of whom the king had ordered to be reduced to captivity before that time. And afterwards, he ordered it to be announced very pre-emptorily all over this country that all those who held land of the king must be at court in season if they wished to be entitled to the king's protection. And the king ordered Earl Robert to be brought to Windsor and to be kept in the castle there.<sup>17</sup>

The regular attendance of all nobles at court was a means of keeping an eye on the major figures and potential rivals for power, and of sounding out loyalty and potential conspiracies. It therefore constituted a chief method of controlling the powerful landholders, and Robert's refusal to attend was both an attack on the king's authority to demand attendance and an important indicator that a larger power struggle was afoot. It is crucial to note that William used his response to this crisis--not just as a means of defusing this particular situation--but as a way of ensuring that, in the future, all nobles would be cowed into attendance at the court, which substantially reduced the risk of insurrection.

The next year King William asserted his authority by making good such threats of physical punishment and mutilation, and the broken bodies (and most especially the blinded and castrated William of Eu) produced through such acts served to underscore the power of the King, the futility (and, indeed, foolishness) of rebellion, and the guilt of the individual mutilated conspirators:

In this year King William held his court at Christmas at Windsor, and William, bishop of Durham, died there on New Year's Day. And on the Octave of the Epiphany, the king and all his councilors



were at Salisbury. There Geoffrey Bainard accused William of Eu, the king's kinsman, of having been a party to the treason against the king: and fought it out with him, and overcame him in a trial by battle, and when he was overcome, the king ordered his eyes to be put out and that afterwards he should be castrated. And his steward, called William, who was son to his mother's sister, the king ordered to be hanged on a gallows. Also, Odo, count of Champagne, the king's uncle, and many others were deprived of their lands there, and some men taken to London and there destroyed.<sup>18</sup>

The case of William of Eu is interesting to my discussion for a number of reasons. First of all, it is noteworthy that the king leaves William alive--and horribly mutilated--while he puts the steward of William to a quick--albeit ignoble--end. The living testimony to royal power, the futility of rebellion, and the treacherous sin of William provided through the text of his mutilated body served to broadcast a message which was not likely to be misinterpreted by its audience, and did so in a manner which may have been much more effective and long-lasting than that provided through the text of a corpse. Furthermore, the methods of mutilation--whereby the victim is deprived of both the power to function without assistance, and the power to procreate--are particularly significant in the context of a nobility whose two ends were to lead and to leave heirs.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the fact that William was convicted through the process of trial by combat--in which the guilt or innocence of the accused is made manifest through God's intervention on the side of justice--is derived from the same tradition as the process of trial by ordeal (discussed below and in Chapter Six), and is in fact founded upon

the same basic principle that the state of the spirit may be divined through some sign made manifest through the flesh.

The practice of torture and mutilation as a means to combat treason amongst the ruling classes is--in its basic functions and underlying principles--very similar to the practice of torture and mutilation as a means to control the populace at large. An interesting divergence, however, between these two methods of control occurs when the latter shifts from a coercive model to a propagandistic one; in both cases the texts of broken bodies produced through torture articulate a language of power, guilt, and identity, but the message of that language shifts in the latter case, as does the perception of such torture by its intended audience. We find such an interesting contrast between depictions of mutilations for criminal offenses in the adjacent entries 1124 and 1125. In both cases it is clear that times were hard economically, and we may infer that the king's government was using the public mutilation and execution of criminal offenders in order to affect varying forms of control over what must have been a disgruntled populace. What is interesting is the contrast between the methods involved, the ends towards which these methods were directed, and the public perception of these methods, which seems clearly recorded in the wildly divergent tones of the two annals. In the first case, the king's representatives seem to have been taking severe measures in order to combat rising crime in a troubled period, and also probably to reassert forcibly and graphically to a discontented public the nature and extent of royal power:

In the course of this same year after St. Andrew's Day before Christmas, Ralph Basset, and the king's thegns held a council at Hundcot in Leicestershire, and hanged more thieves than ever had



been hanged before; that was in all forty-four men in that little time: and six men were blinded and castrated. A large number of trustworthy men said that many were destroyed very unjustly there, but our Lord God Almighty that sees and knows all secrets-- he sees the wretched people are treated with complete injustice-- first they are robbed of their property and then they are killed. It was a very troublous year: the man who had any property was deprived of it by severe taxes and severe courts: the man who had none died of hunger.<sup>20</sup>

It is clear that public perception of this crackdown was largely negative, and that these iron-fisted measures simply served to reaffirm the popular perception that the common man was suffering at the hands of an unjust and greedy aristocracy. The measures taken the following year, although no less horrible, were far more cleverly considered, and seem to have proven immensely popular. In 1125, moneyers were mutilated for their "treasonous" "false-dealing"; according to the chronicler this was their just dessert, and the public was to understand that their mutilated bodies served as a testament to their "sin". In fact, this is a striking example because the government had found a convenient scapegoat for the economic problems which were clearly ravaging the country, and they made use of torture as a means to write a testimony of guilt upon the bodies of these scapegoats. In order to deflect public blame from the king, his agents, tax men, etc., the King chose publicly to blame, condemn, and mutilate the moneyers; their bodies then were on public display, both reinforcing the government accusation of their guilt, and reinforcing the public's opinion of the just retribution of the king, who seems through these texts powerful, just, and able to find the root of the economic troubles and to deal with it. Most striking of all is that this

gambit seems to have worked--judging from the rabid opinion of the Chronicler--which is especially notable in juxtaposition with the implicit criticism of royal power, justice, and taxation in the previous entry:

In this year King Henry sent to England from Normandy before Christmas, and ordered that all the moneyers who were in England should be mutilated--i.e. that each should lose the right hand and be castrated. That was because the man who had a pound could not get a pennyworth at a market. And Bishop Roger of Salisbury sent all over England and ordered them all to come to Winchester at Christmas. When they got there, they were taken one by one and each deprived of the right hand and castrated. All this was done before Twelfth Night, and it was done very justly because they had ruined all the country with their great false-dealing: they all paid for it.<sup>21</sup>

The removal of the offending member--that is, the right hand--of each moneyer is especially significant, as this is the hand with which they were presumed to have struck coins, and therefore that with which they were presumed to have sinned. There are several references in Anglo-Saxon law to exactly such mutilation of duplicitous moneyers, and the function of the lost hand as a sign was not lost upon the lawmakers: it was sometimes mounted above the door of the mint where the crime took place (see my discussion of the laws, below). Here the lawmakers are just as aware of the value of symbols of guilt and of power, although the symbols in this context take a somewhat different form. It is clear in such contexts that the possibility of a signifying function of torture and dismemberment was not always lost on either those who utilized such a function or those interpreted it in the annals. Not all acts of language



composed through torture, however, were self-conscious, and I move now to acts which have much to tell us about the nature of political and military power in Anglo-Saxon England, without necessarily having been composed to do so.

Accounts concerning the Danes often seem to imply that their acts of torture and mutilation upon helpless victims were indicative of their own blood-thirsty nature, and not representative of any sort of organized or recognizable system of morality, justice, or law. There is certainly an element of truth in this generalization: the terrible ransacking, looting, and pillaging wrought by the Northmen often seemed to follow few rules, except primitive principles concerning profit, glory, and personal satisfaction. Such a simplification, however--although understandable in the minds of their victims--is not altogether just. The Scandinavian raiders who so oppressed the English were, in a cultural and ethnic sense, amongst their closest kinsmen, and their systems of waging war, affecting treaties, exchanging hostages, etc., plainly derived from the same Germanic organizing principles as did the Anglo-Saxon systems. This is nowhere more clear than in the fact that the cultural systems both groups utilized were so similar that the various chroniclers did not take the trouble to explain concepts such as the exchange of hostages, the purchasing of peace with tribute money, and the like; these were self-explanatory social systems developed in the volatile Germanic north in order to allow for a certain measure of stability in negotiating settlements between constantly warring tribes, and both groups in question participated in systems derived from a common Germanic source. It is only fair to note that, as loathsome and unredeemingly evil as the chroniclers often found the Vikings,<sup>22</sup> it is occasionally remarked that they maintained their part of a particular bargain--at least for a while, and when it was in their interest to do so--which is about as much

as can be said for their Anglo-Saxon counterparts.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, some references to Danish actions might be seen to imply that they sometimes took Germanic customs and legal concepts extremely seriously, most notably the sanctity of the sworn oath and the important place of hostages in treaty negotiations and compliance.

A case in point involves the conquest of England under Swein, and the consequences of treaty violations in the aftermath of Swein's untimely death. In the entry for the year 1014 we are offered an example of the mutilation of hostages by Cnut, Swein's successor, in return for the breaking of faith by the English. During his rapid subjugation of the whole of England in 1013, Swein received hostages from each area in turn as it came under his control:

...And then at once Earl Uhtred and all the Northumbrians submitted to him, as did all the people of Lindsey, and then all the people belonging to the district of the Five Boroughs, and quickly afterwards all the Danish settlers north of Watling Street, and hostages were given to him from every shire...he then turned to Oxford, and the citizens at once submitted and gave hostages; and from there to Winchester, where they did the same...then King Swein turned from there to Wallingford, and so west across the Thames to Bath, where he stayed with his army. Then Ealdorman Æthelmær [of Devon] came there, and with him the western thegns, and all submitted to Swein, and they gave him hostages. When he had fared thus, he then turned northward to his ships, and all the nation regarded him as full king. And after that the citizens of London submitted and gave hostages, for they were afraid that he would destroy them.<sup>24</sup>



In the final line of this passage we are clearly informed that hostages were given in order to avoid destruction, and therefore stood in lieu of such destruction; in that sense they must also be recognized as a tangible sign of their captor's power. Hostage-giving was a common Germanic practice, and the understanding was that by surrendering and tendering such hostages, the citizens of each area in question were recognizing their debt of loyalty to Swein; the hostages stood in lieu of the ravagement which the country might have undergone without this symbolic act of fealty, and they stood to suffer the consequences if and when the agreed compact was broken. It did not take long to test the strength of these oaths. Swein died suddenly in 1014, leaving his young son Cnut in control of the Danish forces, but not in any position to lay proper claim to his inheritance. In the face of this power vacuum, the English aristocracy offered to come to terms with the currently disenfranchised King Ethelred, in return for certain oaths on his part that he should remedy his more unpopular ways. He agreed to these terms quickly enough, and with this agreement the English lords recognized him as king, and pronounced Cnut (and any Danish successors) outlaw. Cnut was forced to withdraw for the moment, but not before wreaking a frightful vengeance upon those hostages who had been given to his father as assurances of the loyalty of the English to their Danish king:

Then after Swein was dead, Cnut stayed in Gainsborough with his army until Easter, and he and the people in Lindsey came to an agreement that they would provide him with horses and then go out and ravage together. Then King Ethelred came there to Lindsey with his full force before they [Cnut and his followers] were ready, and it [Lindsey] was ravaged and burnt, and all the men who could be got at were killed; and Cnut put out to sea with

his fleet, and thus the wretched people [of Lindsey] were betrayed by him. And then he turned south till he reached Sandwich, and he caused to be put ashore the hostages who had been given to his father, and he cut off their hands, ears and noses.<sup>25</sup>

Just as these hostages were symbolic of the loyalty of the conquered provinces to Swein--and therefore also served as signs of his political and military power--the ritual dismemberment which they suffered when the treaties were broken signifies the guilt and faithlessness of their lords and kinsmen. Their broken bodies provided an unambiguous and easily intelligible text in which all who viewed them could plainly read this guilt, this greatest of Germanic sins; further--more abstractly--such mutilation serves as a horrifying testimony to the nature of the Germanic conception of oath, loyalty, and power relationships, as well as to the--momentarily--otherwise impotent rage of the ousted Cnut.

Such hostages as those given to Swein were not prisoners for ransom in the modern sense of the term "hostage"; they were, rather, high-ranking individuals exchanged between Germanic tribes or kingdoms to ensure adherence to peace-treaties, and were actually usually quite privileged members of the courts in which they stood hostage. They lived and often fought alongside those who were ostensibly their "captors", and in fact the day-to-day role of the hostage in a foreign court serves to underscore their symbolic value as a pledge of faith; indeed, this in many ways makes the text of their mutilation--in such cases of broken faith as that described above--particularly horrific, and simultaneously particularly eloquent.

But though such hostages were not prisoners kidnapped for ransom or political advantage--as we understand the term--this is not to say that Germanic peoples, and the Northmen in particular, did not



engage in such profitable practices of kidnapping. Indeed, the very centrality of the *wergild* in Germanic culture presupposes a mercantile understanding of the objective cash value of a man of any given social status. *Wergild* was a traditional system whereby inter-tribal feuds were staved off through the payment of blood-money (quite literally “man-money”) to the kin of a slain man for the death of that individual. By the time of Alfred and Guthrum the *wergild* system in Anglo-Saxon England had been codified and was quite complex, and clearly delineated the appropriate cash value for men of several different social ranks. Especially notable is the fact that Danish and English law both agree on the point of *wergild* in principle, and worked out a compromise between the specifics of their two systems in the laws of Alfred and Guthrum; this illustrates my point that a common social system was involved.<sup>26</sup> It is but a short step from acknowledging the cash equivalent of a particular category of man to perceiving the potential cash value of a prisoner, either through a payment of tribute from his kinsmen, or through the price which he fetches as a slave. While the Vikings were quick to grasp the economic opportunities of both the “cash hostage” and the slave market, it is with the former that I am at present primarily concerned.

The Danes made the cash hostage a regular part of their system of extorting tribute from the peoples whom they harassed, and they seem to have taken on faith that such a system was sensible and, by their reckoning, honorable. Indeed, they seem to have been enraged by any reticence to pay a demanded sum, and the results to the victim were as dire as that inflicted upon any oath-breaker, whether or not a promise to pay in fact had been extorted. I would argue that they understood the paying of such tribute--in a very real sense “man-money”--to be only just, and indeed the honorable course for the kinsmen of the prisoner.

An inversion of the *wergild* system, to be sure, but a rationally conceived and logically implemented one.

In the example of Archbishop Ælfheah we find a good illustration of how the “breaking of faith” in this cash hostage system could lead to the torture and murder of the victim, the torment and death of whom serve social and semiotic purposes not unlike those articulated by the dismembered bodies of the hostages tortured by Cnut. We learn in the annal for the year 1011 that the Northmen besieged and then entered Canterbury through the treachery of one Ælfmær, thereby capturing a number of persons, including the archbishop; after wreaking havoc they left, taking Archbishop Ælfheah with them.<sup>27</sup> According to the ASC account, the Vikings were enraged because the archbishop refused to promise them money, or indeed, to allow others to raise the sum which the Danes demanded for him (some 3,000 pounds).<sup>28</sup> Judging by this account, the bludgeoning to death of Ælfheah was not the result of the breaking of any explicit bargain struck for the price of his release, but rather the result of the violation of an implicit Germanic social contract whereby the king and thegns and kinsmen of a man of the archbishop’s social standing were expected and even morally obligated to redeem him through tribute. Here the Archbishop’s stubborn and--to the Vikings--inexplicable refusal to adhere to the terms of such a contract (or, more to the point, to allow others to adhere to it) ends in his martyrdom at the hands of his captors:

Then on the Saturday the army became greatly incensed against the bishop because he would not promise them any money, but forbade that anything should be paid for him. They were also very drunk, for wine from the south had been brought there. They seized the bishop, and brought him to their assembly on the eve of



the Sunday of the octave of Easter, which was 19 April, and shamefully put him to death there: they pelted him with bones and with ox-heads, and one of them struck him on the head with the back of an axe, that he sank down with the blow, and his holy blood fell on the ground, and so he sent his holy soul to God's kingdom.<sup>29</sup>

Though it has been argued that the raiding Northmen were a cruel and vicious people--and the description of Æltheah's death certainly confirms such a view--it must be remembered that, though cruel and vicious they could be, they were--first and foremost--a people interested in profit. There is no profit for the killers to be made from--no *wergild* to be paid for--a corpse (indeed, traditionally the killers would pay such a sum), and it is only when the Danes perceive that they will not turn a profit from the archbishop that they choose to murder him; they have, after all, kept him with them and alive for at least several months. Their rage at the time of his death (and the violent and ghastly nature of that death, which was born of that rage) stems from their perception of the breaking of a fundamental social contract bound up in conceptions of loyalty and oath, and not, in some senses, very different from that contract between Swein and the English which Cnut sought to avenge.

An account from another chronicle, however, indicates that the Danes were enraged because Ælfheah was breaking an explicit promise; according to this source, the archbishop buys himself some time by promising a payment he subsequently does not make:

...[the Danes] ill-treated them with chains and hunger and indescribable torments after their abominable fashion. Moved by human weakness he [the bishop] promised them money and fixed

a term for obtaining it, so that if he could not escape death by an acceptable ransom, he might meanwhile cleanse himself with frequent groans as a living sacrifice to be offered up to the Lord. Then, when all the appointed period was ended, the voracious Charybdis of thieving magpies summoned the servant of God, and quickly demanded of him with threats the payment of promised tribute. And gentle as a lamb, he said: "I am ready at once for anything you now dare to do to me; but, by the love of Christ, that I may deserve to become an example to his servants, I am untroubled today. It is not my wish, but dire poverty, that makes me seem a liar to you."<sup>30</sup>

In this case the rage of the Vikings is clearly a result of Ælfheah's breaking of his word; he seems--to use his own phrase--a liar to them. Here the actions of the Danes are even more clear and explicable, and may be more easily associated with those of Cnut. The word of the archbishop was coerced by threats and torments, of course, but just so was the treaty with the English extorted through force of arms by Swein. Indeed, the *wergild* and tribute systems are both predicated on the assumption that it is desirable and honorable to buy off the threat of violence by means of cash; an element of coercion is therefore a necessary part of the process, and in no way mitigates either a sworn oath or an implied promise. The understanding seems to be that one's word--or any social contract--is inviolate, regardless of volition, causality, or motive. As in other cases of treason, oath-breaking, and treaty-abrogation, the penalties are severe, and the text of this punishment is written publicly on the body of the victim for all to read.

The abuse and subsequent murder of Archbishop Ælfheah at the hands of his Danish captors is at once both an act of considerable



signification and an act of impotent rage, and in this regard it is similar to (and refines our understanding of) Cnut's ritual disfigurement of his father's hostages. In both cases the mutilated bodies of the victims reflect the dominance of the perpetrators over their victims, and thus articulate for all who saw these bodies a language of personal power, pain, and the consequences of faithlessness. The mutilation of Cnut's victims stood witness to the broken oaths of loyalty of the English. Ælfheah's broken body served as testament to the faithlessness of kinsmen who should have redeemed their own: either by the Viking standards of the inverted *wergild*, or through simple Germanic loyalty to kin, lord (he was a bishop) and thegn (he was an important servant to the king). In both cases these texts of rent flesh served as a warning to others of the consequences of breaking faith, and indeed as a simple testament to the terror of the Vikings. Horrific acts of mutilation and murder might well serve to intimidate others into surrender, tribute, and terms. In each case, however, the acts of bodily destruction also illustrate the rage and impotence of the perpetrators: Cnut because of his lack of real political power in his situation, Ælfheah's slayers because of their inability to convert their prisoner into the expected cash. But the political realities reflected by these acts--and the political messages which they convey--are utterly at odds. While Cnut exercised a power over his individual victims which was not reflected in his political and military strength--indeed, his act was a direct result of his lack of such power--Ælfheah's helplessness at the hands of the Danes accurately reflects the power balance current at that time in England. The English were powerless to protect Canterbury, and therefore the bishop, from the Viking army in the first place, they were unable subsequently to rescue him, and, indeed, they could not protect their own towns or countryside

from ravages which were reflected in the wounds suffered by the doomed Ælfheah.

In the example of Ælfheah, then, we may read the nature of a political reality as it is articulated incidentally through the bishop's plight. In other words, the body broken provides us with a text in this case, but it is a text composed with only the most rudimentary self-awareness: although the Vikings who put Ælfheah to death did so for a number of reasons (and among these was certainly a desire to strike fear into the hearts of the English, and to remind them of the terror and power of the Danes) they did not self-consciously set out to reflect the political realities of the England of their day in the bludgeoned corpse of Ælfheah, although, from our vantage point, they did achieve this. Their act was, fundamentally, one of frustration, and they certainly would have preferred to have their ransom and let the bishop go his way. The text of the political reality composed through this act of physical torment, then, although quite valid, is nonetheless incidental to the murder of Ælfheah. There are examples, however, of acts of torture, execution, and dismemberment--most especially decapitation--which seem self-consciously designed to utilize the body broken as a text which broadcasts a message of political power and status. Decapitation and castration provide particularly vibrant texts for the dissemination of such political messages, and the removal of the head, penis, and other tokens of power from a head of state, and the presentation of these same artifacts to his successor, provides an easily intelligible public expression of the nature of the political and military power shift involved. Such acts--and the tokens which they render--articulate a language of political and/or spiritual power, and it is not at all anachronistic to suggest that the writers of the annals understood the significance of such acts. Indeed, I use the term "token" quite



deliberately, as it echoes the poet of the Old English *Judith*, who uses the same term to discuss the significance of the decapitation of Holofernes (see Chapter Four for my discussion of literary examples of such languages of power as they are articulated through physical acts and tokens).

In the annals for the years 798 and 799 we have two interesting adjacent passages both having to do with the relationship between bodily torture and mutilation and the political power associated with these practices; further, these political and spiritual resonances are underscored in the latter passage, where the spiritual state of the “victim”--and the nature of his relationship with God--assures that the temporal power which dismembers him is overcome and the disfigurement itself is undone. This manifestation of divine power explicates the hierarchy of power relationships which acts of torture, dismemberment, and execution articulate in these annals. The first passage records the subjugation of Kent by the Mercians under Cenwulf. The mutilation which the king of the people of Kent suffers at the hands of the Mercians is not merely an exercise in cruelty (such acts were common enough, and hardly bear special mention), nor is it simply an act of political pragmatism, designed to ensure that he could never return to power (it would have been simple enough to put him to death). No, this case is significant enough to have been recorded by a number of chroniclers, all of whom agree on the basic facts of the mutilation, and at least one of which seems aware of the political implications of this act of dismemberment. The disfigurement which Præn suffers at the order of Cenwulf clearly explicates the balance of power between the two kings, and the total subjugation of the former by the latter. This personal subjugation, moreover, accurately reflects the power which Cenwulf now wields over the domains formerly in the grasp of Præn:

In this year Cenwulf, king of the Mercians, ravaged the people of Kent and of the Marsh, and they seized Præn their king and brought him in fetters into Mercia.<sup>31</sup> ...and they had his eyes put out and his hands cut off.<sup>32</sup>

The hands of a king represent his strength, his power; it is with these hands that he might grip his sword in battle, or his scepter in peace. His eyes represent his wisdom, his ability to "see" and understand metaphorically as well as literally, and without which he is dependent upon others to lead him, he who was accustomed to leading.<sup>33</sup> Cenwulf has taken these physical powers from Præn, and their metaphorical equivalents with them, and the text of Præn's broken body serves as a reminder that Cenwulf has taken these powers unto himself. The second passage records the mutilation and banishment of Pope Leo by his enemies, and his subsequent miraculous recovery:

In this year the Romans cut out Pope Leo's tongue and put out his eyes and banished him from his see; and then immediately afterwards he could, with God's help, see and speak and was again pope as he had been before.<sup>34</sup>

Just as a king's power rests in his hands, so does a pope's power reside in his tongue, in his ability to speak and interpret God's law. Pope Leo's mutilation, therefore, provides an exact ecclesiastical equivalent to the secular example of Præn, and in each case the physical disfigurement of the body of the individual involved reflects their loss of the analogous political powers which their lost organs represent. In Leo's case, however, the power of the divine asserts itself over that of the temporal,



and he is restored, physically and politically, literally and metaphorically; this restoration is itself an act which signifies the realities of a power hierarchy, as such a reversal reiterates the strength of God over man, and by extension, that of the ecclesiastical over the secular, and that of the pope over temporal lords. Further, this incident offers an interesting example of attitudes towards the relationship between the nature of the physical body and that of the spirit, such as is manifested temporally in the ritual of the ordeal (see below) and divinely in the fire of judgment model (see Chapter Six).

While blinding and other forms of dismemberment can serve to signify graphically the nature of power relationships and power transfers, the act of decapitation is a particularly eloquent manner through which such realities may be articulated. We find a clearly explicated relationship between decapitation and the transfer of political power in the subjugation of Wales by Harold and Tostig in 1063. In this case the Welsh recognize the political and military realities of their situation, and they therefore turn on their king, Griffith, beheading him and presenting the severed head to Harold as a token of their recognition of his military power, and of the transfer of political authority (this account is from the "E" chronicle):

In this year Earl Harold and his brother Earl Tosti went into Wales with both a land force and a naval force and subdued the country. And that people gave hostages and surrendered, and then went out and killed their king, Griffith, and brought his head to Harold who appointed another king for them.<sup>35</sup>

The "D" chronicle is even more explicit in associating the severed head of the defeated Welsh king with other tokens of power which are

presented to the victorious English king in order to represent symbolically the transfer of political power from the dead Griffith to Edward, the political figurehead which the act of decapitation was meant to appease. Of particular note in this context is the burning of the royal residence and the ships--the head-place and the signs of military power--which prefigures the two-fold removal of the head of state: the literal removal of King Griffith through his execution, and the symbolic removal and presentation of his head to Edward; this act signifies the removal of one head of state in exchange for another. Most significant in this passage is that the head is only one symbol of the exchange of power, along with the ship's head, and other symbols of authority (see my discussion of the linguistic significance of such tokens, in Chapters Three and Four, below). The fact that the head is equated with other symbols of royal authority is particularly revealing, as it supports my reading of the text of this act: the presentation of the head of Griffith to Edward--along with the presentation of other tokens of authority--represents the transfer of political power, and therefore the act of decapitation itself, the necessary precursor to such a ritualistic act of fealty, articulates a language of political power. Along with the transfer of authority, however, comes a concurrent transfer of royal identity; here an English king is recognized as politically and personally equivalent to his Welsh predecessors. We might note how the Welsh agree to give Edward his due just as it had been rendered to "any other king" before:

In this year after Christmas Earl Harold went from Gloucester to Rhuddlan, which belonged to Griffith, and there he burnt the residence and the ships and all the equipment which belonged to them; and he put him to flight. And then at Rogationtide Harold



went with ships from Bristol round Wales, and that people made peace and gave hostages. And Tosti went against them with a land force and they subdued the country. But in the same year in autumn King Griffith was killed on 5 August by his own men because of the fight he fought against Earl Harold. He was king over all the Welsh, and his head was brought to Earl Harold, and Harold brought it to the king, and the figurehead of his ship and the ornaments with it. And King Edward entrusted the country to the two brothers of Griffith, Blethgent and Rigwatta, and they swore oaths and gave hostages to the king and the earl, promising that they would be faithful to him in everything, and be everywhere ready on water and on land, and likewise pay such dues from that country as before had been given to any other king.<sup>36</sup>

Acts of blinding, decapitation, and other forms of torture and dismemberment thus sometimes were utilized in order to formulate a language of political power which articulated the nature, distribution, and transfer of authority; such articulation was often--but by no means always--self-conscious. Torture is not merely a means of expressing political realities, however, and can serve a number of other functions, the primary one of which is fundamentally practical, although it certainly contains symbolic elements. Various acts of torture, execution, and dismemberment often served as the means by which such political realities were affected: for example, rivals or enemies could be removed from contention, and although the symbolic value of these acts is similar to that of those which we have discussed, signification in such cases is a secondary function of an act the primary purpose of which is to affect a political end.<sup>37</sup>

We turn now to an act of blinding which was carried out as a means to gain power in the 1030s. This act, in conjunction with a number of acts of politically-motivated torture and execution--and later associated and extremely symbolic acts of disinternment and the payment of *wergild*--all contribute to an on-going discourse of political power which prefigures that of the ritual decapitation of Griffith and the presentation of his head by Harold (Godwineson) to Edward almost thirty years later.<sup>38</sup> Of particular interest in the case of this example are the politically significant variations of the basic facts of the story which are implied by the different versions. The acts involved, as far as we can reconstruct them, both participate in the appropriation of power by Godwine and Harold (Harefoot), and simultaneously articulate a language of power which is concerned with just such political conflicts.

In the annal for 1036 we are told of the horrible fate of the young prince Alfred at the hands of Earl Godwine, who--according to this annal--was the leader of a faction which was determined that Harold, and not Alfred, should succeed the recently deceased King Cnut.<sup>39</sup> Although dastardly actions by Harold's minions towards potential rivals for the throne might be understandable--if deplorable--this version asserts that Alfred's reason for his journey to England was one of filial devotion, and not at all politically motivated, which makes his reception and his fate at the hands of Godwine (discussed below) seem as senseless as it is horrific:

In this year the innocent atheling Alfred, the son of King Ethelred, came into this country, wishing to go to his mother who was in Winchester, but Earl Godwine did not allow him, nor did the other men who had great power, because feeling was veering much towards Harold, although this was not right.<sup>40</sup>



Florence of Worcester is a bit more forthcoming about the state of Alfred's affairs prior to his trip to England, and his description of the many soldiers and multiple ships which accompanied the prince on his journey--as well as the indignation and concern of the English nobles--suggests that there might have been something of a political motivation behind Alfred's visit. Even the phrase Florence uses to describe the planned meeting--while not overtly ascribing to it any political intent--differs from that of the ASC in that it implies that the meeting had some planned agenda:

The innocent athelings Alfred and Edward, sons of Ethelred, formerly king of the English, joining to them many Norman soldiers and crossing with a few ships from Normandy, where they had dwelt with their uncle Richard for a long time, to England, came in order to confer with their mother, who was living in Winchester. This some men in power bore with indignation and concern, because, though it was not right, they were much more devoted to Harold than to them; and especially, it is said, Earl Godwine.<sup>41</sup>

In this version, the principal reason given for the visit is still that the princes wished to call upon their mother; but here Florence implies that they wished to visit their mother to achieve some specific end: note that, where the ASC version stated that Alfred wanted simply "to go to" his mother, Florence insists that the princes desired "to confer" with her. Although the implication of such a familial moot is not necessarily political, such a wording does assert that the reason for the meeting was more than an act of filial devotion: the sons were coming to discuss

some matter of importance with their mother the queen. What that matter might be is not made apparent, but the actions of Alfred's enemies imply that--if it were not political--it was perceived to be by Harold's faction. Other accounts, however, are much more explicit in detailing the specifics of the plots and counter-plots surrounding Alfred's demise, and in such a context the torment, dismemberment, and execution of Alfred and his retainers begin to make a kind of macabre sense. For example, the version of these events detailed in the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*--which is substantiated by the major Norman accounts of this episode--goes much further than Florence, ascribes a very explicit political intention to Alfred's journey to England, and goes so far as to assert that the entire episode was brought about through a conspiracy hatched by Harold in order to do away with his potential rivals.

According to this account, Harold was secretly anxious to move against Emma and her sons, but was not yet able to do so openly; he therefore devised a cunning plan whereby he might lure the unsuspecting princes to their deaths. The nature of this plan is particularly revealing, whether it is based upon the fact of Harold's treachery, or was devised as a testament to the innocence of Alfred: either way, the plot hinges upon the desire of the young prince to seize the throne. Regardless of the truth of other particulars of the case, this desire seems to have been based in some part upon fact. It is without doubt that Harold must have suspected--or at the very least strongly feared--such a desire on the part of the young princes, or he would not have gone through the trouble of capturing and torturing Alfred and his followers, a risky and potentially politically disastrous act. And, if we are to believe this account (and the Norman ones like it), Harold had good reason to suspect such a desire on the part of Alfred, who otherwise would not have fallen so easily into



Harold's trap. The plot described in this account involves a forged letter, ostensibly from Queen Emma to her two sons in Normandy; the letter plays upon the desire of the princes to capture the throne of England, and encourages them to come to the mother as quickly as possible in order to plan how this desire might best be achieved:

Emma, queen in name only, imparts motherly salutation to her sons, Edward and Alfred. Since we severely lament the death of our lord, the king, most dear sons, and since daily you are deprived more and more of the kingdom, your inheritance, I wonder what plan you are adopting, since you are aware that the delay arising from your procrastination is becoming from day to day a support to the usurper of your rule. For he goes round hamlets and cities ceaselessly, and makes the chief men his friends by gifts, threats and prayers. But they would prefer that one of you should rule over them, than that they should be held in the power of him who now commands them. I entreat, therefore, that one of you come to me speedily and privately, to receive from me wholesome counsel, and to know in what manner this matter, which I desire, must be brought to pass. Send back word what you are going to do about these matters by the present messenger, whoever he may be. Farewell, beloved ones of my heart.<sup>42</sup>

Having baited the trap, Harold and his faction were prepared for Alfred, and he and his men were quickly captured and tormented; the destruction of Alfred and his followers had the practical consequence that a prime rival to Harold's power was removed. Moreover--in such an overtly political context--their tortured bodies signified the power of Harold, Godwine, and their followers, the implausibility of Alfred's

claim to the throne, and the futility of Emma's scheming for the continued dominance of her line. Further, as Whitelock points out, the Norman sources saw these acts as an overt warning to Edward (and in fact the entire Norman aristocracy) to forego any claim to England;<sup>43</sup> thus the broken bodies of Alfred's troops, and--most especially--Alfred's own horrific blinding, served as visible tokens of political power in much the same way that the tortured bodies of traitors and political rivals described above served to signify similar messages.

What is of particular interest in the case of this episode is that there are multiple accounts thereof, that each account differs in some significant details, and that each does so--as Whitelock has indicated--because of specific political realities surrounding the composition of that particular account. We have then, in this example, three different, politically-motivated recensions which all describe varying perceptions of the same politically-charged acts of physical mutilation. Godwine is chief villain in the ASC account; Harold is not named as a co-conspirator in this annal, and indeed is merely alluded to as the one whom Godwine and his cronies have determined to support. The ASC also offers the least graphic account of the mutilation and torment of Alfred and his men, and suggests that Alfred may have lived for some time amongst the monks of Ely:

...But Godwine then stopped him and put him in captivity, and he dispersed his companions and killed some in various ways; some were sold for money, some were cruelly killed, some were put in fetters, some were blinded, some were mutilated, some were scalped. ...The atheling still lived. He was threatened with every evil, until it was decided to take him in bonds to Ely. As soon as



he arrived he was blinded on the ship, and thus blind he was brought to the monks, and he dwelt there as long as he lived.<sup>44</sup>

The Florence account agrees in many details with that of the ASC, and is even more specific in attributing the guilt of the matter to Godwine. Further, Florence numbers the following of Alfred at several hundred, which both adds to the magnitude of the horror of the act, and also reinforces our conception that Alfred had come to England in force for some political end. Florence is also much more graphic in his description of the mutilation of Alfred's followers, and indeed concerning the blinding of Alfred himself. Finally, in this account it is made clear that Alfred does not long survive in his mutilated state, although it is not explicitly claimed that he was put to death:

...[Godwine] placed him in close confinement; and of his companions some he dispersed, some he put in fetters and afterwards blinded, some he tortured by scalping and punished by cutting off their hands and feet; many he also ordered to be sold, and he killed by various and miserable deaths 600 men at Guildford. ...Then, by the orders of Godwine and certain others, the atheling Alfred was taken tightly bound to the island of Ely; but as the ship touched land, immediately, on board ship, his eyes were very cruelly torn out; and he was thus led to the monastery and given to the custody of the monks. There a short time afterwards he departed from this world....<sup>45</sup>

The account in the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* is the most graphic and informative of the three, although it does diverge from the other two accounts on more than one important point. Here Godwine's

role transforms from that of a cruel enemy--who makes no pretense of the loyalty which he should show to Alfred--to that of a Judas who makes a false oath of loyalty and betrays Alfred. It is politically expedient here for the author not to implicate Godwine overtly, but it seems rather unlikely that Harold could have so easily found and disarmed the sleeping soldiers if not for Godwine's complicity. Even if he did so, and his soldiers managed to disarm Alfred's men and manacle them without a fight, Godwine was, at this point, Alfred's sworn man, and was bound to rescue him or avenge him. As a result he is either a treacherous false-oath-maker or a cowardly oath-breaker, and either way he is at fault. It is most suspicious that Godwine comes away blameless in this account; it seems clear that he was involved, possible that he was an instigator from the beginning, and probable that he was a treacherous false-oath-maker who turned on the young and probably naive Alfred. This account is extremely specific and graphic, even down to the details of the time frame involved, the method of selecting victims, and the precise details of the method by which Alfred was blinded. We might note most especially that in this version Alfred is put to death after his tribulations. Also worthy of attention are the abusive terms with which the chronicler derides the torturers, and the comparison between Harold's executioners and pagans killing Christians:

...But when he was already near his goal, Earl Godwine met him and took him under his protection, and forthwith became his soldier by averment under oath. Diverting him from London, he led him into the town called Guildford, and lodged his soldiers there in separate billets by twenties, twelves and tens, leaving a few with the young man, whose duty it was to be in attendance upon him. And he gave them food and drink in plenty, and



withdrew personally to his own lodging, until he should return in the morning to wait upon his lord with due honour. But after they had eaten and drunk, and being weary, had gladly ascended their couches, behold, men leagued with the most abominable tyrant Harold appeared, entered the various billets, secretly removed the arms of the innocent men, confined them with iron manacles and fetters, and kept them till the morrow to be tortured. But when it was morning, the innocent men were led out, and were iniquitously condemned without a hearing. For they were all disarmed and delivered with their hands bound behind their backs to most vicious executioners, who were ordered, furthermore, to spare no man unless the tenth lot should reprieve him. Then the torturers made the bound men sit in a row, and reviling them beyond measure, followed the example of that murderer of the Theban legion, who first decimated guiltless men, though more mercifully than they did. For that utterly pagan ruler spared nine of the Christians and killed the tenth, but these most profane and false Christians killed nine of the good Christians and let the tenth go. That pagan, though he massacred Christians, nevertheless ordered that they should be beheaded on an open plain unfettered by bonds, like glorious soldiers. But these, though they were in name Christians, were nevertheless in actions totally pagan, and butchered innocent heroes with blows from their spears bound as they were, like swine. Hence all ages will justly call such torturers worse than dogs, since they brought to condemnation the worthy persons of so many soldiers not by soldierly force but by their treacherous snares. Some, as has been said, they slew, some they placed in slavery to themselves; others they sold, for they were in the grip of blind greed, but they kept a few loaded with

bonds to be subjected to greater mockery.... The royal youth, then, was captured secretly in his lodging, and having been taken to the island called Ely, was first of all mocked by the most wicked soldiery. Then still more contemptible persons were selected, that the lamented youth might be condemned by them in their madness. When these men had been set up as judges, they decreed that first of all both his eyes should be put out as a sign of contempt. After they prepared to carry this out, two men were placed on his arms to hold them meanwhile, one on his breast, and one on his legs, in order that the punishment might be more easily inflicted on him...he was held fast, and after his eyes had been put out, most wickedly slain....<sup>46</sup>

Although the three accounts of Alfred's demise differ in some important details and in the amount of development, in all three it is clear that Alfred and his men were done away with for two primary reasons: to remove a potential rival and thereby consolidate Harold's power, and simultaneously to articulate that power. At the same time that the destruction of an enemy strengthens the position of a leader, it also serves as both a warning to other rivals and as an assurance to that leader's subjects. What remains, then, is to discuss the reasons for the particular methods of disposal, and to examine the specific details available from each of the three accounts. The ASC account, with the exception of specific references to blinding and to scalping (discussed below), does not offer us a great deal of additional information through which we might begin to reconstruct the significance of these particular practices.

From the examples which we have already encountered it is clear that blinding--like decapitation--was often used in overtly political



contexts, and for highly symbolic reasons; this annal does little to illuminate such agendas, however. Florence's account offers much more intriguing detail, and it is here that we may be able to extend our knowledge concerning the significance of practices of torture in this context. It is interesting that Florence relates binding and blinding in the case of Alfred and those of his men who were likewise tortured. The helplessness wrought through both practices is particularly significant in the context of a military and political leader. It is also noteworthy that both Florence and the ASC chronicler refer to the scalping of some of the prisoners; though gruelling, this practice is not necessarily life threatening, and would provide horrendous and permanent scarring which would articulate the power of Harold and the powerlessness of Alfred for many years after the event. Although it is doubtful that many would survive the loss of their hands and feet, and thereby provide such a message over a period of time, it is interesting that Florence refers to this particular practice as "punishment". The implication is that it is the victims--Alfred's loyal retainers--who have sinned, and not Harold; this unconscious allusion to guilt (by a chronicler otherwise most sympathetic to the victims of this massacre) underscores the reality of the political situation wrought through Alfred's removal: Harold--through his consolidation of royal power--is king, with the right to judge and punish.

Finally, in the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, we may divine quite a bit of information which helps us to understand the author's perspective concerning torture--and, more importantly--concerning the significance of that torture. It is especially noteworthy that this author defines noble and ignoble means of execution, as well as providing us with a possible way of interpreting the act of the blinding of Alfred. The author seems most disturbed--not by the massacre itself--but rather by the

unacceptable means of execution. To be decapitated while unencumbered by bonds is--to this writer--a noble mode of death, while to die in chains "like swine" is utterly unworthy of a hero. We have noted the significance of decapitation in a political context, and these sentiments serve to illuminate somewhat further the nature of this particular practice, which seems from this example somehow related to the warrior and/or ruling class. I have also discussed at length the potential significance of the act of blinding; in this account such significance is further explicated through the author's explanation of the intent of Alfred's judges: his eyes were put out "as a sign of contempt". This assertion offers us an important textual reference to the signification of acts of torment and dismemberment; such an understanding may give us an indication--a template, as it were--of how to read other such signs (I discuss similar indicators in *Judith* in Chapter Four). These direct interpretations of the valence of such signs are rare, and therefore are notable.

Interestingly, just as the acts of Alfred's blinding and the torment and dismemberment of his followers signify the realities of the political power struggle in which they took part, Godwine's later act of atonement for his part in these atrocities is likewise a richly multivalent act. According to the annal of Florence of Worcester for 1040, King Hardacnut "burned with great anger" at Godwine and others "because of the killing of his brother Alfred"; Godwine, however, disavowed blame, claiming that he followed the orders of "his lord King Harold". This plea of loyalty is suspect, of course, as Harold was not yet king, and Alfred should have been due Godwine's loyalty before Harold. Maintaining his innocence in any case, Godwine nevertheless gives Hardacnut an elaborate and costly gift--which seems *wergild* in fact, if not in name--thereby tacitly admitting his guilt by recompensing the kin



of the slain prince. This gambit was successful, Hardacnut was appeased, and Godwine remained a key player in Anglo-Saxon politics. Hardacnut's acceptance of Godwine's offering illustrates the tension between the fiction of family ties and the realities of power politics in Anglo-Saxon England. Hardacnut seems to have felt real family loyalty towards his half-brothers: he took the assault on Alfred as that upon a kinsman, adopted Edward into his household, and almost certainly named him as his heir.<sup>47</sup> In such a case it seems paradoxical--and perhaps more than a little mercantile--that Hardacnut allowed himself to be appeased through the payment of *wergild*. He may have done so because of the political realities involved; for the practical reason that Godwine had immense popular support, and was a wealthy and powerful adversary. This is the point of the *wergild* system: to allow practical economic and political realities to take precedence over the emotional bond between kinsman, the desire for blood-vengeance, and the assertion of personal and clan prestige and power through acts of revenge. Often the actual feeling for a kinsman was probably slight, or even hostile; but blood-feud was a way of asserting the individual's and the clan's power. The paying of *wergild* allowed for a public ceremony which likewise affirmed such power and prestige, and offered an economic advantage which served--symbolically or practically--to replace the contribution of the lost member of the clan to the wealth and well-being of the whole.

Hardacnut was undoubtedly wise to accept this tribute and to dispense with further vengeance; Godwine was a powerful figure (as his gift, indeed, was doubtless meant to suggest), and even Hardacnut's successor Edward, who harbored deep-seated animosity towards Godwine, was ultimately unable to wreak any lasting vengeance upon him.<sup>48</sup> Hardacnut probably felt no such personal hatred towards

Godwine, but in any case this conflict underscores the political reality of feud and *wergild* in Anglo-Saxon culture: power and prestige were the currencies of exchange, not personal sentiment, and Godwine's gift to Hardacnut was designed to signify just such issues of power and prestige:

But Godwine gave to the king for his friendship a skilfully made galley, having a gilded prow, and furnished with the best tackle, handsomely equipped with suitable weapons and 80 picked soldiers, each of whom had on his arms two gold armlets, weighing 16 ounces, wore a triple mail-shirt, a partly gilded helmet on his head, and had a sword with a gilded hilt fastened round his loins, and a Danish battle-axe rimmed with gold and silver hanging from his left shoulder, and in his left hand a shield, whose boss and studs were gilded, in his right hand a spear which in the English language is called *ætgar*. Moreover, he swore to the king, with the ealdormen and the more important thegns of almost the whole of England, that it was not by his counsel nor his will that his brother was blinded; but that his lord King Harold had ordered him to do what he did.<sup>49</sup>

The public, ceremonial presentation of such a lavish and valuable gift as that which Godwine presents to Hardacnut is symbolic on a number of levels. First, its display of material value serves as a public act of penance and atonement on the part of Godwine. Second, it reinforces the value of the person of Alfred; it is an ornate ship, perhaps reminiscent of and in lieu of a burial ship. This ostentatious representation of Alfred's worth is especially significant in juxtaposition to Harold's body pulled unceremoniously from the grave and chucked in



the swamp. Third, peace and forgiveness at such a great cost further enhance the reputation of the power and prestige of Hardacnut personally, and by extension that of his family and line. Finally, the ability to pay such a price without financial ruin, while maintaining that he is innocent of any crime, also serves implicitly and perhaps quietly self-consciously to reinforce Godwine's reputation as a man of seemingly boundless wealth, power, and prestige.

While Godwine thus escaped the wrath of Hardacnut, the king attempted to pass judgment and wreak vengeance upon the body of the dead Harold, whom he held responsible both for the death of Alfred and for the usurpation of his own power in England.<sup>50</sup> The body of the dead King Harold was disinterred and thrown into a marsh by order of the new King Hardacnut. Just as Godwine's gift to Hardacnut serves a much more symbolic than practical purpose, Hardacnut's treatment of the corpse of his predecessor (and half-brother!) is a particularly significant act, as the disinternment and defilement of the body could serve no practical purpose: Harold could not be rendered more dead, and in any case Hardacnut was, at this point, firmly established as king. The only reasons which may be ascribed to such an act are symbolic, and comprise messages of judgment, vengeance, and power. The act of desecrating the corpse of Hardacnut's usurper, who was also the torturer and slayer of his brother Alfred, is a politically significant act in much the same way as the decapitation and presentation of the head of a rival king serves to enunciate clearly the power and position of the victorious king, as well as the powerlessness and vulnerability (in life or in death) of his hapless foe. The ASC account offers little detail, so I turn to the record of Florence of Worcester, which agrees with that of the ASC with much elaboration (note especially the role of the executioner in this episode):<sup>51</sup>

...but during the time of his rule he did nothing worthy of royal power. For, as soon as he began to reign, being not unmindful of the injuries which his predecessor King Harold, who was reputed his brother, had done either against him or against his mother, he sent to London Ælfric, archbishop of York, Earl Godwine, Stir, the master of his household, Eadric his steward, Thronð his executioner, and other men of high position, and ordered the body of this Harold to be dug up and thrown into a marsh; and when it had been thrown there, he gave orders for it to be pulled out and thrown into the River Thames.<sup>52</sup>

It seems notable that Hardacnut's executioner was present at the disinternment, because this suggests that this act was meant to be seen as a posthumous judgment and sentence upon the body of Harold. In this way the desecration of Harold's body might be equated with forms of public execution, and might be seen to fulfill the same semiotic functions: just as the tokens of justice might include severed hands or heads, or disfigured bodies, the corpse of Harold--ripped from its hallowed grave and cast into a marsh--signifies his guilt and lawlessness, the justice of the new regime, and the political and personal power of his successor, who is able to enact vengeance upon his enemy. The fact that the body was then once more removed from its resting place and cast into the Thames suggests that Hardacnut was determined to make this act as public as possible, and wished the body to be seen by as many witnesses as possible; punishment, dishonor, and humiliation are not enough--in the contexts which we have examined--but must be made public in order to communicate guilt, power, and vengeance.



It is also of particular interest in the context of power politics, and in that of acts upon bodies which serve to signify the nature of such power, that Godwine was ordered to be present at this ceremony. In Florence's annal for 1040, the description of the disinternment and desecration of Harold's corpse, and the note that Godwine was in attendance, precedes the description of Godwine's lavish peace-offering to Hardacnut. Further, the phrasing with which Florence prefaces his account of that peace-offering begins "*Besides these things*, he burned with great anger against Earl Godwine..." (emphasis mine).<sup>53</sup> This wording implies that the reconciliation between Godwine and Hardacnut brought about through *wergild* did not take place until *after* the disinternment of Harold which Godwine was ordered to witness. The relationship between these two events may indicate a further political motive on the part of Hardacnut regarding Godwine, and it is certainly possible that we should perceive a causal link between these two episodes. It is at the very least noteworthy that the language of power articulated through the abuse of Harold's rotting corpse was wrought in the presence of (the soon to be penitent) Godwine.

Finally, although the chroniclers often seem aware of the symbolic value of acts of torture and execution, in this case it is clear that this event met with some measure of disapproval. The phrasing indicates that, in the course of a reign of one who wielded royal authority to no good end, the desecration of Harold's body was a particularly unworthy act. This disapproval may have stemmed from an aversion to the violation of the sanctity and sanctuary of consecrated ground--and the sacrilege inherent in disinternment--or it may simply have reflected a general disappointment in and disapproval of the reign of Hardacnut. In any case, it is clear that this act caught the attention of the popular imagination, which--considering Hardacnut's apparent disinclination to

appease his subjects in any manner--might have been at the heart of its symbolic function. As Stenton has pointed out, Hardacnut consolidated his own power and systematically attacked the regime and memory of his predecessor through a series of actions which culminated with the disinternment of Harold:

The prosecution of Godwine and Lyfing was part of a general demonstration against Harold and all his works, of which the disinternment and ignominious disposal of the king's corpse was the supreme event.<sup>54</sup>

Godwine was a prominent member of Harold's court, and that member most closely associated by most chroniclers with the conspiracy against Alfred; Lyfing was bishop of Worcester and, according to Stenton, also held accountable by Hardacnut for Alfred's fate.<sup>55</sup> Most important of all, Hardacnut felt that Harold was a usurper, had broken faith when he used the opportunity of his regency to seize the throne of England, and had murdered Alfred in cold blood to consolidate that claim.<sup>56</sup> Thus Hardacnut's acts against these figures may be seen as a concerted effort both to draw attention to and to punish the crimes committed by Harold and his regime; Harold was--in Hardacnut's estimation--ultimately responsible for these crimes, and--being dead--was vulnerable to this campaign against his memory. The disinternment and desecration of Harold's corpse thus served as the final culmination of this campaign, a climax which was necessarily a symbolic act of judgment, as Harold was beyond any other temporal act of vengeance. It was also the final and culminating act of a series of episodes in which a language of political power, justice, and vengeance was played out through physical actions--the blinding of Alfred, the torture and



dismemberment of his retainers, the disinternment of Harold, the act of paying *wergild* performed by Godwine--which individually might seem to offer a confused cacophony of violence, greed, and bribery, but which (examined in concert) actually contribute to an intelligible narrative concerning the nature of power in this cultural context, the consolidation of such power, and related issues concerning social mechanisms for exacting judgment and vengeance.

Indeed, the desire for such mechanisms of justice and social control lies at the heart of certain Anglo-Saxon practices of judicial torture and execution, and the message of power conveyed through the proper implementation of these practices was meant to be one of assurance and stability. Although the annals often complain of the wanton cruelty of individuals and rulers, they also lament those who do not strictly enforce the law. Hence, those codes and practices which we see as barbaric and without any positive value clearly were perceived of as positive--in limited circumstances and justly and equally applied to all--by some of the chroniclers. Though such a positive perception of stern punishment might seem perplexing to modern readers, this is not an isolated incidence of such a conception; see my evidence in Chapters Three, Four, and Five that in an Old English poetic context pain and torture are perceived as good in terms of the ends which they attain. Here "strict justice" is recommended as good (in opposition to the weakness of a king who is too lenient), and this should not seem too far fetched in the cultural context of the harsh laws and swift retribution of a vengeful God who shows his love for his children through stern discipline.

In the annals for the years 1137, 1140, and 1154, we are presented with descriptions of good and bad rulers, weak and strict justice, and the proper and improper use of harsh physical treatment. It is especially

interesting to note that, in the first entry, it is the very weakness and inability to enforce harsh penalties to the full extent of the law on the part of King Stephen which leads to abuses of the law--and to horrendous abuses of judicial and penal torture--on the part of his lawless, oath-breaking subordinate lords. Once they realize that they have nothing to fear from Stephen, these evil men run rampant across the country, paradoxically using to evil ends the very practices of torture and retribution which such traitors should have feared at the hands of a just and powerful king. The message of this chronicle is that the threat of stern punishment in the hands of a good judge is a powerful tool of justice, mercy, and compassion for the weak and the poor who live by the law, and who are entitled to expect protection from that law. It is the responsibility of a king to utilize these tools of justice to enforce such laws, else these tools might be perverted to wicked uses:

When the traitors understood that he was a mild man, and gentle and good, and did not exact the full penalties of the law, they perpetrated every enormity. They had done him homage, and sworn oaths, but they kept no pledge; all of them were perjured and their pledges nullified.... Then, both by night and day they took those people that they thought had any goods--men and women--and put them in prison and tortured them with indescribable torture to exhort gold and silver--for no martyrs were ever so tortured as they were. They were hung by the thumbs or by the head, and corselets were hung on their feet. Knotted ropes were put round their heads and twisted till they penetrated to the brains. They put them in prisons where there were adders and snakes and toads, and killed them like that. Some they put in a "torture-chamber"--that is in a chest that was



short, narrow and shallow, and they put sharp stones in it and pressed the man in it so that he had all his limbs broken. In many of the castles was a "noose-and-trap"--consisting of chains of such a kind that two or three men had enough to do to carry one. It was so made that it was fastened to a beam, and they used to put a sharp iron around the man's throat and his neck, so that he could not in any direction either sit or lie or sleep, but had to carry all that iron. Many thousands they killed by starvation. I have neither the ability nor the power to tell all the horrors nor all the torments they inflicted upon wretched people in this country: and that lasted the nineteen years while Stephen was king, and it was always going from bad to worse....<sup>57</sup>

Acts of torture, dismemberment, and execution articulate a language of power in such a context, but this language speaks of the weakness of the central governing structure, the powerlessness of the common people, and the licentiousness of the bold, strong, and wicked. Such a message is clearly at odds with that signified through the acts (or, indeed, the mere implicit threat of acts) of justice under Stephen's successor. It is worthwhile to compare the desolation and despair described in the previous passage, clearly related in the minds of the chroniclers with Stephen's weakness, with the "strict justice" and "awe" associated with Henry, Stephen's successor. In the following passage Stephen is perceived of as stronger due to his association with Henry, and we might note especially the relationship which the chronicler divines between "love" and "strict justice":

Then he went with a big army into England, and won castles, and the king went against him with a much bigger army, and all the

same they did not fight, but the archbishop and the wise men went between them and made an agreement that the king should be liege lord and king as long as he lived and after his day Henry should be king; they should be as father and son; and there should always be peace and concord between them, and in all England. This, and all the other conditions that they made, the king and the count and the bishops and the earls and powerful men all swore to keep. Then the count was received at Winchester and in London with great honour, and all did him homage, and swore to keep the peace: and it soon became a good peace, such as there never was before. Then the king was stronger than he had been till then, and the count went overseas and everybody loved him because he exacted strict justice and made peace.<sup>58</sup>

This account of the merits of Henry's stern discipline is continued in the annal for 1154, which describes his ascent of the throne; of special note is the "great awe" in which he was held, and the power with which such awe imbued him. The chronicler does not mention any specific act of "strict justice" to which we might attribute such awe (which is noteworthy in juxtaposition with the graphic descriptions of the abuses under the weak Stephen), and yet it is clear in this context that such awe rest upon the threat of just such retribution:

In this year King Stephen died, and was buried where his wife and son were buried at Faversham, the monastery they had founded. When the king was dead, the count was overseas, and nobody dared do anything but good to another because they were in such great awe of him....<sup>59</sup>



The contrast between the perceptions of ruling illustrated in the comparison of these passages is notable in the context of my larger discussion. The contrast between weak and strict rule--and between proper and improper implementation of physical punishment in order to maintain political control and to ensure equal justice under law--underscores a tension which harkens back to chronicler of annal 1087. That writer, while implicitly condemning that of William's cruelty which seemed attributable to his avaricious nature, remarks with no little respect as to the peaceful benefits born of William's strict justice: a man could walk anywhere in the kingdom with a bosom full of gold with no fear, and the violent settling of disputes and harassment and lawlessness of all kinds were harshly curtailed. This is a model of king as law-giver and dispenser of justice which is somewhat at odds with earlier Germanic models (both of leadership and of dispute resolution), but which clearly resonates with a Christian conception of the role of God as stern father and harsh judge, who shows his love for his children through strict and fair justice and punishment. In addition, the notion of the value of properly applied physical punishment in the temporal realm--and the relationship between the body and the soul of the individual involved--also resonates well with the theological and philosophical construct of spiritual punishment in the afterlife--which utilizes a physical metaphor to explicate this self-same relationship between the body and the soul--which I discuss in poetic contexts at length in Chapter Six.

It is with just such a relationship between the nature of the soul and the state of the flesh that the Germanic legal conception of the ordeal is concerned: flesh is tainted through the sin of the spirit, while an innocent soul is reflected through uncorrupted flesh. I will discuss

the legal and philosophical basis for this tradition at length in the second part of this chapter, and will examine especially the role of the ordeal in Anglo-Saxon law, and how this role brings together literary, legal, and philosophical traditions. For the moment, however, I would like to focus upon a few excerpts from the historical records which illustrate the Anglo-Saxon conception of the relationship between physical state and spiritual nature. This relationship is a commonplace of Anglo-Saxon theological and poetic writing, and it is of particular interest that such a philosophical construct is also reflected in historical and legal works.

There are two related forms of Anglo-Saxon historical records which explicitly manifest such a conception of the causal relationship between bodily appearance and spiritual guilt or innocence. Punitive acts of torture and dismemberment implicitly manifest such a relationship--as I have endeavored to explain--but in those cases the state marks the guilt of an individual upon the tablet of the flesh of that individual. In the cases to which I now turn, the spiritual state of the individual is reflected through divine intervention in the mirror of the flesh. The records in which I am interested have to do with individuals the innocence of whom is proven through their unblemished flesh which is unscathed by the trial by ordeal, and with saints, the sanctity of whom is proven through their uncorrupted bodies which are unmarked by death. An example from the annals of Winchester should suffice to illustrate the Anglo-Saxon conception of the utility of the trial by ordeal in manifesting the guilt or innocence of the accused. In this particular case, Queen Emma undergoes the ordeal of the red-hot plowshares in order to prove her innocence (the crime is not recorded) to her son. It is significant that in this example Emma does not seem to feel the heat, nor does she seem aware of undergoing the ordeal at all; this could hardly have been the common experience, but neither is it the test of the ordeal:



it must be merely indicative of her extreme piety. The point of the ordeal is the effect of the torment upon the flesh, which then indicates the state of the soul; while in actual legal practice this effect was looked for after a stipulated period (and would normally have to do with the presence or absence of infection; see discussion, below), here the annalist has taken license for the sake of narrative brevity. The purpose of the ordeal is underscored by the fact that Emma demands to be taken before her son, so that he may read her innocence in the text of her unblemished feet:

The queen was brought at the king's command from Whewell to Winchester and throughout all the night preceding her trial she kept her vigil at the shrine of St. Swithin.... On the appointed day the clergy and the people came to the church and the king himself sat on the tribunal. The queen was brought before her son and questioned whether she was willing to go through with what she had undertaken.... Nine glowing ploughshares were placed on the carefully swept pavement of the church. After these had been consecrated by a short ceremony the queen's shoes and stockings were taken off; then her robe was removed and her cloak thrown aside, and, supported by two bishops, one on either side, she was led to the torture. The bishops who led her were weeping and those who were much more afraid than she were encouraging her not to fear. Uncontrollable weeping broke out all over the church and all voices were united in the cry "St. Swithin, O St. Swithin, help her!" If the thunder had pealed forth at this time the people could not have heard it, with such strength, with such a concourse of voices did the shout go up to Heaven that St. Swithin should now or never hasten to her aid. God suffers violence and St.

Swithin is dragged by force from Heaven. In a low voice the queen offered this prayer as she undertook the ordeal: "O God, who didst free Susanna from the wicked elders *and the three youths from the fiery furnace, from the fire prepared for me deign to preserve me* through the merits of St. Swithin." [Italics mine] Behold the miracle! With the bishops directing her feet, in nine steps she walked upon the nine ploughshares, pressing each one of them with the full weight of her whole body; and though she thus passed over them all, she neither saw the iron nor felt the heat. Therefore she said to the bishops: "Am I not to obtain that which I especially sought? Why do you lead me out of the church when I ought to be tried within it?" For she was going out and yet did not realize that she had gone through the ordeal. To which the bishops replied as well as they could through their sobs: "O lady, behold, you have already done it; the deed is now accomplished which you think must yet be done." She gazed and her eyes were opened; then for the first time she looked about and understood the miracle. "Lead me," she said, "to my son, that he may see my feet and know that I have suffered no ill."<sup>60</sup>

Emma's experience is indicative of the purpose of the ordeal: the guilt or innocence of the accused is made manifest--through divine intervention--upon their flesh. In Emma's case, her unblemished body acts as a sign which tells of the nature of the innocent and pure soul of the accused. Such signs are directly related to the uncorrupted relics of saints sometimes described in the annals; the holiness of the individuals involved is made manifest through their spotless flesh. (This relationship between spiritual purity and bodily integrity is related to fire of judgment model discussed in Chapter Five, wherein the state of the



individual soul on doomsday determines the material effects of the flames upon that individual.) This relationship between the body and the soul is often interpreted metaphorically, but the fact that such examples occur in Anglo-Saxon historical records as well as ecclesiastical and literary works reminds us that--in an Anglo-Saxon cultural context--such a relationship was understood in practical as well as metaphorical terms. Indeed, considering the centrality of the trial by ordeal to the Anglo-Saxon system of jurisprudence, such an understanding is to be expected. I include from the ASC two examples pertaining to the undecayed relics of saints; I include further references in the notes. It is particularly revealing that the chronicler who recorded the first entry noted that Oswald's holiness was made known in many ways; surely the uncorrupted state of his relics was understood as one of these ways:

In this year Oswald, king of the Northumbrians, was slain by Penda, the Southumbrian, at Maserfeld on 5 August, and his body was buried at Bardney. His holiness and miracles were afterwards made known in manifold ways throughout this island, and his hands are undecayed in Bamburgh.<sup>61</sup>

...In the same year the body of Wihtburh was found all sound and undecayed in Dereham, 55 years after she departed from this life.<sup>62</sup>

Like those records discussed earlier concerned with acts of punitive and political torture, these examples clearly illustrate an understanding of the semiotic function of the body as text which is closely related to literary constructions which utilize acts of torture and tortured bodies as signs to articulate a language of power and spiritual

nature. These holy bodies--like those broken bodies produced through punitive and political torture--articulate a language of power; while the earlier examples were largely concerned with a language of political power, however, these examples are concerned with a language of spiritual power. It is with the relationship between such spiritual power and the temporal power of the state to which we now turn in our discussion of the Anglo-Saxon laws concerning torture and ordeal. The concept of the ordeal--its philosophical basis, the Germanic traditions from which it evolved, and the judicial torture which replaced it--is intimately related to a wide spectrum of Old English literary works concerned with the nature of the relationship between the body and the soul, and so it is upon the ordeal that I will focus most of my attention in my discussion of the laws.



## Part II: Torture in Anglo-Saxon Law

Many Anglo-Saxon laws involve mutilation as penalties; such acts serve to dissuade the offender against further crimes, of course, and usually make such relapses potentially difficult, if not physically impossible. Further, such penalties render the body of the offender into a sign which signifies--not only that offender's personal guilt--but the power of the state and the force of the rule of law. Such examples remind us of the politically-motivated penalties of blinding, decapitation, and the like (examined in our discussion of Anglo-Saxon historical records), and they also are closely related philosophically to the concept of the trial by ordeal, in that the body of the individual involved is seen to manifest physically the nature of a spiritual reality. Thus, just as the wrongly accused are vindicated through the text of their unblemished flesh after having successfully undergone the ordeal and just as the guilty are indicted through the text of their corrupt flesh, the mutilated body of the convicted felon serves to articulate physically the moral turpitude of that felon. These criminal codes, then, serve to bridge the gap between the more politically-charged texts of the mutilation and dismemberment of traitors and political rivals, and the more spiritually-significant philosophy supporting the conceptual framework of the trial by ordeal. In all of these cases the body serves as a text, but the nature of that text varies according to the social functions and expectations involved in the cultural constructs of pragmatic political agendas, a system of jurisprudence which understands spiritual guilt and innocence to be physically quantifiable, and proscriptive criminal law codes.

Mutilation and dismemberment as criminal penalties appear in law codes throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, and continue to do so after the Conquest. Amongst the earliest of surviving examples are the laws

of Ine, ca. 688-694. These laws are of special interest, as they provided a basis for the very important laws of Alfred which followed them. Moreover, these laws offer us not only a very early record of the codification of such Germanic traditions as the *wergild* and the centrality of the freeman's oath, but also a glimpse into a very complex system of assessing the relationship between various crimes, their punishments (which often comprised mutilation or various forms of execution), and these same Germanic concepts. Thus, for instance, oaths and *wergild* values sometimes are combined in complex formulae for the determination of guilt. Further, this code offers an interesting insight into the social conditions, such as roving bands of marauders, clearly both foreign and domestic, which required such laws in the first place.<sup>63</sup> In the context of the laws which follow, it is worth noticing that penalties of dismemberment mentioned in this law code--while symbolic as well as punitive--are non-specific in their symbolism. That is to say, that although the criminal is punished for the crime through the pain of the torment, the loss of the use of the member in question, and through the life-long shame associated with the badge of sin with which that missing member brands the victim, that badge is only incidentally related to the specific crime involved. Although the offender's body acts as a text, in such a case, this text speaks generally about the crime of that offender, the punishment for that crime, and the power of the king who affected that punishment. However, the text does not indicate anything about the specific crime in question, which--as we shall see--is in stark contrast to some of the later law codes.

There are two entries within this code which specifically mention dismemberment, and both have to do with the punishment of criminal behavior on the part of a *ceorl*. The first has to do with infamy--or bad reputation, which is intimately related to the concept of personal honor



and the value of one's oath--and invokes a harsh sentence for an unspecified, but putatively habitual, crime, when the suspected criminal is finally caught in the act:

18. If a *ceorl* is often accused, and if at the last he is taken [in the act], his hand or foot is to be struck off.<sup>64</sup>

The second entry deals specifically with theft, and is likewise concerned with the common assessment of character, and with the perception of habitual crime:

37. The *ceorl*, who has often been accused of theft, and then at last is proved guilty at the ordeal or else in obvious guilt, is to have a hand or foot struck off.<sup>65</sup>

It is telling that these entries are so general in nature; not just the penalties, but the crimes themselves--and even the methods of ascertaining guilt--are somewhat vague. The laws of Ine are not only non-specific, however, but are at times contradictory; it is especially noteworthy that elsewhere within this same code it is made clear that a thief may be killed without *wergild*, or may--in fact--be put to death for his crime, if he cannot redeem himself through the payment of his *wergild*.<sup>66</sup> Thus the penalties for theft are somewhat open-ended, and although the acts of punishment signify issues of guilt and power, this signification is general and non-specific.

With the laws of Alfred, which were composed about a century later than those of Ine (ca. 871-899), we enter a context within which crime, penalty, and significance are all explicitly specified. In this code we find several examples of punitive mutilation which clearly are related

to the particular crime committed, make another offense of that kind difficult or impossible, and signify through their rending of the body of the offender the exact nature of the crime for which they were imposed. The first two crimes deal with theft and rape, respectively, and the third with slander; I will discuss the first two at this point, and leave the third until my examination of the importance of oaths and sworn testimony in Germanic tradition and Anglo-Saxon law. The first example concerns theft from a church; in this case the offender repays the value of the theft, plus a fine, and is required, furthermore, to forfeit a hand:

6. If anyone steals anything in church, he is to pay the simple compensation and the fine normally belonging to that simple compensation, and the hand with which he did it is to be struck off.<sup>67</sup>

It is particularly telling that the hand to be removed is that with which the offender committed the crime; this fact--in combination with the repayment of the theft and the additional fine, which is a punitive measure in and of itself--underscores the symbolic nature of this act of dismemberment. The pain of the penalty itself, combined with the permanent loss of the hand involved--most likely the dominant one--is clearly a punishment which will have an impact on the victim, as well as rendering that offender unlikely to be able to so transgress again. Further, however, the loss of the member with which the crime was committed is a symbolic act which produces upon the text of the body of the criminal a message of personal guilt and judicial power. The penalty for a slave who rapes another slave similarly conjoins a pragmatic penalty, which renders the guilty man unable to commit this crime again, with a symbolic act. This act renders the body of this man into a sign,



both of the nature of his own guilt, and of the penalty imposed by the law upon transgressors:

25.1 If a slave rape a slave-woman, he is to pay by suffering castration.<sup>68</sup>

In both of these cases, then, it is of particular and self-conscious significance that the punishment for each crime involves the removal of the offending member from the body of the transgressor.

We find a similarly eloquent example of how the language of mutilation may be articulated upon the flesh of the transgressor in the laws of Athelstan issued at Grately, Hampshire (ca. 924-939). In this case, the physical member of the accused represents his guilt or innocence on a number of levels: it serves to condemn or to acquit him at his trial. If he is condemned, the loss of his hand brands him personally as a criminal; the condemned hand suffers the penalty for the crime which it committed, and is displayed over the mint for all to see its particular guilt, and for all to read in this text the consequences (more generally) of such transgression, and also the power and justice of the king:

14.1. And if a moneyer is convicted, the hand with which he committed the crime is to be struck off, and put up on the mint. And if, however, there is an accusation, and he wishes to clear himself, he is then to go to [the ordeal of] hot iron, and redeem the hand with which he is accused of having committed the crime; and if he is convicted at the ordeal, the same is to be done as it said here above.<sup>69</sup>

Once again, in this case the punishment for the crime is a very specific penalty of mutilation which refers to the exact crime committed by the particular member of the specific criminal; further, the token rendered through this punishment is publicly displayed with the obvious intent to broadcast a number of levels of signification. Finally, it is most significant that in this case the ordeal is invoked in order to determine guilt or innocence, and this spiritual state is made manifest by divine power through the same member with which the accused would have committed the crime. Thus the guilty moneyer is condemned through that very hand which subsequently will be displayed by the temporal authorities to articulate this very same guilt, as well as to make clear these same issues of divine and temporal power and judgment.

Considering the number of historical annals which record acts of symbolic mutilation carried out by his order, we might well expect to find penal dismemberment and torture also codified in the laws of Cnut (written ca. 1020-1023); in this expectation we are not disappointed. In these laws we find, for example, a very similar penalty to that enacted under Athelstan for the crime of counterfeiting, although no mention is made of the ordeal, nor of the display of the severed member. The basic punishment is the same, however, and the removal of the hand which committed the offense is designed to signify the same truths concerning the guilt of the offender, the justice of the king, and the power of the law:

8.1. And he who after this coins false money is to forfeit the hand with which he coined the false money, and he is not to redeem it at any price, neither with gold nor with silver.

8.2. And if the reeve is accused, that it was with his permission that he coined the false money, he is to clear himself with the



three-fold process of exculpation; and if this exculpation fails, he is to incur the same sentence as he who coined the false money.<sup>70</sup>

Although the ordeal is not mentioned in regards to counterfeiting, it is an important part of jurisprudence under Cnut, and several laws refer to its use.

Next I turn to a prominent example of mutilation as the prescribed penalty for those who have been proven guilty through the ordeal. In this case it is worth attention that the accused undergoes a trial by ordeal which we would consider to be a form of torture, and then, if proven guilty, is tortured yet again as punishment. But however similar these related acts may seem to us, we must recognize that the ordeal and punitive torment are two distinct traditions, with different philosophical structures supporting each. Still, it is crucial to realize that each of these acts has to do with utilizing the body as text: the trial by ordeal relies upon the hand of God to write the spiritual state of the accused upon the tablet of his flesh, while the penalty of dismemberment--or other disfiguring torture--written through the agency of the king upon those thus proven guilty serves to mark this spiritual truth indelibly upon this same tablet. It is of particular interest that such torment explicitly is designed to be used in place of execution in order to punish the crime while still allowing the criminal to live and be spiritually saved. Further, such punishment simultaneously serves to preach the wages of sin to potential sinners through the text of the convicted felon's broken body:

30.3a. And the three-fold ordeal is to be set on foot thus: he [i.e. the accuser] is to take five men and be himself the sixth.

30.3b. And if he is then convicted, on the first occasion he is to pay two-fold compensation to the accuser and his wergild to the

lord who is entitled to his fine, and to appoint trustworthy sureties that he will afterwards cease from all evil-doing.

30.4. And on the second occasion there is to be no other compensation, if he is convicted, but that his hands, or feet, or both, in proportion to the deed, are to be cut off.

30.5. And if, however, he has committed still further crimes, his eyes are to be put out and his nose and ears and upper lip cut off, or his scalp removed, whichever of these is then decreed by those with whom the decision rests; thus one can punish and at the same time preserve the soul.<sup>71</sup>

The penalties for slaves were similar, although they were given only one chance to reform. In addition, where slaves are concerned, the penalty of branding is implemented. Branding is intriguing because it is another particularly visible form of punishment which renders the body of the victim into a text, without, however, reducing his capability for labor. Thus branding serves the purpose of the penalties imposed upon freemen, but does so in a pragmatic, economical way which does not unduly penalize the owner of the slave:

32. And if a slave is convicted by the ordeal, on the first occasion he is to be branded.

32.1. And on the second occasion, there is to be no compensation except his head.<sup>72</sup>

Some penalties--although for crimes serious enough to merit mutilation--might be commuted through the payment of a fine. See, for example, the law concerning an offender who commits a breach of the Lenten fast by wounding a man:



48.1. And if he wounds a man, he is to pay compensation for it and pay full fine to the lord, and redeem his hand from the bishop or forfeit it.<sup>73</sup>

The penalty for a woman who commits adultery allows for no such compensation, however, and the severity of the punishment might have to do with the public nature of the offense, which touches on volatile issues (in Germanic and Anglo-Saxon contexts) such as public reputation and oaths of loyalty. The wording of the following law stipulates that this penalty is to be invoked only if the crime becomes known, and the reference to the process through which the wife incurs “public disgrace” implies that the body of the punished woman serves to document her disgrace publicly, while simultaneously avenging the public humiliation of her husband:

53. If a woman during her husband's lifetime commits adultery with another man, and it becomes known, let her afterwards become herself a public disgrace and her lawful husband is to have all that she owns, and she is to lose her nose and ears.<sup>74</sup>

This mutilation is clearly symbolic, but this symbolism is not as straightforward as that associated with some other acts of disfigurement or dismemberment. As opposed to the penalty of castration imposed upon a male rapist under some codes, for example, the adulteress does not lose the body part in question. Presumably, it is the beauty represented in the face--the vanity in the woman which it reflects and the lust in the man which it incites--which is perceived as the culprit here, and which, therefore, is publicly dispatched to end this vanity and lust;

to punish the offender, and to symbolize publicly the nature of this sin for all to see and to learn by.

In the laws of Cnut, as in those acts of his which are mentioned in the annals, we discern a particular affinity for expressive acts of violence upon bodies. This is not at all to suggest that Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings did not enact laws and perform acts which were similarly expressive, but rather to note that Cnut's seem especially so, and seem to be organized around principles which are founded upon the premise that violence may be wrought upon bodies in such a way as to signify the nature of spiritual and political realities. It is possible that Cnut's Scandinavian heritage reflected more purely Germanic influences than did those of his English and French counterparts, and it is certainly true that Stenton perceives that Cnut reflected an older, outdated culture even as he embraced Christian values and culture.<sup>75</sup> In any case, Cnut's laws certainly utilize the possibilities of the body as text as fully as did those of any Anglo-Saxon king before him, and in his (Christianity-influenced) attempt to substitute such expressive acts of mutilation for capital punishment, his laws prefigure those of William; thus the Scandinavian-Christian blend of influences reflected in the laws of Cnut provides a bridge between earlier Anglo-Saxon concepts of the functions of corporal punishment and the Norman conceptions of the late eleventh century.

The Norman laws which follow the Conquest are valuable to this discussion as they provide context for the Anglo-Saxon traditions in which we are most particularly interested. In general, it would be fair to say that these laws mark the beginning of a shift in legal and philosophical concepts of the relationship between the body and the spirit, of the function of the divine in temporal justice, and of the role of the state in the protection and the punishment of its members. Focusing



on laws which have to do with, respectively, the supplanting of the trial by ordeal with the trial by combat, and the replacement of capital punishment with blinding and castration, I will note four ways in which these legal and philosophical shifts are made manifest.

First, the beginning of a movement away from trial by ordeal to trial by combat is indicative of a general shift away from the principles of Germanic law (manifested in the ordeal), which culminates in the removal of the ordeal from English jurisprudence in 1219. After this change, God no longer acted as judge and jury, but men had to serve as the principal agents of justice, although presumably with divine guidance. Similarly, in the trial by combat, favored by Norman law, men act as their own advocates, each writing his suit upon the body of his opponent, while in the trial by ordeal God alone is expected to mark guilt or innocence upon the body of the accused. Second, the shift from capital punishment to dismemberment also reflects a growing uneasiness with the right of the state to take life; as confidence in the ordeal ebbed, reflecting a gradual shift both from Germanic to Roman law and from Germanic to Christian models of understanding the role of the divine in the enactment of justice, and as temporal justice replaced divine judgment, men felt less and less confident about the imposition of the death penalty. We might note the similarity of William's position to laws enacted in 1219 after the abolishment of the ordeal, which did away with capital punishment for precisely this reason. Third, the non-specific punitive mutilation prescribed by William's law also undermines to a certain extent the conceptual framework of the ordeal. While in the laws of Athelstan and Cnut, for example, the member of the body in question (often, although not always) bears the guilt of the transgression, reflects this guilt in the ordeal, suffers dismemberment for it, and then serves as a sign of this specific crime, in the laws of William

all criminals suffer the same fate. Although the body still serves as a sign in a general way--and thus still reflects the relationship between body and soul which is the basis of the ordeal--William's laws are again moving away from a precise correlation between the guilty member and such signification, and thus this relationship becomes somewhat more blurred. Finally, a shift from traditional Germanic models of kingship to feudal models is marked by a centralization of authority in the person of the king (a Christian hierarchical model), and in the notion that a good king imposes "strict justice" in the manner of a stern but loving God (see critique of William's reign from the ASC, below).

It is in the following law, from the *Laws of William the Conqueror*, ca. 1066-1087 (earliest extant ms. ca. 1100-1150), that the trial by combat first begins to supplant the trial by ordeal in English law; at this point the trial by combat is an option which may be claimed in place of the trial by ordeal:

6. It was also decreed there that if a Frenchman shall charge an Englishman with perjury or murder or theft or homicide or 'ran', as the English call open rapine which cannot be denied, the Englishman may defend himself, as he shall prefer, either by the ordeal of hot iron or by wager of battle. But if the Englishman be infirm, let him find another who will take his place. If one of them shall be vanquished, he shall pay a fine of 40 shillings to the king. If an Englishman shall charge a Frenchman and be unwilling to prove his accusation either by ordeal or by wager of battle, I will, nevertheless, that the Frenchman shall acquit himself by a valid oath.<sup>76</sup>



William's introduction of the trial by battle is indicative of an on-going process which results in a fundamental change in the English system of jurisprudence within a century or so of the Norman Conquest. It is noteworthy that, by a hundred years after the death of William, trial by combat had become the standard manner through which the accused might deny an accuser, and trial by ordeal was utilized *after* guilt had been established through trial by jury. Its function had therefore shifted from a judicial, inquisitive process to a punitive, purgative one; the purpose of the ordeal in this latter context is to use a temporal process to punish the flesh for crime and to purge the soul of sin, rather than to invoke a divine process whereby the nature of the soul is reflected in the state of the flesh. This move reflects a Europe-wide shift back to Roman law, which also sees a concurrent rise in the doctrine of purgatory, the sacrament of confession, and judicial torture (see discussion, below).<sup>77</sup>

Under the following law (also from *The Laws of William the Conqueror*) dismemberment categorically is to be utilized in place of execution. There is clearly a similarity between this law and that of Cnut mentioned above. However, where the law of Cnut manifested a combination of physical signification of guilt and power combined with Christian care for the soul, William's law also is indicative of a growing concern with the nature of jurisprudence itself. Cnut was not so concerned with the state of the soul of slaves that he was unwilling to put them to death; indeed, as those to be punished under his laws first had been proven guilty by the ordeal, he was assured of their guilt. William's law, however, reflects a concern with such methods of establishing guilt:

10. I also forbid that anyone be slain or hanged for any fault, but let his eyes be put out and let him be castrated. And this

command shall not be violated under pain of a fine in full to me.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, I turn to an annal from the ASC which is reminiscent of that which extolled the virtues of the strict justice of King Henry. This example is significant in that, although it contains explicit criticism of William's excesses, it also remarks on the civil value of his stern justice, which is most notably illustrated in his favorite punishments of punitive blinding and castration. In summing up William's career the annalist notes both the security and the oppression inherent in a system of precisely codified and strictly implemented laws which are constructed upon a base of severe physical penalties:

...Amongst other things the good security he made in this country is not to be forgotten--so that any honest man could travel over his kingdom without injury with his bosom full of gold: and no one dared strike another, however much wrong he had done him. And if any man had intercourse with a woman against her will, he was forthwith castrated.... Certainly in his time people had much oppression and very many injuries:

...He made protection for the game

And imposed laws for the same.

That who so slew a hart or hind

Should be made blind....<sup>79</sup>

The general nature of much of the bodily destruction codified under William--in conjunction with both the centralization of political power under the Norman system and the shift from a more divine-driven to a more temporal-driven model of establishing personal guilt or innocence--



-reflects the power relationship which William was interested in expressing. Earlier systems of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence reflected first and foremost an understanding of divine power superseding temporal power in order to manifest the spiritual state of the accused upon the tablet of his flesh, and therefore reflected political realities concerning the relationship between that individual and the state more incidentally to this central purpose. In contrast to such systems, William's laws of punitive mutilation were not as concerned with the manifestation of divine power, and therefore served to articulate the power of the state over the individual, in judicial, punitive, and political terms.

Having examined Anglo-Saxon criminal law codes, and having discussed the significance of the concept of the ordeal to the Anglo-Saxon system of jurisprudence, I turn now to examine in more detail the philosophical basis of the ordeal, its relationship to oath, and the underlying Germanic understanding of the relationship between the nature of the soul and the state of the flesh. These concepts are central to understanding Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards acts of physical torture, and illuminate, not only our study of related laws and historical incidents, but also the literary, linguistic, theological, and philosophical contexts which lie at the heart of my study.

In order to understand fully the development of the concept of the ordeal in Germanic culture, it is important to understand the nature of law and the status of the individual in such a tribal and customary context. The highly abstracted and codified Roman law with which the barbarians came into contact when they entered the empire was an entirely distinct conceptual body unto itself, and was removed from the day to day life of the individual. Traditional Germanic law, on the other hand, was customary, and was part of a unified system of social control which was passed from generation to generation through word of mouth

and through the handing down of rituals and ceremonies. Such customary law is founded upon an understanding of the individual as a part of a localized network of kin and loyalty spheres; such a network--within which the individual is well known, and by which the individual is motivated and influenced--serves to ensure that the individual adheres to the tenets of that network's system of customary law:

In the Germanic society of the pre-invasion period, as in most primitive societies, law was part of a system of "undifferentiated social control by religion, ethical custom, and kin discipline."...Custom, identified by the elders of a kindred, tribe, or group, was transmitted orally and, presumably, by all the other complex methods of teaching the young that a primitive society possesses.<sup>80</sup>

In such a context, where law is an inalienable component of an atmosphere of social control which is dependent upon the efficacy of localized social pressure, the reputation (and therefore the word, as I will turn to presently) and the rights of the individual are sacred. In such a context, law is not, therefore, a separate social construct which functions independent of the action of any one individual, and which operates in order to secure the public good. Such a concept as "public good" is in fact not a component of this system at all, except as a rudimentary understanding of the value of custom and ritual to the group. Rather, legal action in such a context is driven by the rights and responsibilities of the individual, and can only be invoked by a particular individual who asserts a claim to such rights, or who claims that his rights have been infringed upon. Status, reputation, and traditional rights are therefore



central to what we would understand as legal action in such a customary setting, and legal historians refer to such a procedure as “accusatorial”:

A procedure may be accusatorial, in which a specific charge is brought against an individual by another individual and determined by a judge, whether an individual or an aggregation; or it may be inquisitorial, in which a charge is initiated by the judge without an accuser...in Germanic society, the accusatorial process survived long after the invasions, and [judicial] torture, unknown to the society of Germanic freemen, did not appear in European law until after the reception of Roman law in the twelfth century...legal historians have suggested that the accusatorial procedure is generally an earlier stage of legal development, and that the inquisitorial process is the product of a relatively more differentiated idea of society, one which contains a concept of public crime and potentially limits the role of public status.<sup>81</sup>

Following the collapse of the imperial power structure, these systems of accusatorial and inquisitorial law came into direct conflict; for a time, in much of Europe Germanic customary law supplanted some aspects of Roman law. What is especially significant in the context of this discussion is that judicial torture, which was at the heart of Roman inquisitorial law, was until the thirteenth century largely replaced by the Germanic accusatorial process of the ordeal:

Another consequence of the collapse of imperial power was the disruption of the legal system caused by the barbarian invasions. Though the conquered peoples continued to live under the old Roman laws, the Germanic invaders brought with them tribal laws

in which torture had no place. The Burgundian and Salic laws of the Visigoths, assimilating Roman tradition, still made provision for the torture of slaves. But torture, as it had been practiced under Roman law, was out of place in proceedings which were mainly open, oral or based on private accusation.<sup>82</sup>

However, it was not simply due to a conflict in legal concepts that the ordeal began to be institutionalized in European law; the ordeal also found a powerful ally in the form of the Church. Although the ordeal was never officially sanctioned by the pope, and was indeed often condemned, at a local level the servants of the Church found much to recommend the practice. Its basic premise--that the hand of the divine might make manifest a spiritual reality upon the flesh of the accused--was one that lent itself to Christian interpretation, and thus strengthened the connection between popular conception and ritual and Christianity. Further, by enshrining the practice within the mystery and ritual of the Church, its priests assumed a position of political and legal prominence and influence in the most important local circles. Finally--although hardly incidentally--by placing the Church at the center of the legal process, and by institutionalizing that process within the framework of the liturgy, the priests guaranteed themselves a tidy income through the fees payable for official sanction of the solemnities surrounding the process of the ordeal itself:

The most efficient cause of the increased use of the ordeal was, however, to be found in the Church. With her customary tact, in converting the Barbarians, she adopted such of their practices as she could adapt to Christian belief and practice; and she accepted the ordeal as an undoubted appeal to God, whose response was



regarded as unquestionable...[t]he pagan ceremonies were moulded into Christian rites, and the most solemn forms of religion were thrown around the rude expedients invented thousands of years before by the Bactrian nomads. Elaborate rituals were constructed, including celebration of the mass and impressive prayers, adjurations and exorcisms of the persons to undergo the trial and of the materials used in it, and the most implicit faith was inculcated in the interposition of God to defend the right and to punish guilt. The administration of the ordeal being thus reserved for priestly hands, the Church acquired a vastly increased influence as the minister of justice, to say nothing of the revenues thence arising, and the facility with which ecclesiastics could thus defend themselves when legally assailed by their turbulent flocks.<sup>83</sup>

The centrality of personal relationships and reputation to a system of customary law, as indicated above, ensured that the oath of the individual freeman was held sacred under such a system, and indeed, stood at the heart of the accusatorial legal procedure. As Germanic society began to expand and to evolve, this legal procedure began to be outpaced. While oath remained central to the legal process (indeed, even after the rise of the ordeal, oath was still central to the ceremonies surrounding it), problems began to arise as the possibility of perjury became more and more apparent:

The status of freemen in Germanic society imparted to the personal oath a great weight in the resolution of judicial conflicts. So profound was this faith in the sworn word of a free man (and in the quantitative oaths of a designated number of free men for

specific occasions), that it usually constituted the primary level of resolution. The oath and compurgation, whenever possible, constituted the usual methods of resolving litigation in barbarian courts...[however] the oath, for so long the fundamental manner of judicial resolution, appears to have weakened in public opinion after the fifth century, and the texts reflect a concern for the dangers of perjury...<sup>84</sup>

This concern regarding the danger of perjury--which was an important motive force behind the legal shift from compurgation to ordeal--seems to have been part of a larger process of social change which had as much to do with the breakdown of the traditional clan and village structure as it did with any drastic philosophical development. As the Germanic peoples became part of a larger population of various traditions, and as traditional customs and relationships became fractured through migration and social upheaval, the social ties which were at the very core of the customary system began to likewise weaken. Although the importance of the individual's sworn word did not diminish, the concurrent necessity of a context within which an individual's reputation might serve as a viable measure of the value of that word became much harder to maintain. As Germanic societies became larger, more complex, and more urbanized, the traditional kin and loyalty networks became too diffuse to support a system whereby jurisprudence was based upon the local community in which each member was intimately known to every other member:

...as the universal acceptance of the unsupported or supported oath diminished, men turned to other forms of certainty, and from the eighth to the twelfth centuries, the ordeal came to fulfill that need.



Next to the *purgatio canonica* [the sworn word], there developed the *purgatio vulgaris*, the ordeal. Oath, judicial duel, and ordeal are all referred to as the *judicium Dei*, the judgment of God, and from the ninth century on, the two kinds of purgation--by oath or by ordeal--became an increasingly acceptable form of judicial resolution...the ordeal itself indicates a decreasing reliance upon kin and friends and an increasing reluctance to accept traditional kin solidarity on the part of a society in the process of shaping new and wider social bonds.<sup>85</sup>

This is not at all to suggest that kin and loyalty bonds did not remain strong, that the sworn word of the freeman did not remain central, or that small and intimate communities no longer existed; all of these remain important throughout the early middle ages, and certainly throughout the course of Anglo-Saxon history. I will turn momentarily to a discussion of the significance of the oath in Anglo-Saxon law and society; it is crucial to note, however, that the rise of the ordeal represents a shift in Germanic law that is a logical outgrowth of the diffusion and expansion of the Germanic peoples. As this society grew beyond the bounds of small tightly-knit clans and common customary traditions and contexts, it became important to find a common measure by which the oaths of parties unknown to each other might be fairly judged. The ordeal provided such a measure, and by invoking the divine as arbiter, such a system also removed the appearance, if not the reality, of clan and political rivalries from the proceedings.

Although by the early Anglo-Saxon period compurgation was replaced by ordeal as the primary method of resolving legal disputes in which there might be a conflict between oaths, the oath--both as a component of the formal legal system and as a measure of personal

character--remained one of the most important social contracts in Anglo-Saxon culture. Oath-keeping, especially, was a primary barometer of personal integrity, and the importance in this culture of being faithful to oaths past and present--even when oaths of loyalty would seem to be in conflict--cannot be over-emphasized. To break one oath was seen to imply that to break more would come easily. An interesting case in point is detailed in the account of the reign of Athelstan recorded by William of Malmesbury in his *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*. Athelstan's father Edward largely had been ignored by Sihtric, the Viking king of York, but in 926 Sihtric proposed an alliance with Athelstan, which the latter sealed by giving Sihtric his sister in marriage; within a year Sihtric was dead, however, and his young son Olaf--by a previous marriage--and Sihtric's brother Guthfrith--the king of the Irish Vikings--challenged the conditions of Sihtric's alliance with Athelstan.<sup>86</sup> The episode of particular interest to my argument has to do with Olaf slipping into Athelstan's camp in the dead of night on the eve of battle; Olaf disguised himself as a *scop*, entertained the king and his retainers, and disdaining to take the reward given him for his services, marked the location of the king's tent before stealing away into the night:

This was noticed by a certain person who had once served under him, and immediately told to Athelstan. When he blamed the man for not betraying the enemy when he stood before him, he received this reply: "The same oath which lately, O king, I made to you, I once gave to Olaf; and if you had seen me violate it against him, you could beware a similar act against yourself. But condescend to take your servant's advice to move away your tent; and, if you stay in another place until the rest of your forces arrive, you will with a moderate delay crush the enemy who is



impudently attacking you.” His words were approved and that place was abandoned.<sup>87</sup>

We have examined the evolution of the role of the sworn oath in Germanic culture; and noted that this traditional system survived into Anglo-Saxon England; the conflict of loyalties which is resolved in the Athelstan episode underscores just how crucial oath-keeping--and most especially the keeping of loyalty oaths--still remained in the Anglo-Saxon world. By the time of Alfred this basic concept--that of the paramount importance of one's oath, and especially that oath as it pertains to one's loyalty to one's lord--had been enshrined as the primary directive in what is, arguably, the most important of all Anglo-Saxon law codes:

1. First we direct, what is most necessary, that each man keep carefully his oath and pledge.

1.1. If anyone is wrongly compelled to either of these, promising treachery to his lord or any illegal aid, then it is better to leave it unfulfilled than to perform it.

1.2. [If, however, he pledges what is right for him to perform,] and leaves it unfulfilled, let him with humility give his weapons and his possessions into his friends' keeping and be 40 days in prison at a king's estate, endure there what penance the bishop prescribes for him, and his kinsmen are to feed him if he has no food himself.<sup>88</sup>

Here the ancient Germanic concepts of oath-keeping and loyalty are explicitly marked out as the two most central legal principles, and the penalty for the breach of such principles is likewise made clear.

It is of particular interest that this traditional Germanic system (like that of the *wergild*, discussed above) becomes codified in a highly complex form as it evolves into a cornerstone of Anglo-Saxon law. Even as early as the laws of Wihtred, King of Kent (ca. 695), for example, a class system has developed in the weighing of oaths and exculpation. The sworn word of the freeman, which was the foundation of Germanic jurisprudence, has developed into a pyramidal system of values with the king and the bishop at the uppermost level, and the various social classes stratified below them by ranks. In this system the king's word (without an oath) is equivalent--for example--to that of a priest sworn on an altar, or to that of four *ceorls* sworn on an altar:

16. The word of the bishop and the king without an oath is to be incontrovertible.

17. The head of a monastery is to clear himself with a priest's exculpation.

18. A priest is to purge himself with his own asseveration in his holy vestments before the altar, saying thus: "I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie." Similarly a deacon is to purge himself.

19. A cleric is to purge himself with three of the same order, and he alone is to have his hand on the altar; the others are to stand by and discharge the oath.

20. A stranger is to purge himself with his own oath on the altar; similarly a king's thegn;

21. a *ceorl* with three of the same class on the altar; and the oath of all these is to be incontrovertible.

21.1. Then the Church's right of exculpation is as follows:



22. If anyone accuses a bishop's servant or a king's, he is to clear himself by the hand of the reeve: the reeve is either to clear him or deliver him to be flogged.

23. If anyone accuses an unfree servant of a community in their midst, his lord is to clear him with his oath alone, if he is a communicant; if he is not a communicant he is to have in the oath another good oath-helper, or pay for him or deliver him to be flogged.

24. If the servant of a layman accuses the servant of an ecclesiastic or the servant of an ecclesiastic accuses the servant of a layman, his lord is to clear him with his oath alone.<sup>89</sup>

It is clear from such a schema as this that oath--as a simple instrument for proving the truth of any freeman's assertions--is by this period rapidly becoming simply one component in the legal system. As noted above, the beginning of the rise of the ordeal paralleled the fall of the oath as an absolutely incontrovertible method of ascertaining truth. This is not, however, to suggest that oath lost its prominence in Germanic tradition and in the Anglo-Saxon system of jurisprudence which derives from this tradition. Rather, the oath evolves into one facet of a system which also relies upon the checks and balances of such social indicators as rank and reputation, and upon the final arbitration of divine intervention through the medium of the ordeal.

Indeed, it is important to note that the nearly inviolate nature of the oath of a freeman still was held in such esteem in Anglo-Saxon culture that an accusation of slander was an extremely serious matter; in the laws of Hlothhere and Eadric, kings of Kent, which were drafted between 673-685, we find a code dealing with such an offense. This law provides an example of an interesting paradox inherent in any system

which weighs heavily the sanctity of the sworn word, and also goes some distance towards explaining the necessity of the system of checks and balances alluded to above. An accusation of perjury necessarily implies that either the accuser or the accused is bearing or has borne false witness:

11. If anyone in another's house calls a man a perjurer, or shamefully accosts him with insulting words, he is to pay a shilling to him who owns the house, and six shillings to him to whom he spoke that word, and to pay 12 shillings to the king.<sup>90</sup>

It was a concern with the dangers of perjury which led to the rise of additional systems, such as the ordeal, by which truth could be independently ascertained; in spite of such concerns, however, the fact that the sworn oath was never entirely replaced, and that an accusation of perjury was considered such a serious matter, indicates just how central oaths continued to be to this culture. The ascendance of the procedure of the ordeal (which still contained elements of oath and compurgation), the development of complex legal systems for weighing the value of conflicting testimony, the punishment for an accusation of perjury, and the penalties imposed for those convicted of perjury, all are indicative of a growing concern with the problems inherent in a legal and social system based upon the value of the sworn word, it is true. But the fact that such elaborate controls were set in place, rather than the abolition of the heart of the very system itself, illustrates how difficult it was to change this system so radically. In order to resolve to some extent the tension between a social system which continued to recognize the sanctity of the oath and a legal system which was attempting to combat the problems of perjury, some Anglo-Saxon law codes



prescribed severe penalties for perjury, while others implemented complex systems of institutionalized witnessing.

In a system which utilized oath as a barometer of personal integrity, it would be perhaps entirely reasonable to view an oath-breaker or a perjurer as a thoroughly untrustworthy individual; indeed, such a perception is the moral of the story of Olaf and Athelstan. Further, however, such an unforgivable transgression seems to have been viewed as an indication of an unredeemable character. The penalties for perjury, which ranged from fines to mutilation, usually also contained a provision that the perjurer's word be ever after considered invalid. Thus perjury was, in a very real sense, considered an unforgivable crime; further, however, in an accusatorial legal environment which was dependent upon the sworn word (even in the utilization of the ordeal), such a penalty effectively placed the convicted perjurer outside of the protection of the law, unless that perjurer had kinsmen or friends willing to take an oath in his stead. By appreciating the real severity of such penalties we may begin to understand the importance of the individual's word (even after the rise of the ordeal) in an Anglo-Saxon context.

I include four examples of laws which stipulate penalties for false witness, false oath, and slander. The first two stipulate that the oath of the convicted perjurer or oath-breaker never again be valued; the second two deal with slander, which appears to have been considered a particularly vile form of perjury, assaulting as it does the integrity and public reputation of another in conjunction with falsehood, and call for acts of punitive mutilation. The laws of King Athelstan issued at Grately, Hampshire, contain the first two examples; one law concerns the bearing of false witness in the exchange of livestock:

10.1. Concerning false witness. If it is then discovered that any of them gave false witness, his witness is never again to be valid; and also he is to pay 30 shillings as a fine.<sup>91</sup>

The second law concerns the bearing of false oath, and the ecclesiastical penalty incurred in addition to the sanction on future oaths underscores the moral and spiritual nature of the crime involved:

26. And he who swears a false oath, and it becomes known against him, is never afterwards to be entitled to an oath, nor is he to be buried in a consecrated cemetery when he dies, unless he has the witness of the bishop in whose diocese he is that he has done penance for it as his confessor has prescribed for him.<sup>92</sup>

The second pair of laws deals with slander, and each one prescribes a penalty of mutilation for such an offense. Once again (as in several of the cases of punitive mutilation discussed above), here it is of particular interest that the body part which is to be removed is that with which the slanderer committed the crime. In such cases the broken bodies of the guilty parties produced through the punitive dismemberment will speak more truthfully concerning their spiritual nature and the fact of their transgression, than their false tongues did concerning the character of those whom they slandered. The first example is from the laws of Alfred:

32. If anyone is guilty of public slander, and it is proved against him, it is to be compensated for with no lighter penalty than the cutting off of his tongue, with the proviso that it be redeemed at no cheaper rate than it is valued in proportion to the wergild.<sup>93</sup>



The second example is from the code of King Edgar issued at Andover (ca. 959-963):

4. And he who wishes to accuse another falsely, so that he suffer loss either of property or of life, if the other can then prove what one would charge him with to be false, he [the accuser] is to forfeit his tongue, unless he redeem himself with his wergild.<sup>94</sup>

In the code of laws of Edgar which were issued at Wihthorpesstan (ca. 962-963), we find an interesting institutionalization of the Germanic tradition of the value of oath and the function of witnessing. Under this system elaborate trade rituals were developed which required a standing number of official witnesses, the function of whom was to ensure that all transactions were performed according to the law. The sanctity of the role of these witnesses--as well as the inviolate nature of the individual's word--is underscored by the penalty to be imposed upon any who attempt to circumvent this system:

11. If, however, he declares that he bought it with witness, and that is false, he is to be regarded as a thief and to lose his head and all that he owns. And the lord of the estate is to keep the stolen cattle or the value of the stolen cattle, until the owner discovers it and proves his right to the cattle with witness.<sup>95</sup>

Amongst the later laws, those of King Cnut are interesting for a number of reasons, and most especially so in the context of Cnut's contradictory statements and actions concerning perjury. Further, as in some of the earlier codes, here the punishment for the giving of a false oath is

dismemberment, and the false oath-maker's right to give an oath is likewise shorn from him. In addition, however, here we find an interesting condition attached to the oath-giving process: in order to incur the penalty, the false oath must have been sworn "on the relics". This is an unusual stipulation, as most of the codes imply that any oath given is valid, although acts of exculpation do often require the use of an altar. Here, however, relics are necessary, and this seems a bit odd in the context of Anglo-Saxon law, although not necessarily in that of Norse law; as I have noted before, Cnut displays an intriguing mixture of Germanic and Christian influences, and possibly this reference to valid oaths sworn upon relics invokes the Norse tradition of the "holy ring":

36. And if anyone swears a false oath on the relics, and is confuted, he is to forfeit his hands or half his wergild; and it is to be divided by the lord and the bishop.

36.1. And from thenceforth he is not to be entitled to an oath, unless he atones for it very deeply with God, and finds surety for himself that he will desist from such ever afterwards.

37. And if anyone notoriously takes part in false witness, and is confuted, his testimony is afterwards to be worthless, but he is to compensate the king or the lord of the estate with his *healsfang*.<sup>96</sup>

There are also two important related--and contradictory--examples concerning perjury which both involve King Cnut. The first is an overt condemnation of the crime of perjury by Cnut, and the second is a record which asserts that, at the same time Cnut disparaged perjury, he was also quick to utilize it when it could benefit him. The first example contains references to the sanctity of oaths and to the vileness of perjury, and is found in Cnut's letter to the people of England, dated 1019-1020. This



letter is valuable to this study in that, like the first of the laws of Alfred, it overtly contextualizes the place of oath and the value of the integrity of the sworn word in late Anglo-Saxon culture. Not only is the sanctity of oaths explicitly confirmed, but perjury is listed amongst the vilest of possible sins:

13. And it is my will that all the nation, ecclesiastical and lay, shall steadfastly observe Edgar's laws, which all men have chosen and sworn to at Oxford.

14. For all the bishops say that the breaking of oaths and pledge is to be very deeply atoned for with God.

15. And also they teach us further that we must with all our strength and all our might earnestly seek, love and honour the eternal merciful God, and shun all evil-doing, namely [the deeds of] homicides and murderers, and perjurers and wizards and sorceresses, and adulterers, and incestuous deeds.<sup>97</sup>

The second example is of particular significance because it illustrates the contempt in which perjurers were held, even by those who benefited from their perjury. In a situation which is reminiscent of the moral underlying the resolution of conflict in oath-keeping described in the episode concerning Athelstan and Olaf, here we have an example of those who have perjured themselves in Cnut's service, and the moral this time seems to be that those who once have broken faith may be expected to do so again. Indeed, Cnut rather seems to have thought that they would, so the prudent thing to do, from his perspective, was eliminate them once they had served their (faithless) function. Cnut therefore removed the risk of them recanting their perjury or otherwise breaking faith with their new master. In such a cultural context he could never

trust them, as once a man was an oath-breaker, he was perceived always to be an oath-breaker. From a modern perspective Cnut's use of perjurers to gain a political perspective may seem pragmatic and intelligible, and the cultural expectation of faithfulness may seem naive, or more to do with hypocritical lip-service than any steadfast belief. That being the case, however, Cnut's elimination of his erstwhile supporters seems somewhat less explicable. I would submit that, no matter how self-serving and pragmatic Cnut may have been, he was influenced by the morals of his culture to such an extent that the concept of oath-breaking retainers disturbed him. The passage concerned is from the annals of Florence for the year 1016; the witnesses described are from amongst the powerful nobles of England:

And they said that they knew beyond doubt that King Edmund had entrusted no portion of his kingdom to his brothers, either in this life or at his death; and they said that they knew that Edmund wished Cnut to be the supporter and protector of his sons, until they were old enough to reign. In truth, God is to witness, they gave false testimony, and lied deceitfully, imagining both that he would be more gracious to them because of their lying, and that they would receive a big reward from him. Some of these false witnesses were put to death not long afterwards by that same king.<sup>98</sup>

Perjury was a heinous crime in Germanic culture because the possibility of perjury undermined the value of oath; although this possibility resulted in the ascendancy of the ordeal in Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, perjury remained amongst the vilest of sins because, although the ordeal was meant as an independent method by which the



comparative values of oaths might be judged, the ordeal fundamentally still rested upon the sanctity of the oath. Therefore, although the ordeal was construed as independent of the oath, it could not really be so. The oath and the ordeal are two distinct modes of proof, but the ordeal is dependent upon the oath. That is, while not all oath-making must be accompanied by ordeal, all ordeals by necessity contain oaths. Thus an understanding of the centrality of the oath to Germanic culture generally, and to Anglo-Saxon law specifically, is crucial in order to place the ordeal in its cultural context. The oath was the mode by which the accused asserted innocence; the ordeal, trial by combat, or (sometimes) unrelated circumstances, provided the mode by which the validity of the oath was confirmed:

The ordeal involves or is proceeded by an oath; but even when the proof is to consist merely of oaths, a supernatural element is present. The swearer satisfies human justice by taking the oath. If he has sworn falsely, he is exposed to the wrath of God and in some subsequent proceeding may perhaps be convicted of perjury; but in the meantime he has performed the task that the law set him; he has given the requisite proof.<sup>99</sup>

The foregoing examination of the role of compurgation in early Germanic law, and of the continued importance of oath in Anglo-Saxon law and culture, provides the context for a detailed exploration of the role of the ordeal in this law and culture. The ordeal, as we have seen, was utilized to fill a legal void which resulted from the decline in the efficacy of compurgation as the sole foundation for a system of jurisprudence in a complex and rapidly growing society. But more than this, the ordeal also resonated with basic Anglo-Saxon philosophical

conceptions of the relationship between physical and spiritual matter. Such resonance will become especially significant when we begin to explore the relationship between the philosophical and legal foundations of the ordeal and related theological and literary constructs (see especially Chapter Five). But first we must begin by examining the ordeal itself, and the fundamental question with which a modern is confronted in approaching the ordeal is its widespread appeal. Why did the ordeal appeal to the masses? The answer to this question might be simpler than it appears, and may have to do with the distinction to be drawn between temporal and divine justice; God is the judge in the ordeal, and it might seem more reasonable to expect justice from an omniscient and impartial God than from a jury of prejudicial and short-sighted peers. John Langbein emphasizes the nature of such a belief system in his discussion of the disconcerting vacuum left by the ordeal when it was finally abolished in the thirteenth century:

The ordeals were means of provoking the judgment of God. God revealed the innocence of an accused whose hand withstood infection from the hot iron; God pronounced the guilt of one who floated when subjected to the water ordeal. The abolition of this system meant not only a fundamental change in the rules of proof, but a profound change in thinking about the nature of government and law. The attempt to make God the fact finder for human disputes was being abandoned. Henceforth, humans were going to replace God in deciding guilt or innocence, humans called judges. It is almost impossible for us to imagine how difficult it must have been for the ordinary people of that age to accept that substitution. The question that springs to the lips is: "You who



are merely another mortal like me, who are you to sit in judgment upon me?" 100

Further, God also seems to have acquitted most of the accused; legal historians such as Pollock and Maitland have suggested that the accused stood a reasonable chance of acquittal under the ordeal. Lea maintains that this chance was far more than reasonable:

...the ordeal, with its undoubted cruelty, was not as cruel as it appears to us, and in its practical results it probably acquitted the guilty far more often than it convicted the innocent...in the English records from 1201 till the abolition of the ordeal in 1219--a period in which...it was in constant use---...[there is] but one instance in which it failed to clear the accused.<sup>101</sup>

Before moving on to discuss the specific details of procedure involved in the ordeal, and indeed the systems of laws in which such procedure is enshrined, we should first examine the underlying theory of the ordeal; that is, the metaphysical mechanism involved in the determination of justice through this model. As I have noted, the popular perception of the ordeal centered around the belief that God participated directly in the judicial process through intervening in the effect upon the body of the accused of the material consequences involved in the particular ordeal at stake. In a very real way, God was expected to make manifest the spiritual reality of the guilt or innocence of the accused upon the body of that defendant. The basic premise of this construct, however, is independent of Christian theology, and certainly pre-dates Christianity in Germanic society; this premise maintains that the material universe is profoundly and necessarily related

to spiritual nature, and that this relationship may be utilized through such a procedure as the ordeal in order to view a spiritual reality in physical form (for a related concept, see my discussion of transmutation in Chapter Five). As this premise and this procedure become subsumed within Christian ritual, the ordeal takes on a religious significance:

The archaic concept of the solidarity of the forces of nature, which would reject the guilty party or the liar, gives way to a concept somewhat further evolved, although not yet specifically Christian (because it is found among pagans as well, and it seems, when found among Christians, more pagan than Christian), according to which God, all powerful and omniscient, knowing the truthful and the just, expresses that knowledge by signs and by the elements of material creation...Thus, the judicial duel, as does the oath, takes on a religious significance. A kind of hierarchy of proofs is established; if the oath and the judicial combat are impossible, one then has recourse to the elements themselves (water, iron, and earth). That is the ordeal.<sup>102</sup>

Within the hierarchy of proofs established through this system, ancient Germanic attitudes towards oath, reputation, and social status reassert themselves. Under Anglo-Saxon law, oath still provided the first order of proof, followed by varying forms of compurgation, and only including the ordeal when a dispute could not be resolved through other means. The wager of law, or compurgation, was an extension of the oath of the individual, and was itself directly dependent upon social status and reputation; a powerful individual could undoubtedly find willing compurgators, but barring that sort of influence, it is doubtful



that a man of less than sound public reputation could find help to support his oath:

The party who was called upon to make his law had to find a number of people, twelve or some other number fixed by the court according to the circumstances, and then take a solemn oath that he was innocent. His companions, or "compurgators" as they were called, then swore that the oath which he had taken was clean. In other words, the court calls upon the accused to produce a specified number of people (occasionally from a particular class or even from the names on a given list) who are prepared to swear that in their opinion his oath is trustworthy. They do not swear to the facts of the case, but merely to their judgment that the accused is a credible person. Wager of law, therefore, reduces itself to a character test; in the earlier period when there were strong religious sanctions surrounding the oath it is clear that a disreputable person would have difficulty in finding compurgators.<sup>103</sup>

As I pointed out in my discussion of the laws of Wihtred (above), social status was crucial to this hierarchy of proofs, and social rank could be said to be bound together with the public perception of character in the sort of public reputation which determined the practical status by which one's word might be measured. There is a complex relationship between oath, *wergild* (which is of course based on social rank, and thus implicitly includes such considerations as birth in the formula), reputation, and the buying off of ordeal: those of good reputation can forego the ordeal through an oath; those with money can sometimes buy it off. The implication is that those of good reputation can be believed,

that those with rank and money are deserving of the benefit of the doubt, and that those who are supported steadfastly by oath-helpers or creditors have a sound reputation amongst that group, and might be believed on that basis. The place of creditors in such a scheme, who must remain constant in their support or else be penalized, is particularly revealing.

The relationship between cash, credit, oath-helpers, and the necessity of undergoing the ordeal is indicative of attempts to reconcile the ancient legal system of oath with later complexities such as concern about perjury and methods of evaluating public reputation. The following is from the laws of Ine, and its reference to credit illuminates such a relationship:

62. When a charge is brought against a man, and he is driven to the ordeal, and he himself possesses nothing to give, in order to avoid the ordeal; and another man comes forward and gives his goods instead, on what terms he can obtain, on condition that he becomes subject to him until he can restore his property to him; and then he is again a second time accused and driven to the ordeal; if he who before gave goods on his behalf will not support him further, and he [the accuser] takes him, he [the creditor] is to lose his goods, which before he paid on his behalf.<sup>104</sup>

The following examples from the laws of Cnut do not mention complexities involving creditors, but certainly are interested with issues of public reputation, oath, and compurgation. Further, it is clear that these laws also are designed to try to avoid the necessity of ordeal if at all possible:



30. And if any man is so regarded with suspicion by the hundred and so frequently accused, and three men together then accuse him, there is then to be nothing for it but that he is to go to the three-fold ordeal.

30.1. If the lord then says that he has failed neither at the oath nor at the ordeal since the assembly was held at Winchester, the lord is to take with him two trustworthy men from within the hundred and swear that he failed neither at oath nor at ordeal, nor did he pay any compensation for theft, unless the lord have a reeve who is entitled to do this on his behalf.

30.2. And if the oath is then forthcoming, the man who is there accused is to choose which he will have, whether simple ordeal or an oath worth a pound within the three hundreds, in a case of [stolen goods of] over 30 pence.

30.3. And if, however, they dare not give that oath, he is to go to the three-fold ordeal.<sup>105</sup>

It is obvious from such examples as these--with their complex concerns regarding the alternatives of pecuniary surety, oath, and compurgation--that the ordeal was to be avoided unless absolutely necessary. If no other method was feasible or satisfactory, however, the ordeal comprised a definitive method of proof. The laws of Athelstan provide us with a number of extremely detailed examples of the specifics involved in the various ordeals. The religious ritual which had been established around the basic procedure is of interest, as it indicates how the Church transformed the tradition and made it its own. Also of special interest are the rules governing the oaths which were part and parcel of the ordeal. The following example is primarily concerned with matters of oath and religious detail, in fact, and this concern is indicative of the fact

that such preliminaries were seen as integral, and not simply auxiliary, to the ordeal:

If anyone gives pledge for an ordeal, then let him come three days before to the mass-priest who is to hallow it; and let him feed himself with bread and water, and salt, and herbs, before he shall go to it; and let him attend mass each of the three days, and make an oblation, and go to communion on the day that he shall go to the ordeal: and then swear the oath that he is, according to folk-right, guiltless of the charge, before he goes to the ordeal. And if it be water, that he dive an ell and a half by the rope; if it be iron ordeal, let it be three days before the hand be undone. And let every man begin his charge with a fore-oath, as we before ordained: and be each of those fasting, on either hand, who may be there together, by God's command and the archbishop's; and let there not be on either side more than twelve men. If the accused man be with a larger company than some twelve, then the ordeal be void, unless they will go from him.<sup>106</sup>

The next example, also from the laws of Athelstan, offers precise instructions as to the methods by which the ordeals of water and of the hot iron were to be affected. The importance of witnesses to the ordeal is interesting, as is the ritual purgation of the accused and the witnesses. Of particular note is the attention to every detail of the ceremony, from the physical preparations of the instruments to the materials which are suitable for the cauldron. In the context of such legalistic jargon, it is entirely possible to lose sight of the excruciating torment around which all of this ritual is constructed. This paradox is important because in the case of ordeal--unlike that of judicial or punitive torture--the point is not



the pain to which the victim is subjected during the course of the procedure, but the sign written upon the body of that victim as a result of that procedure. Hence, though we might claim that immediate pain is a primary aim of judicial or punitive torture (although these can and do have other aims, as well), in the case of the ordeal the immediate pain to the victim is incidental to the primary purpose, which is a manifestation of the spiritual in bodily terms:

Concerning the ordeal we enjoin by command of God, and of the archbishop, and of all the bishops: that no man come within the church after the fire is borne in with which the ordeal is to be heated except the priest and him who is to undergo judgment. And let nine feet be measured from the stake to the mark, by the feet of him who is to be tried. But if [the ordeal] be water, let it be heated till it comes to boiling. And be the kettle of iron or of brass, of lead, or of clay. And if it be a single accusation, let the hand dive for the stone up to the wrist; and if it be threefold, up to the elbow. And when the ordeal is ready let two men from each side go in and certify that it is as hot as we have directed it to be. Then let an equal number from both sides enter and stand on either side of the judgment place along the church, and let them all be fasting and abstinent from their wives on the preceding night. And let the priest sprinkle them all with water and let them bow themselves every one to the holy water and let the holy Gospel and the cross be given them all to kiss. And no one shall mend the fire any longer than the beginning of the hallowing, but let the iron lie on the coals until the last collect. Afterwards let it be placed on a frame, and let no one speak except to pray diligently to God, the Father Omnipotent, to deign to manifest His truth in

the matter: And let the accused drink of the holy water and then let the hand with which he is about to carry the iron be sprinkled, and so let him go [to the ordeal]. Let the nine feet that were measured off be divided into three sections. In the first division let him hold his right foot, close to the stake. Then let him move his right foot across the second into the third division, where he shall cast the iron in front of him and hasten to the holy altar. Then let his hand be sealed up, and on the third day let examination be made whether it is clean or foul within the wrapper. And whosoever shall transgress these laws, be the ordeal of no worth in his case, but let him pay the king a fine of twenty shillings.<sup>107</sup>

The ordeal was not abolished until after 1215, and was a cornerstone of English jurisprudence throughout the Anglo-Saxon period; directly after the Norman Conquest, however, (as I noted above) some changes to English law occurred which are suggestive of the European theological and legal trends which resulted in the demise of the ordeal. As this demise was particularly quick and thorough in England<sup>108</sup>--where, paradoxically, the practice of the ordeal had been particularly popular and widespread--it might be beneficial to examine briefly the major motive forces behind it. Broadly speaking, there were two trends involved: one legal, which had to do with the reemergence of Roman law throughout the course of the twelfth century, and one theological, which had to do both with the weak theological basis for the ordeal and the rise of confession to the level of a sacrament. The theological weakness had been noted since the inception of Church-condoned ordeal, and, as I noted above, papal opposition to this practice had been vocal almost since the beginning. Although the Germanic



conception of the relationship between spirit and matter does not seem, on the surface, anathema to Christian conceptions, the expectation of Divine intervention at the command and convenience of man is--as Peter the Chanter and others pointed out--presumptuous and blasphemous:

With the general rationalization and extension of Roman-Canon law in the twelfth century, influenced by the great school of Bologna, the ordeals came under increasing attack--not just from lawyers but from theologians. The most influential critic was Peter the Chanter (d. 1197) who pointed out that the ordeals, by demanding miracles, violated the scriptural injunction 'Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God'. (Had not Christ himself, on the Mount of Temptation, refused to perform miracles upon demand?).<sup>109</sup>

As has been indicated, the theological controversy surrounding the ordeal which came to a head in the late twelfth century was concurrent with--and indeed influenced by--a reascendancy of Roman law during this same period. This rise of Roman law stemmed from a number of sources, but in the context of the relationship between cultural development and legal philosophy, this ascendancy primarily was indicative of a growing consciousness of the concept of public welfare, and of the role of government in utilizing law as a means towards this common good. In general terms, legal procedure became less dependent upon an individual pursuing an accusation in order to remedy an infringement of rights, and more dependent upon governing agents of justice pursuing an investigation in order to gather written and oral proofs concerning the facts of a case. Concurrently ordeal, the function of which was to make manifest physical proofs through divine

intervention, waned, while judicial torture, the function of which was to retrieve facts directly through physical intervention, waxed:

Torture belongs to the world of inquisitorial procedure and the differentiated concept of public order, and reflects the society's confidence that the powers of the public order are sufficient to establish legal fact, whether through testimony and interrogation or torture itself. The ordeal, on the other hand, belongs to the world of accusatorial procedure and a limited concept of public order, and to a worldview that places less faith in purely human methods of inquiry than in the belief in supernatural intervention to remedy injustice.<sup>110</sup>

Confession became a sacrament after the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and the rise of the importance of judicial confession seems concurrent; this added another dimension to the function of judicial torture, which had always played a role in Roman law. It is important to note that, like the ordeal, despite widespread popular perception and use torture was never a doctrinally sound method of procuring confession.<sup>111</sup> The direct legal ramifications of the Fourth Lateran Council were far more far-reaching than that, however, and the abolition of the ordeals left a vacuum in the legal system, destroying as it did the most widely recognized system of producing proofs.<sup>112</sup> A legal system such as that of England, which never assimilated judicial torture into its structure, had a particularly tough time finding procedures to fill this vacuum, and did so only slowly and piecemeal, over time and by consulting the growing body of precedents.<sup>113</sup> A particularly thorny issue was that of capital punishment:



The abolition of the ordeal had disturbed all its [the law's] arrangements. We take it that under the old procedure a man who refused to go to the ordeal might have been put to death, though rather perhaps as an outlaw than as a convict.... It was a different thing to sentence a man who had been allowed no chance of proving his innocence by any of the world-old sacral processes. 'No one is to be convicted of a capital crime by testimony,' said the author of the *Leges Henrici*. These words represent a strong feeling: mere human testimony is not enough to send a man to the gallows.<sup>114</sup>

The immediate result of this void in the system of English jurisprudence, then, was a series of stop-gap measures, and--most notably--a moratorium on capital punishment which reflected a concern with condemning the accused without recourse to divine ratification. Such a concern is reminiscent of the stipulation in the laws of William that death sentences were to be uniformly replaced by punitive dismemberment; as I mentioned above, William may also have been concerned with the efficacy of the ordeal in providing such divine judgment.

As I have attempted to illustrate, it is notable in the context of my argument that legal historians generally are quite concerned with drawing a clear distinction between what I term judicial torture and that which is known as the ordeal; this concern stems from the fact that these historians are invested in drawing distinctions between philosophies of jurisprudence, rather than comparing those points which are common to two systems which both utilize forms of systematic and deliberate applied pain (albeit to somewhat different ends). What is of particular interest, then, in the hazy period during which the ordeal was coming

under attack and judicial torture was on the rise, is that the clear semantic distinction between "torture" and "ordeal" breaks down when procedural shifts allow the form of the latter to be used to affect the function of the former:

In medieval Europe the replacement by torture of trial by ordeal resulted in some cases from changes in criminal procedure, rather than changes in the mode of applying pain. It is therefore possible to envisage a transitional stage between the trial by ordeal and investigative torture, which shares some of the features of both.<sup>115</sup>

I would submit that the dual shifts (from trial by ordeal to trial by combat, and from capital punishment to punitive dismemberment) in Norman law mark the beginning of this period of transition in England. Not only do both shifts underscore a growing discomfort with a system of justice predicated upon the supernatural, but further--in a country which never formally adopted judicial torture as a method by which to gather evidence--it is significant that the Anglo-Norman laws equate punitive dismemberment with the ordeal: both are used as forms of punishment. The ordeal is punitive and is not involved in adjudication by the late Norman period.<sup>116</sup> That the Normans utilized the ordeal as a form of punitive torture equivalent to other corporal penalties highlights the fact that the distinction between the functions of what historians term "torture" and "ordeal" had become blurred.

It is most important, therefore, that we not confuse "torture" as a medieval legal procedure (or as legal historians define it) with the term "torture" as I define it: that is, any deliberate and systematic application of physical and/or psychological pain and destruction which is used to



achieve some specific end. In this context "ordeal" becomes a most interesting complementary--and *not* contradictory--concept in relation to torture.<sup>117</sup> "Ordeal", in this context, is a means of ascertaining or asserting the valence (good or evil, saint or sinner, innocent or guilty) of the accused's spiritual identity: the ordeal--and especially those of the boiling water and the red-hot plowshares--seems to have much in common with, say, the episode describing Juliana in the cauldron of lead, or that concerning the youths in the furnace in *Daniel*, or any other similar episode. This idea also is extremely relevant in the context of the fire of judgment, where the condition of one's soul determines the effect of the flames upon one. (See my discussion in Chapter Five).

In this chapter I have attempted to describe the reality of practices of torture, dismemberment, and bodily destruction in Anglo-Saxon England. I have concerned myself with the various kinds of mutilation involved, and with specific examples which exemplify the nature and purpose of such mutilation. Further, I have explored the legal history which illuminates, and the philosophical understructure which informed, such purposes. Thus we have examined how torture was a language of political, legal, and moral power in Anglo-Saxon England, and how this language both reflected political and social realities and articulated a binary understanding of the body both as a potential text for inscribing such exterior political and social realities, and as a gloss for interpreting the interior spiritual nature of the individual involved. Before moving on to a discussion of the nature and purpose of torture in an Old English poetic context, I turn now to an examination of Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the nature of pain; pain is at the heart of torture, and it is only with an understanding of what "pain" is--and what our forebears thought it was--that we can begin to appreciate what "torture" is, and how it functions in Old English literary culture.

## CHAPTER ONE NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all chronicle and annal citations refer to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*; see bibliographical entry, below.
- <sup>2</sup> See, for example, the description of the funeral pyre of Hildeburh's sons in *Beowulf*, ll. 1114-1124, or the description of the funeral pyre of Beowulf himself, ll. 3143-3149. See also the description of the phoenix's destruction by fire, *Phoenix*, ll. 216-222a.
- <sup>3</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, ed. *English Historical Documents, c. 500-1042*. Vol. I of *English Historical Documents*. David C. Douglas, gen. ed. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955. Page 155. This reference is from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (hereafter ASC), version C (A,B), dated 685.
- <sup>4</sup> Whitelock, page 156; ASC 686.
- <sup>5</sup> Whitelock, page 156; ASC 687.
- <sup>6</sup> Whitelock, page 167; ASC 794 (792).
- <sup>7</sup> Whitelock, page 189; ASC 896 (897 C,D).
- <sup>8</sup> Besides the historical annals themselves, and the acts which they record, I am at least tangentially interested in examining the nature of Anglo-Saxon historiography: that is, how history was conceptualized by Anglo-Saxon historians. While I do not address this concern explicitly in any great detail, I do try to place these records in their philosophical and cultural context, which necessarily implies that I at times interpret the act of recording history. When, for instance, I note the Anglo-Saxon perception of the nature of the relationship between the body and the spirit as this perception is revealed through criminal law, the concept of the trial by ordeal, and records of punitive torture, I am explicating not just the historical records, but the purposes and philosophies behind the record-keeping. I find many ways in which the poetry, hagiography,



homiletics, law, and history of this period intersect, and I find--in fact--that the generic boundaries which we impose are often blurred and indistinct in this context. What we deem "history", and our reasons for recording it, are much more narrowly constrained than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. While I do not focus on this issue of historiography, I am aware of it, and I attempt to note the points at which I grapple with it.

<sup>9</sup> Decapitation and castration are also psychologically linked; see my discussion of the semiotic significance of this link in Chapter Four.

<sup>10</sup> Whitelock, page 213. See note 6.

<sup>11</sup> Whitelock, page 213. See note 7.

<sup>12</sup> Whitelock, page 213; ASC 993 C (D,E). In this case we have the context of the treason of Ælfric, and therefore the fact that Ælfgar is named as the son of an Ealdorman Ælfric offers a persuasive argument as to the reason for Ælfgar's blinding; the punishment of the son in lieu of the father may have been a matter of necessity: the father may have been inaccessible or too powerful. This would not be a singular incidence; see King Edmund's blinding of the sons of Dunmail, king of Cumbria, discussed below. Such evidence may seem more suggestive than conclusive, but given the nature of the narrative style of most of the ASC, it is convincing; where such facts are placed in juxtaposition, it is usually to a purpose. Some other examples are suggestive, but not convincing, and these place the Ælfgar incident in perspective. For an intriguing reference which hints at a connection between blinding and some unmentioned breach of fealty, but offers no such corroborating contextual evidence as this example does, see Whitelock, page 218; ASC 1006 C (D, E):

In the same year Wulgeat was deprived of all his property, and Wulfheah and Ufegeat were blinded...

The fact that Wulgeat lost his holdings--a common punishment for treason--might suggest that the two blindings listed along with his disenfranchisement are related. But there is no way to be sure.

13 David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway, eds. *English Historical Documents, 1042-1189*. Vol. II of *English Historical Documents*. David C. Douglas, gen. ed. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953. Page 157; ASC 1075, both D and E.

14 Douglas and Greenaway, page 158; ASC 1075 E. D reads "were sentenced".

15 Douglas and Greenaway, page 158; ASC 1075 D. E makes no mention of "shame".

16 Douglas and Greenaway, page 158; ASC 1076 D. E omits the date, which would be 31 May.

17 Douglas and Greenaway, page 172; ASC 1095 E.

18 Douglas and Greenaway, page 173; ASC 1096 E.

19 The combination of castration with blinding is a striking one; one without the other would not be nearly so devastating, either in practical or symbolic terms. A sighted castrated man would still be able to fight, to lead troops, to function politically as he had before. Conversely, a blinded man who had not been castrated would still be able to produce male offspring to serve these same social functions in his stead. By combining these two acts of mutilation, King William deprives his victim (and his victim's family) of both a political present and political future; and by leaving him alive in such a condition, these realities are made manifest in a much more graphic way than would have been achieved by a simple execution. The relationship between sight and



power is an especially interesting one; see my discussion of the accounts of the blinding of Præn by Cenwulf, below.

20 Douglas and Greenaway, page 191; ASC 1124 E.

21 Douglas and Greenaway, page 192; ASC 1125 E.

22 For examples of the Vikings' actions as allegorical manifestations of evil and single-dimensional, see especially the famous annal for 793 which seems to equate the ravages of the Northmen with other pestilences of nature and Providence, foretold by "dire signs" and to be understood only as the erstwhile inexplicable scourge of an angry God:

In this year dire portents appeared over Northumbria and sorely frightened the people. They consisted of immense whirlwinds and flashes of lightning, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. A great famine immediately followed those signs, and a little after that in the same year, on 8 June, the ravages of heathen men miserably destroyed God's church on Lindisfarne, with plunder and slaughter....(Whitelock, page 167; ASC 793 D (E))

In the early references especially, before an awareness of political circumstances and a sense of causality begin to seep into the narration, the Viking raids sometimes seem to belong in a biblical recitation of plagues.

23 The Vikings are quite often portrayed as faithless oath-breakers, of course; see for example Whitelock, pages 176, 182, 217; ASC 865 A, B (866 C), 885 A, B (886 C), 1004 C (D, E) (respectively). It is only fair to note that the annals are rife with Anglo-Saxon oath-breakers, as well. For examples of the Vikings portrayed as upholding treaties, however, see Whitelock, pages 180, 214; ASC 878 A, B (879 C), 994 C (D,E) (respectively). See most especially the account of the oath sworn by the Danes "on the holy ring", evidently an important pagan Germanic surety

which they had hitherto avoided (therefore, ostensibly, nullifying any oaths which they had made which were not so sanctified). For the reference see Whitelock, page 179; ASC 876 A, B (877 C). See especially note number 4. For a Norse perspective on the function of the holy ring in oath-giving, see *Eyrbyggja Saga*, in the description of the interior of a heathen temple, right after Thorolf Mostur-Beard lands in Iceland and carries fire around his claim.

24 Whitelock, page 223; ASC 1013 C (D, E).

25 Whitelock, page 224; ASC 1014 C (D, E).

26 For a brief and clear assessment of the function of the *wergild* in Anglo-Saxon England, see especially Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989. For commentary on specific laws concerning *wergild* for various social classes in different Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, see pages 278 and 303-304. For a representative (although not comprehensive) sampling of laws pertaining to various situations in which *wergild* was involved, see Whitelock: *The Laws of Ethelbert*, 5, 6, 7, 13, 20-23, 25, 26, 30, 86, 87 (pages 357-359); *The Laws of Wihtred*, 25, 26, 28 (pages 363-364); *The Laws of Ine*, 12, 21, 21.1, 33, 34, 34.1 (pages 365-368); *The Laws of Alfred*, 26-28 (page 377); *The Treaty Between Alfred and Guthrum*, 2, 3 (page 381; see discussion of this material in Stenton, below). For a discussion of the comparative systems of Danish and English *wergild*, brought to an accord under the laws of Alfred and Guthrum, see Stenton, pages 261-262, and most especially note number 1.

27 Whitelock, page 222; ASC 1011 C (D, E).

28 Whitelock, page 222, note number 11.

29 Whitelock, page 222; ASC 1012 C (D, E).



30 Whitelock, pages 320-321. This reference is from *The Chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg*.

31 Whitelock, page 168; ASC 798 (796 D, E).

32 Whitelock, page 168; ASC 796 (F). A somewhat fuller account of these acts is recorded in the *Historia Regum* attributed to Simeon of Durham. In this account King Præn of Kent is referred to as Eadberht, but we learn in the ASC that both names refer to the same person (Whitelock, page 167; ASC 796 (794) D (E)). Simeon's outraged tone at the brutality of the Mercians is noteworthy, but still more significant in the context of this discussion is the outcome of Cenwulf's act: having deprived Eadberht of kingdom, eyes, and hands, he takes control of that kingdom symbolically by placing the crown on his head and the scepter in his hand; this act signifies the reality that Eadberht has been deprived of the power to hold a kingdom (metaphorically) or to hold a scepter (literally):

In these times Cenwulf, king of the Mercians, invaded the province of the people of Kent with the whole strength of his army, and mightily devastated it with a grievous pillaging almost to its utter destruction. At the same time Eadberht, king of the people of Kent, was captured, and the king of the Mercians ordered his eyes to be torn out and his hands ruthlessly cut off, because of the pride and deceit of those people. Then, having obtained it with the Lord's help, he added the dominion of that kingdom to his own dominions, placing the crown on his head and the sceptre in his hand. (Whitelock, page 249; *Historia Regum* 798)

33 This episode, in my view, helps to explicate the blinding of William of Eu, discussed above.

34 Whitelock, page 168; ASC 799 (797 D, E).

35 Douglas and Greenaway, page 138; ASC 1063 (E). A related incident in which an act of decapitation is equated with the consolidation of political power is to be found in the annals of Florence of Worcester. In this episode, Cnut has already claimed the throne of England, but is anxious to do away with Eadwig, the brother of Cnut's predecessor Edmund, in order to stave off any potential rebellion. Cnut attempts to bribe one Æthelweard--whom he has reason to believe might have influence over Eadwig--into betraying the prince; Cnut says generally that he wants Eadwig killed, but he specifically asks for the prince's head:

Now one of the aforesaid athelings was Eadwig, the illustrious and much honoured brother of King Edmund, and by most evil counsel they there resolved that he should be exiled. And when King Cnut had heard the servile flattery of the above-mentioned persons, and the contempt which they expressed for Eadwig, he entered his chamber rejoicing, and, calling to him the perfidious ealdorman Eadric, he inquired of him how he might entrap Eadwig, to endanger his life. And he said in reply that he knew another man, Æthelweard by name, who would be able to betray him to death more easily than he; he could have a talk with him and promise him a great reward. When he learnt the man's name, the king called to him, saying craftily: "Thus and thus has Ealdorman Eadric spoken to me, saying that you can lay a trap for the atheling Eadwig in order to kill him. Agree now to our counsels, and you shall possess all the honours and dignities of your ancestors; and get me his head, and you will be dearer to me than my own brother." He indeed said that he would seek him out



and kill him, if he could by any means. Nevertheless, he did not intend to kill him, but promised this way out of pretense; for he was sprung from a most noble English family. (Whitelock, page 285; Florence 1016)

Eadwig was to escape Cnut's wiles for another year; but considering Cnut's penchant for politically significant acts of bodily destruction (see his disfigurement of hostages, above, and his treatment of the corpse of Eadric, below), it does not seem unreasonable to assert that his desire for the head of his rival illustrates his knowledge that such a trophy would have a symbolic, as well as a practical, value.

<sup>36</sup> Douglas and Greenaway, pages 138-139; ASC 1063 (D). We find a tantalizing record of decapitation in the annal for 1053 which might seem related to the Anglo-Welsh political struggles of the next decade. In this case the brother of the Welsh king is put to death due to the "injuries" (presumably to the English) for which he was responsible. No mention is made as to whether he was killed by some of his own people to placate the wrath of the English, or whether he was taken in some sort of retaliatory action by the English:

...And it was decided that Rhys, the Welsh king's brother, should be killed, because he was causing injuries and his head was brought to Gloucester on the eve of the Epiphany.

(Douglas and Greenaway, page 130; ASC 1053 (D))

It is impossible to tell in this context whether Rhys was killed for politically reconciliatory reasons as Griffith later was, or whether he was killed by the English much as a Dane or other raider might be. We learn from other sources that Rhys was put to death by order of Edward (Douglas and Greenaway, page 209). In any case, it is significant that he was decapitated, and that his head was taken to Gloucester as a sign of

his actions, their consequences, and the power structures involved. Such a case exemplifies the power of the English and the weakness of the Welsh: either the Welsh turned on one of their own in order to appease their neighbors, as in the case of Griffith, or the English were able with impunity to capture, kill, and dismember the brother of the king of the Welsh, taking his head as a trophy.

37 This is precisely the opposite structure as that examined in the description of punitive torture, in the first section of this chapter. In the case of punitive dismemberment, for example, (say the moneyer's loss of a hand) the authority structure is not much concerned with the particular individual involved, nor indeed, with the particular offense; rather, it is the purpose of punitive torture to use the broken body of the victim (any victim) in order to publicly announce the power of the state, and (more incidentally) the crime of the victim. It is not that the state does not consider the actions of the victim to be criminal, or that the state does not wish to punish these actions; these the state indeed does want, but most of all the state is interested in a public display which will serve as a lesson (a text to be read) for the community at large, a lesson which has more to do with power and authority than with crime and punishment. This is a means of social control. In the case of torture utilized as a means of gaining political control, however, the values are reversed: the primary goal is to remove rivals and consolidate control, and the symbolic nature of the act (although present) is more incidental to the function of the act of torture.

38 It is of most particular significance that this Edward (the Confessor) was the half-brother (through Emma, their mother) and heir of Hardacnut, and the full brother (both Edward and Alfred being the sons Æthelred and Emma) of the Alfred blinded at the hands of Earl



Godwine. This Godwine was father to the Harold (called "Godwineson") who became Harold II upon the death of the Confessor, and who died at Hastings. The blinding of Alfred was on the orders of Harold I (called "Harefoot") who was half-brother (through Cnut, their father) with the same Hardacnut who later desecrated Harefoot's corpse. Harefoot's mother was Ælfgifu, the first wife (never consecrated) of Cnut; Cnut later married Emma (Æthelred's widow). It is all a bit confusing, but the point is that these two episodes are very closely interwoven in terms of political symbolism and family relationship.

39 Whitelock, page 233. See especially notes numbers 1, 2, and 4. The account which I have recorded here is primarily from the "C" chronicle; the "D" version evidently omits mention of Godwine, and pins the blame for Alfred's treatment on Harold himself and his popular support.

40 Whitelock, pages 232-233; ASC C (D).

41 Whitelock, page 289. This reference is from the entry for the year 1036 in *The reigns of the Danish kings of England, from Florence of Worcester*.

42 Whitelock, page 322. This entry is from the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. Concerning the import of this forgery and the plot which brought it into being, see Whitelock's preface to this selection. She underscores the political motivation implied by this version, and also offers a comparative critical summary of the various accounts of Alfred's sorry fate:

By making Alfred's visit one of political intention, it supplies a motive for his molestation in England, which is lacking from the account in the Chronicle, where his sole purpose is to visit his mother. It is possible that the English writer considered it impolitic to state in the reign of the Confessor that his brother's

murderers had any sort of provocation. Norman traditions, best represented by William of Poitiers and William of Jumièges, are in agreement with the *Encomium* on this matter, though differing in detail. They describe an earlier attempt by Edward to recover his throne, in which he came with 40 ships to Southampton, was met by an English force, and, though victorious, retired to Normandy with his booty, because of the superiority of the forces opposed to him. Harold's cruel treatment of Alfred, who is said to have made better preparations for attack, and, sailing from the port of *Icius* (Wissant?), to have come to Canterbury, is explained as an attempt to frighten Edward from making any further effort. Like the 'D' version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the author of the *Encomium* seems anxious to avoid laying the crime on Earl Godwine. He may have been unwilling to make an enemy of a man who was in power at the time of his writing, whereas Harold was dead and could safely be vilified. The Norman versions lay great stress on the deliberate treachery of Godwine, who pretended to receive Alfred as a friend, in order to hand him over to his enemies. They are, however, obviously actuated by a wish to justify William the Conqueror's attack on England by all possible means, and seize this opportunity of making it an act of vengeance for the murder of Alfred by the machinations of

Godwine, King Harold II's father. (Whitelock, pages 321-322)

43 See Whitelock's commentary from page 322, cited above.

44 Whitelock, page 233; ASC C (D). The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* offers some additional graphic detail (see below); Florence of Worcester gives substantially the same account as that in the ASC, except for the few additional details which I've noted below. This is not by any means



an isolated incident of the blinding of heirs of defeated enemies (as potential claimants to power) as a means of consolidating and protecting political gains. See, for example, the fate of the sons of Dunmail, king of Cumbria, at the hands of Edmund of Wessex, described in the *Flores Historiarum* of Roger of Wendover:

...King Edmund, relying on the help of Leolin, king of Dyfed, despoiled the whole of Cumbria of all its property, and having deprived the two sons of Dunmail, king of that province, of their sight, he gave the kingdom to Malcom, king of the Scots, to hold of him, that he might defend the northern parts of England from incursions of enemy raiders by land and sea.... (Whitelock, page 257; *Flores Historiarum* 946)

45 Whitelock, page 289; Florence 1036.

46 Whitelock, pages 323-324. This entry is from the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*.

47 See Stenton, pages 422-423.

48 See Stenton, pages 566-569.

49 Whitelock, page 291; Florence 1040. See also Stenton, page 423, for further discussion of the number and importance of Godwine's "oath helpers", who are only obliquely mentioned here.

50 Note Whitelock, page 233; ASC 1037 C (D): "In this year Harold was chosen as king everywhere, and Hardacnut was deserted because he stayed too long in Denmark...".

51 I include the ASC annal for comparison:

...And also he did nothing worthy of a king as long as he ruled. He had the dead Harold dug up and thrown into the fen. (Whitelock, page 234; ASC C (D))

52 Whitelock, page 290; Florence 1040. Nor is this a singular illustration in which the treatment of a corpse is as much a politically-significant language act as the mutilation of a living body. Florence of Worcester offers a similar example in the entry for the year 1017. In an episode occurring not long after the elimination of Eadwig by Cnut (discussed above), the king orders the execution of Eadric, a character even more disparaged than Godwine in the annals; Eadric had served Cnut quite well, it seems, but--unlike Godwine--he was not in a position to protect himself when Cnut judged it was time to dispense with such a dangerous servant:

And at the Lord's Nativity, when he was in London, he gave orders for the perfidious ealdorman Eadric to be killed in the palace because he feared to be at some time deceived by his treachery, as his former lords Ethelred and Edmund had frequently been deceived; and he ordered his body to be thrown over the wall of the city and left unburied....(Whitelock, page 286; Florence 1017)

Eadwig had been of use to Cnut, but he was an oath-breaker, a liar, a man whose pragmatic cunning outweighed his sense of honor. The loyalty of such a man is suspect because he has given false pledges before. He can not be trusted, perhaps especially by those who have made good use of his capacity for treachery. Cnut is an interesting study in contrasts, as he clearly valued the utility of such oath-breakers when it was convenient, and yet seemed especially conscientious about ridding himself of such villains--the lowest form of life in the Germanic conception--at the earliest convenience. His treatment of the perjurers who supported his claim to the throne of England in 1016 discussed below, is another case in point. The value of the personal integrity and



sworn word of an individual in this cultural context can not be over-emphasized, even though political figures in that world were often as faithless as in our own; perhaps this very emphasis on the value of oath-keeping hinged upon a knowledge of this very (perhaps necessary) character weakness in many men of power (see discussion of oath-keeping above, and especially how these cultural values are reflected in Germanic and Anglo-Saxon law, below). For an example of a thane whose faithfulness to a number of seemingly conflicting oaths of loyalty provides a striking contrast to the feckless Eadric, see the episode from the account of the life of Athelstan from William of Malmesbury discussed below. Cnut was a man who used the text of the body broken to articulate a number of levels of meaning, and this is not the only example of particular note; see his treatment of the hostages of the faithless English subjects of his father, discussed above. In this case, the rotting corpse of Eadric--visible for all to see for an extended period of time and over the course of its decomposition through exposure to the elements, animal scavengers, and decay--stands as a graphic testament to the wages of deceit and faithlessness, to Eadric's personal villainy, and--most importantly--to the consolidation of political power by Cnut, who could at this point afford to do away with a powerful noble who had been amongst his prime supporters; that he did so in such a way as to emphasize Eadric's faithlessness (remarked upon by the chronicler) without drawing undue attention to his own complicity in these crimes is of particular note, and draws attention to the political acumen reflected in Cnut's use of acts to articulate a language of personal and political power.

53 Whitelock, page 291; Florence 1040.

54 Stenton, page 423.

55 Stenton, page 422.

56 Harold was technically the illegitimate son of Cnut. See Stenton, pages 397-398, for a brief summary of Cnut's unconventional and opportunistic private life. For all intents and purposes Cnut was a bigamist; although he was never (in the eyes of the church) married to Harold's mother Ælfgifu, she was his first partner, she bore his eldest son, and he encouraged her to behave in Scandinavia as his queen, even appointing her regent in Norway for their son Swein. During the English succession crisis after the death of Cnut, Harold was merely named regent until Hardacnut could resolve the difficulties facing him from Norway in the person of Magnus; during the three years which Hardacnut was forced to remain in Denmark, however, Harold saw his opportunity and took it. See Stenton, pages 419-421, for details of the events involved. Harold was therefore both illegitimate and inconstant, and Hardacnut clearly could not forgive his half-brother's opportunistic gain at his expense.

57 Douglas and Greenaway, pages 199-200; ASC 1137 E.

58 Douglas and Greenaway, page 203; ASC 1140 E. This annal seems to be an amalgam of various events which occurred during Stephen's reign, and the chronology is inaccurate. See the editors' notes, pages 201-203. Note especially that the events having to do with the conflict between Stephen and Henry occurred in 1153.

59 Douglas and Greenaway, page 203; ASC 1154 E. King Stephen died on 25 October 1154, and Henry was crowned on 11 December 1154; this is the last entry in the ASC.

60. Henry Charles Lea, *The Ordeal*. With additional original documents in translation by Arthur E. Howland. Edited, with Introduction and Bibliography by Edward Peters. From *Sources of Medieval History*.



Edward Peters, ed. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1973. Pages 192-193. This excerpt is drawn from the appendix which Peters adds to Lea's work; this material originally appeared in a pamphlet by Howland entitled *Ordeals, Compurgation, Excommunication, and Interdict*. Howland includes the following information with his translation of this episode:

THE ORDEAL OF GLOWING PLOWSHARES UNDERGONE  
BY QUEEN EMMA. Source: H. R. Luard, ed., *Annales  
Monastici*, Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores (Rolls  
Series), No. 36, Vol. II (London, 1864), pp. 23-4. This selection  
is taken from the Annals of Winchester, which themselves are  
attributed to Richard of Devizes, for the early period up to the  
Norman Conquest. The ordeal of Queen Emma, under the entry  
for the year 1043, is probably apocryphal, but illustrates the  
twelfth-century writer's conception of the ceremony.

It is interesting that Howland feels it necessary to comment upon what he perceives to be the veracity of his source; it is indeed true that Anglo-Saxon conceptions of what we would term "historiography" (see my note, above) are often quite different from our own. My purpose, however, is not to attempt to force these documents into a modern mold, discounting or discarding those which do not fit; rather, I am attempting to conceive of a model for understanding Anglo-Saxon historical attitudes as these pertain to torture, ordeal, dismemberment, etc. Relationships between the nature of the spirit and that of the body seem to have been important to some aspects of these attitudes, and to me this is more significant than whether or not any particular episode from the annals need be deemed "apocryphal". Further, in the context of a culture that relied upon the ordeal as a basis for its legal system (see discussion,

below), it is not exceptional to find occasional historical references which attest to the utility of this system.

61 Whitelock, page 151; ASC 640 (639 E). See also the account of Oswald's relics recorded in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (Book III, Chapter VI); this version offers the context for this particular miracle, which underscores the semiotic function of these relics as specific signs of piety:

When raised to that height of power, nevertheless, wonderful to relate, he was always humble, kind and generous to poor men and strangers. It is said, in fact, that on one occasion, when he was sitting at dinner with the aforesaid bishop on the holy Easter Day, and there was placed on the table before him a silver dish filled with royal delicacies, and they were already about to put forth their hands to bless the bread, there entered suddenly his thegn to whom was committed the charge of receiving the poor, and he informed the king that a great multitude of poor people, come from all quarters, was sitting in the streets begging some alms of the king. He at once ordered that the food placed in front of him should be carried to the poor, and also that the dish should be broken up and divided in portions among them. At which sight the bishop who sat by him, delighted at such an act of piety, seized his right hand and said: "May this hand never decay." And it happened according to his prayer. For when he had been killed in battle, and his hands and arms were cut off from his body, it happens that they remain incorrupt until this day; and they are kept enclosed in a silver coffer in the church of St. Peter in the king's town which is called after a certain former queen,



Bebbe by name, and they are venerated with due honour by all.

(Whitelock, page 626)

It is clear from this account that Oswald's hands do not decay because of the pious actions which he performed with those hands, and because of the blessing which those hands received from the bishop as a result of those actions. In this context, Oswald's hands serve as signs in much the same way as the severed hands of corrupt moneyers serve as signs, although they are meant to reflect very different spiritual realities; the moneyer's hands are meant to articulate the sin of the criminal and the power of the state, while Oswald's hands articulate the holiness of the saint and the power of the divine.

62 Whitelock, page 169; ASC 798 (F). For similar reports of undecayed bodies representing spiritual innocence and piety, see (for example), the accounts of Fursa, Queen Æthelthryth, St. Cuthbert, and St. Guthlac (Whitelock 633, 658-659 & 694, 669, and 712, respectively).

63 See Whitelock, page 366. Note especially the distinction between "thieves" (up to seven men), "a band" (seven to thirty-five men), and "an army" (over thirty-five men), and the respective penalties for complicity with each (laws 13.1 and 14-15, respectively). Note also that a stranger or foreigner who travels off the regular track must shout or blow a horn, or be considered a thief (law 20, which is almost identical with law 28 of Wihtrud (Whitelock, page 364)).

64 Whitelock, page 366.

65 Whitelock, page 368. Note that here not only is public reputation--or renown--a primary factor, but the ordeal--to which I will turn presently--is the first method which the law mentions by which the accused may be found guilty. It is interesting that the writer did not emulate the above entry and place obvious guilt ahead of the ordeal.

66 See Whitelock, pages 364-372. See especially laws 12 (death sentence for thievery, if not redeemed through *wergild*), 16 (slayer of thief may swear to thief's guilt), 21 (slayer of an announced foreigner may swear that he slew him as a thief (if deed is not concealed) and thus avoid paying *wergild*), and 35 (kinsmen of openly slain thief have no right to feud).

67 Whitelock, page 375. Note that the thief may redeem his hand through the payment of *wergild*; this is also true of the slanderer (discussed below):

6.1. And if he wishes to redeem the hand, and that is allowed to him, he is to pay in proportion to his *wergild*. (Whitelock, page 375)

68 Whitelock, page 377. Note that in this case the slave may not redeem his member through the payment of *wergild*; according to this code, a freeman would have paid a fine. William's justice concerning rape was as harsh as this, but more equitably dispensed (see discussion thereof).

69 Whitelock, page 384.

70 Whitelock, page 420. Whitelock points out that 8.1 is derived from Athelstan 14.1, cited above.

71 Whitelock, page 423. See especially Whitelock's note 1, which compares these laws with those of Ethelred upon which they are based; it is of considerable significance that where the earlier codes called for execution, Cnut has substituted mutilation.

72 Whitelock, page 424.

73 Whitelock, page 426.

74 Whitelock, page 426. Note that the penalties for men are far lighter, and involve spiritual atonement rather than physical mutilation.



Presumably women are to atone spiritually, as well, but the emphasis on marking their bodies with public guilt is particularly significant considering that men suffer their atonement much more privately. See laws 54-55, Whitelock, page 427.

<sup>75</sup> See especially Stenton, page 397. Stenton suggests that, although Cnut was the first Viking king to be embraced by the “civilized fraternity of Christian kings”, and was sincere in his commitment to Christianity, his fundamentally “barbarian” (Germanic) nature was reflected in both his political and his personal affairs. I suggest that this Germanic influence also might be reflected in his legal reasoning (regarding the utilization of the body as sign) on the basis of such arguments as Gaudemet’s (cited below), that concepts of the physical manifestation of divine revelation concerning spiritual nature are pre-Christian, and, when they occur in a Christian context, are “more pagan than Christian”.

<sup>76</sup> Douglas and Greenaway, pages 399-400. See especially the preface to this extract, which also notes the shift in the system of jurisprudence applied to the Normans from the traditional Anglo-Saxon one:

Note may be made of the introduction of trial by battle, in cases where Normans were concerned, as an alternative to the Anglo-Saxon system of wager-at-law and ordeal. (Douglas and Greenaway, page 399)

Although trial by combat is related to other forms of trial by ordeal (see my discussion of an example of Norman trial by combat, above), it is not precisely the same, and diverges most apparently in that it is bilateral, while the other ordeals are unilateral. See Lea, *The Ordeal*, page 3:

Although the wager of battle and the other ordeals have much in common, there is sufficient distinction between them to render

convenient their separate consideration, even at the risk of a little occasional repetition. The development and career of these forms of the judgment of God were not in all respects similar, nor was their employment in all cases the same. The mere fact that the duel was necessarily a bilateral ordeal, to which both sides had to submit, in itself establishes a limit as to the cases fitted for its employment...[m]oreover, in its origin it was simply a device for regulating under conditions of comparative fairness the primitive law of force, and the conception of the intervention of a Divine Power, whereby victory would enure to the right, probably was a belief subsequently engrafted on it. In the other ordeals this is the fundamental idea on which they were based....

77 Douglas and Greenaway, pages 476-477. See especially page 476, note 4, and page 477, note 1.

78 Douglas and Greenaway, page 400.

79 Douglas and Greenaway, page 164; ASC 1087 E.

80 Lea, *The Ordeal*, pages xiv-xv. From Peters' introduction; internal citation from Roscoe Pound, *Jurisprudence* (St. Paul, MN, 1959), page 369.

81 Lea, *The Ordeal*, page xvii. From Peters' introduction.

82 Malise Ruthven, *Torture: The Grand Conspiracy*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978. Page 44.

83 Lea, *The Ordeal*, page 30. Note also Lea's comment that papal approval or disapproval of the ordeal was utterly unimportant in the day-to-day functioning of the Church at large (page 163), and his discussion of various examples of the institutionalization of practices of the ordeal (pages 163-168).

84 Lea, *The Ordeal*, page xxv. From Peters' introduction.



85 Lea, *The Ordeal*, page xxvi. From Peters' introduction. See also Ruthven, page 45:

It gradually became apparent, however, that the Almighty did not exercise such a direct and immediate control over human affairs and that punishment for perjury was, likely as not, to be deferred to the next world. In secular law the various trials by ordeal generally replaced compurgation as a means of determining guilt in criminal prosecutions. Broadly speaking they were of two kinds: the bilateral ordeals, in which the contending parties submitted themselves to a form of contest such as the judicial duel or the ordeal of the cross (in which they had to stand with uplifted arms before the crucifix while masses were said, victory going to whoever kept up this position for longest); and the unilateral ordeals, such as the hot iron or boiling water, in which God was expected to indicate his judgement directly, by preventing injury to the innocent.

86 See Stenton, pages 339-340.

87 Whitelock, page 278. This entry is taken from *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, section 131.

88 Whitelock, pages 373-374.

89 Whitelock, page 363. By this time there are systems even more complex than this one which utilize a series of *wergild* equivalents in order to determine how many oath-helpers are necessary to exculpate an individual who stands accused of a particular crime. These complexities are not of immediate importance to my argument, except as examples of attempts to reconcile the Germanic tradition of the sanctity of the sworn oath with the realities of a culture which is no longer structured around the small village and clan community. In these earlier, more insular

environments, reputation would have offered a reasonable barometer for measuring the value of any particular individual's testimony, and social pressure reasonably could have been assumed to deter most individuals from departing from socially accepted norms (such as oath-keeping). See Lea's comment concerning "undifferentiated" systems of social control in primitive societies, cited above. For examples of such complex, *wergild*-based systems of weighing oaths, see the laws of Ine (in Whitelock), and particularly note 3 on page 369, and note 3 on page 370. It is especially significant that the right to swear an oath is forfeited through previous convictions--particularly convictions for perjury--and that the fine for each crime represents the amount of the aggregate *wergild* (expressed in hides) necessary for the oath to be sworn. In other words, the *wergild* value of the accused must equal the value assigned to the fine for the crime in question, or else the accused must engage oath-helpers, the combined *wergild* of whom brings the value up to the assigned level. Thus social status plays a vital role in determining the value of one's word, as higher castes receive higher *wergilds*. Note that the values attributed to fines and oaths according to this system are derived from relative *wergild* values, but are not necessarily identical in amount to those values.

90 Whitelock, page 361.

91 Whitelock, page 383.

92 Whitelock, page 386.

93 Whitelock, page 378.

94 Whitelock, pages 396-397.

95 Whitelock, page 400. As this entire system has bearing on issues concerning the place of oath and witness in Anglo-Saxon England, I



include the other laws relating to this institutionalization of witnessing in order to provide context:

3. Namely, then, it is my will that every man is to be under surety both within the boroughs and outside the boroughs.

3.1. And witness is to be appointed for each borough and for each hundred.

4. Thirty-six are to be chosen as witness for each borough;

5. twelve for small boroughs and for each hundred, unless you wish for more.

6. And every man is with their witness to buy and sell all goods that he buys and sells, in either a borough or a wapentake.

6.1. And each of them, when he is first chosen as a witness, is to take an oath that never, for money or love or fear, will he deny any of the things for which he was a witness; and will never declare anything in his testimony but that alone which he saw and heard.

6.2. And two or three of the men thus sworn in are to be witness at every transaction.

7. And he who rides out to make any purchase is to inform his neighbours what he is going for; and when he comes home he is also to announce in whose witness he bought the goods.

8. If, however, when out on any journey, he unexpectedly makes a purchase, without having announced it when he set out, he is to announce it when he comes home; and if it is livestock, he is to bring it on to the common pasture with the witness of his village.

8.1. If he does not do so within five days, the villagers are to inform the man in charge of the hundred, and both themselves and their herdsman are to be immune from penalty; and he who

brought it there is to forfeit the cattle, because he would not announce it to his neighbours; and the lord of the estate is to succeed to half, and the hundred to half.

9. If, however, it remains on the common pasture more than five days unannounced, he is to forfeit the cattle, and each of the herdsman is to be flogged; and there is to be no remission of that, no matter what refuge they reach; and he is nevertheless to declare in whose witness he bought that cattle.

10. If then he declares that he bought it with the witness of the men who are nominated as witnesses, either in a borough or in a hundred, and the man in charge of the hundred discovers that it is true, he is nevertheless to forfeit the cattle, because he would not announce it to his neighbours nor to the man in charge of his hundred; and he is to suffer no more loss in this matter.

It is clear that in this system the word of the individual involved is judged to be (potentially) self-serving, so the oath of a (presumably) objective official witness is to stand in its stead; thus the weight of this system--although still resting, in the end, upon the trustworthiness of the witness involved (and therefore, ultimately, upon the value of oaths: in this regard note especially 6.1)--is shifting from the uncorroborated oath of the freeman to the corroborating balance of the oath of his impartial peers. Note also the attempt to engage the community in the act of witnessing, and therefore to reinstate the traditional element of peer control present in earlier Germanic social structures (laws 7-9, especially); in this regard see my discussion of Lea's comment concerning "undifferentiated" social control in early Germanic societies (discussed above in the text), and my analysis of complex systems combining *wergild* values and oaths in order to attempt to reconcile a



traditional Germanic legal system with a much more complex Anglo-Saxon social context (discussed above in the notes).

96 Whitelock, page 424. *Healsfang* refers to a portion of the *wergild*; see Whitelock, page 363, note 3.

97 Whitelock, page 416.

98 Whitelock, pages 284-285; Florence 1016.

99 Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*. Vol. II. 2nd ed. London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1898. Page 600.

100 Langbein, page 6. Lea agrees with Langbein's general analysis of the popular basis for the ordeal. See *The Ordeal*, page 30, and most especially see page 158:

...the ordeal sometimes was regarded as the most satisfactory kind of proof, entitled to respect beyond any other species of evidence. The age was not logical, men acted more from impulse than from reason, and the forms of jurisprudence were still in a state too chaotic for regular and invariable rules to be laid down.

However, Lea also suggests that, while the ordeal was popularly perceived as the judgment of God, it was not without its shortcomings, and critics might be found even amongst its supporters. See *The Ordeal*, pages 153-162. In particular, Lea points out that popular sentiment and the dictates of common sense were probably not altered by the results of a trial by ordeal, any more than they are amongst our contemporaries by a trial by jury (page 153). He goes on to note that "the result depended mostly upon those who administered the ordeal" (page 158), and that contemporaries were aware of the potential abuses of the system (pages 158-159). It is particularly noteworthy that ordeal could be overridden by confession or public opinion (pages 154-155). In such a context of

seeming paradox and ambivalent justice, elaborate rationalizations were required to validate the system. See Lea's discussion of this phenomenon on page 155:

The manifest injustice of the decisions thus rendered by the ordeal put a severe strain on the faith of believers, and led them to the most ingenious sophistry for an explanation. (Page 155)

Lea discusses several of such paradoxical cases and the elaborate explanations constructed to reconcile the outcome of the ordeal with contradictory public perceptions of guilt (pages 155-157). Finally, Lea notes that laws were enacted to try to curtail such abuses (pages 159-160).

101 Lea, *The Ordeal*, page 160. The statistics which Lea cites are from Maitland; although the period of Maitland's study is somewhat later than that of my primary concern, it is a period from which many records survive, and--as Lea notes--it is also a period in which the ordeal was frequently invoked. It seems reasonable to assume that this trend of acquittal extended throughout the imposition of the law of the ordeal, and undoubtedly contributed to its continuing popularity. Lea also notes that the one case in which the accused was not acquitted involved the cold-water ordeal. Pollock and Maitland suggest that the chances in the ordeal were about even.

102 Lea, *The Ordeal*, page xx. From Peters' introduction; this is a citation from Jean Gaudemet, "Les ordalies au moyen age: Doctrine, legislation, et pratique canoniques," *Receuil de la Société Jean Bodin*, Vol. XVII, *La Preuve: Deuxième Partie, Moyen age et temps modernes* (Brussels, 1965), pages 103-104.

103 Theodore F. T. Plucknett, *A Concise History of the Common Law*. 5th ed. London: Butterworth & Co., Ltd., 1956. Page 115. As I



mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the role of the oath-helper has more to do with the public reputation (or indeed power and influence) of the accused than with the evidentiary role of the witness with which we are familiar. See also Pollock and Maitland, page 601:

...when the witness was adduced, he came merely in order that he might swear to a set formula. His was no promissory oath to tell the truth in answer to questions, but an assertory oath. We shall see hereafter that the English procedure of the thirteenth century expects a plaintiff to be accompanied by a 'suit' of witnesses of this kind, witnesses who are prepared to support his oath in case the proof is awarded to him.

See also R. C. van Caenegem, *The Birth of the English Common Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973. Page 66. Note that Caenegem uses the terms "oath-helpers" and "compurgators" interchangeably.

104 Whitelock, page 371.

105 Whitelock, pages 422-423.

106 Lea, *The Ordeal*, page 191. This excerpt is drawn from the Howland material in the appendix; Howland includes the following information with his translation:

*Aethelstanes Domas*, I, c. 23: Of Him Who Gives Pledge for an Ordeal.

For an overview of the methods of ordeal, see Lea, *The Ordeal*, pages 32-93; for concepts of consecrated foods used in ordeals see Lea, *The Ordeal*, pages 93-105. For examples of ordeal in Anglo-Saxon England, and the sources of the accounts, see the appendix to *The Ordeal*, pages 191-194.

107 Lea, *The Ordeal*, pages 191-192. This excerpt is drawn from the Howland material in the appendix; Howland includes the following information with his translation:

*Aethelstanes Domas*, IV c. 7: Doom Concerning Hot Iron and Water.

108 See Lea, *The Ordeal*, page 175:

In England, a rescript of Henry III., dated January 27, 1219, directs the judges then starting on their circuits to employ other modes of proof-- "seeing that the judgment of fire and water is forbidden by the Church of Rome."

For the significance of this change, see also S. F. C. Milsom, *Historical Foundations of the Common Law*. London: Butterworth & Co., Ltd., 1969. Page 359:

It is today impossible to imagine the practical and intellectual disarray caused by this decision. The responsibility for putting men to death could no longer be rested comfortably upon God, and the only known governmental decision did not seek to rest it anywhere. The judges going on eyre in 1219 were told to imprison those accused of grave crimes and thought dangerous, "yet so that they do not incur danger of life or limb by reason of our prison"; to allow those accused of medium crimes to abjure the realm; and to take security for good behavior from those accused of lesser offences. No trials were contemplated because no trials were now possible.

The emphasis of this directive on the preservation of the life of the accused is especially noteworthy. The shift from divine to temporal judgment necessitated by the papal decision of 1215 was at the root of this perplexity, and provides us with a possible reason, not only for the



reticence of Henry III to take responsibility for the death penalty, but also for the shift under the Conqueror from capital to mutilative punishment which was concurrent with the beginning of the Norman shift from trial by ordeal to trial by combat. As the system of trial by ordeal came under question, it is possible that English monarchs as early as William were unwilling to take the responsibility for spilling (possibly) innocent blood. See my discussion of William's law against capital punishment, above.

109 Ruthven, page 46. For a thorough overview of the debate which culminated in the abolition of the ordeal in Canon 18 of the Fourth Lateran Council, see John W. Baldwin, "The Intellectual Preparation for the Canon of 1215 against Ordeals." *Speculum* 36 (1961): 613-636. For an analysis of the legal (as opposed to theological) criticism of the ordeal, see R. C. van Caenegem, "The Law of Evidence in the Twelfth Century: European Perspective and Intellectual Background." *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Medieval Canon Law: Boston College, 12-16 August 1963*. Stephen Kuttner and J. Joseph Ryan, eds. Institute of Medieval Canon Law, Series C: Subsidia, Vol. 1. E Civitate Vaticana: S. Congregatio de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus, 1965: 297-310. See especially page 297:

Between 1100 and 1200 the modes of proof which had prevailed for centuries went through a crisis which would eventually lead to their disappearance. The old system, which we might call primitive or irrational or mystical, gave pride of place to ordeals, compurgation with oath-helpers and the like as means of asserting who was right or wrong, who was innocent or guilty. The appeal to the supernatural was part and parcel of the practice of the courts secular and ecclesiastical and these means of proof were

administered by the clergy as *sacramentalia* provided with the appropriate liturgy. In the twelfth century this practice came under attack from various quarters and began to give way to rational means of proof based on human enquiry and reasoning; they are mainly the hearing of evidence from witnesses, the analysis of various indications and the inspection of written documents.

See also Caenegem's discussion of this period of legal upheaval in *The Birth...*, pages 62-73. For other critics of the ordeal, see Lea, *The Ordeal*, page 163; for a discussion of the growth of papal opposition to the ordeal, beginning with the condemnation of the ordeal as a popular invention by Alexander II (ca. 1070), and culminating in the formal forbidding of ecclesiastical participation in trials by ordeal in 1215, see pages 168-174.

110 Lea, *The Ordeal*, page xviii. From Peters' introduction. Ruthven also discusses the role of the reemerging Roman law in inciting this dawning consciousness of the relationship between law and public welfare; see page 50. For a discussion of the banning of the ordeals as part of a general rationalization of government as well as law, see Ruthven, page 49. See also Ruthven's discussion on page 51 of the rise of confession and of written proofs:

The reintroduction of torture, then, was less the direct consequence of the revival of Roman law than the result of much wider changes in criminal procedure, in particular the decline of the ordeals and the change from oral to written proofs. In the latter case the Roman law was a decisive influence. By the thirteenth century the canon law, and increasingly the secular law, were placing emphasis on the need for written instruments and



witnesses as the best kind of proof. In the nature of things, the Roman requirement that two witnesses were necessary in the case of serious crime must often have been hard to satisfy. In earlier times, confession had always been an alternative to the archaic forms of proof--in fact some of the ordeals, such as the holy morsel were, whether consciously or not, designed to elicit it. There was also a strong tradition in canon law, deriving no doubt from the practice of sacramental confession, that a confession was final and incontrovertible--the 'proof of proofs' or 'queen of proofs' as it was known to lawyers. Confession could, therefore, under the new and more difficult rules, obviate the requirement for 'legal proof' in the form of at least two witnesses. While these changes were happening, the painful ordeals though banned, were still in recent memory. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that judges and lawyers should have found torture a convenient substitute for the old ordeals, ideally suited to the requirements of the new procedure.

See also Lea, *The Ordeal*, page 180:

While the prohibitions uttered by the papacy had undoubtedly much to do in influencing monarchs to abolish the ordeal, there were other causes of scarcely less weight working to the same end. The revival of the Roman law in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the introduction of torture as an unfailing expedient in doubtful cases did much to influence the secular tribunals against all ordeals.

111 See, for example, Ruthven, pages 43-44.

112 See Langbein, pages 5-6:

The Roman-canon law of proof was the successor to the ordeals, the nonrational proofs of Germanic antiquity. When the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 abolished the ordeals, it destroyed an entire system of proof.

113 Ruthven, page 7. For a discussion of why torture (as defined by legal historians) as a systematic legal procedure did not take root in English law, see Henry Charles Lea, *Superstition and Force: Essays on The Wager of Law, The Wager of Battle, The Ordeal, Torture*. 4th ed., rev. Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1892. Pages 563-564. See also Peters, pages 58-59. See also Ruthven, page 7.

114 Pollock and Maitland, page 650. For a similar commentary on the vacuum of a tenable system of jurisprudence in the aftermath of the abolition of the ordeal, see Plucknett, pages 118-119.

115 Ruthven, page 25. See also Ruthven, page 47:

Although the ordeals were primarily ways of determining judgement, there is evidence that they were sometimes used to procure confessions. A suspect might confess rather than face the ordeal: from there it was but a short step to applying the test, not as a way of determining judgement, but in order to procure the confession. The likelihood of the painful methods, such as hot iron or water, being used in this way increased once the procedure of trial by ordeal fell under the papal ban. What followed was not, in the first instance, so much the *introduction* of torture as the continuation of the ordeals under a new mode of procedure.

116 See Douglas and Greenaway, page 476. See also my discussion of this shift, above.

117 See Lea, *Superstition and Force*, page 429. According to the technical definition of torture used by legal historians, "torture" is a term



which only can be applied to physical torment which is inflicted within a system of jurisprudence in order to extract confession and corroborative evidence (see my discussion of definitions of torture in my Introduction); in such a context, ordeal and torture--although not polar opposites--are fundamentally different kinds of legal processes, which--although both may certainly involve the deliberate and systematic application of pain--are each utilized in separate legal systems which generally do not coexist. See page 429:

The ordeal and torture, in fact, are virtual substitutes for each other. It will be seen that they have rarely coexisted, and that, as a general rule, the legislation which depended on the one rejected the other.

As I make clear in my Introduction, I do not define torture this narrowly, and thus both a legal system which depends upon divine intervention and one which relies upon confession might fall under the auspices of my study, provided that each utilizes the deliberate and systematic application of pain as a regular part of the process involved. For me, "ordeal" is a subcategory of "torture", as the model from which I derive my definition of the latter is anthropological and semiotic, rather than legal and historical. It might be useful, however, to have a working knowledge of the distinction between the philosophical bases for each of these legal concepts. On page 4 of *The Ordeal*, Lea offers a cross-cultural analysis of the concept of the ordeal:

...we find in the religious history of almost all races that a belief in a Divine Being is accompanied with the expectation that special manifestations of power will be made on all occasions, and that the interposition of Providence may be had for the asking, whenever man, in the pride of his littleness, condescends to waive

his own judgment, and undertakes to test the inscrutable ways of his Creator by the touchstone of his own limited reason. Thus miracles come to be expected as matters of every-day occurrence, and the laws of nature are to be suspended whenever man chooses to tempt his God with the promise of right and the threat of injustice to be committed in His name. To this tendency of the human mind is attributable the almost universal adoption of the so-called Judgment of God, by which men, oppressed with doubt, have essayed in all ages to relieve themselves from responsibility by calling in the assistance of Heaven. Nor, in so doing, have they seemed to appreciate the self-exaltation implied in the act itself, but in all humility have cast themselves and their sorrows at the feet of the Great Judge, making a merit of abnegating the reason which, however limited, has been bestowed to be used and not rejected.

See also Caenegem, *The Birth...*, pages 62-63, for a comparison of "irrational" versus "rational" modes of proof. Compare this basis with that of the inquisitive legal process which historians term "torture" (from *Superstition and Force*, pages 429-430):

In the early stages of society, the judge or the pleader whose faith does not lead him to rely upon an appeal to God naturally seeks to extort from the reluctant witness a statement of what he might desire to conceal, or from the presumed criminal a confession of his guilt. To accomplish this, the readiest means would seem to be the infliction of pain, to escape from which the witness would sacrifice his friends, and the accused would submit to the penalty of his crime. The means of administering graduated and effectual torment would thus be sought for, and the rules for its application



would in time be developed into a regular system, forming part of the recognized principles of jurisprudence.

See also in *Superstition and Force* a geographical and chronological survey of the history of the evolution, methods, and procedures of such judicial torture (pages 429-479), the reemergence of judicial torture in Europe after the mid-twelfth century (pages 479-511), and a detailed analysis of the final form of this judicial process in post-medieval Europe (pages 512-561). For a more up to date discussion of the evolution of judicial torture, see Peters. Particularly relevant to this examination are Peters' analysis of the roots of judicial torture in Greek law (pages 11-18). Also of special interest are the similarities between early Greek customary systems of dispute settlement and later Germanic systems: the oath of the freeman was as sacrosanct in Ancient Greece as it was in the Germanic world (see page 13), and Peters finds this sanctity to be related to the growth of judicial torture in the legal system of the Greeks. See pages 36 and 37 for related observations. Note also the evolution of the concept of torture under Roman law (pages 18-36); the conflict between Roman and Germanic legal systems, and the resulting decline of judicial torture (pages 36-39); and the rise of Roman law in the twelfth century, which was concurrent with the reemergence of judicial torture (pages 40-62).

## CHAPTER TWO: Perceptions of Pain and the Language of Wounds and Weapons in the Old English *The Dream of the Rood*

It is always a mistake to equate the literary world with the physical world; it is, however, likewise a mistake to deny the relationship between these two. Such a relationship invariably exists at some level, and this was as true for the Anglo-Saxons as it is for us.<sup>1</sup> Chapter One provided a context of historical and legal torture on which to ground my exploration of literary torture in Chapters Three through Five; but it is also necessary to ground our discussions of "torture" on an understanding of "pain", both literal and literary. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to define the relationship between literal pain and its metaphorical representations in Old English religious verse. This relationship is nowhere more clear than in Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards the cross, and these attitudes are manifested most fully, of course, in *The Dream of the Rood*.<sup>2</sup> This most important Old English symbolic representation of the transformative force of the crucifixion succinctly illustrates the centrality of Christ's passion--and symbolically, of the cross--to Anglo-Saxon spirituality, as well as illuminates the relationship between "real" pain and its metaphorical counterparts in Old English literature.

David Bakan has discussed extensively the relationship between "real" and "symbolic" pain in the context of Christianity, and he has paid special attention to the central position of the crucifixion in this context; especially significant to this discussion is his view of the representation of Christ's pain on the cross as a bonding social agent. The universal nature of pain, and the pervasive, all-consuming quality of the pain experience, make representations of pain a particularly effective



bonding agent, and the cross is particularly well-suited to symbolizing this experience:

Skinner is eminently correct in pointing out the great significance of the cross as a symbol of the meaning of pain, a symbol through which large segments of humanity could be joined together. For many centuries the cross has been the way in which many people have found meaning in pain. The cross and its context of meaning has pointed the way for them to a union with the cosmic, on the one hand, and humanity, on the other. Indeed, one might well argue that one of the major psychological uses of Christianity has been to overcome the essential loneliness and privacy of pain.<sup>3</sup>

This paradoxical tension between the universal and personal natures of pain seems to be alleviated to a certain extent by the universal and personal applicability of Christ's passion, and *The Dream of the Rood* expresses this relationship between the private and public faces of Christ's suffering as clearly as any later text. The dreamer, contemplating the glory of the cross, finds that its very beauty reminds him of his own spiritual guilt, a very private pain which is, significantly, referred to as a "wounding" force:

Syllic wæs se sigebeam,      ond ic synnum fah,  
forwunded mid wommum. (ll. 13-14a)

[Wonderful was the victory-wood, and I was stained with sins,  
badly wounded with sins.]<sup>4</sup>

The isolating effect of the dreamer's pain begins to subside, however, when he perceives that the Rood, too, has suffered. At first, of course,

this only causes the dreamer more fear and dread; as the poem moves on, however, it becomes apparent that it is this very suffering of the cross, and, by extension, of Christ, that gives the dreamer's guilt any meaning. Further, the details of the passion serve to illustrate the universal nature of suffering, and the poem draws each reader into this community of pain in two specific ways: first, the Rood's own description of its torment, in tandem with Christ's, is graphic and unsettling; second, and perhaps most startlingly, this narrative is related in the first person:

þæt wæs geara iu,      (ic þæt gyta geman),

þæt ic wæs aheawen      holtes on ende,

astyred of stefne minum ...

þurhdrifan hi me mid deorcan næglum. On me syndon þa dolg

gesiene,

opene inwidhlemmas. Ne dorste ic hira nænigum sceððan.

Bysmeredon hie unc butu ætgædere. Eall ic wæs mid blode

bestemed,

begoten of þæs guman sidan,      siððan he hæfde his gast

onsended. (ll. 28-30a & 46-49)

[That was very long ago--I still remember it--that I was cut down

at the edge of the forest, ripped from my root.... They pierced me

with dark nails; the wounds are visible upon me, open malicious

wounds. I dared not harm any of them. They mocked us both

together. I was all soaked with blood, shed from the side of that

man after he had sent forth his spirit.]<sup>5</sup>

Both the graphic details of torment and the first-person nature of the narrative serve to personalize the experience, to make it real, and--most



importantly in the context of this discussion--to universalize the personal, to bridge the gap of isolation between individual sufferers of pain (see my discussion of the isolating nature of pain, below). That this physical pain is a spiritually transformative force is suggested early on in the poem, when the dreamer recounts the shifting nature of the tree's appearance; it is, at first, bloody and wounded, but then seems to be gilded and jeweled:

Geseah ic þæt fuse beacen  
 wendan wædum ond bleom;      hwilum hit wæs mid wætan  
 bestemed,  
 beswyled mid swates gange,      hwilum mid since gegyrwed. (ll.  
 21b-23)

[I saw that shifting symbol change coverings and colors; at times it was soaked with moisture--drenched with the flow of blood--at times adorned with treasure.]

This transformation represents, of course, not only the change wrought in Christ and the Rood through the passion, but the potential transmutation of each individual soul (see my discussion of "transmutation" in Chapter Five). Further, however, this vibrant and graphic reminder of divine suffering and transformation serves to remind the audience of the universal nature of such pain, seems to give it purpose, and binds the audience of the poem together with the powerful spiritual mortar of the common experience of pain. This is a striking example of the use of representational pain in the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

The next step is to examine how such representational pain in the Old English literary world ultimately is derived from--and at some level

represents--literal pain in the physical world. At this point we must question a fundamental assumption of this study: is it in fact appropriate to apply contemporary conceptions of physical pain to medieval models of spiritual transformation which utilize such physicality as a metaphor? I think that the answer to this question lies in the manner in which we confront this physicality. I propose to confront and to define "pain" in the terms of an anatomical and anthropological constant, related to such shifting cultural constructs as subjectivity, relativity, and perceptions of identity, but fundamentally and intimately bound up with the physical reality of the human experience. In other words, could the experience of the physical reality of pain endured by our forebears really have been so very different from that which we endure today?<sup>6</sup> The constancy of pain (which I will attempt to illustrate) being granted, our contemporary model of its nature must surely also be valid. What remains is to examine how Anglo-Saxon metaphorical representations of pain equate with and differ from our own.

In the context of my larger study concerning the nature and purpose of torture, it is significant that the concepts of pain and torment have been linked for time out of mind; in fact, the very root of our word "pain", is conceptually and linguistically bound together with that of "punishment":<sup>7</sup>

...the relationship between pain and punishment has been established for a long time, as indicated by its roots in Latin (*poena*) and Greek (*poine*), each meaning penalty or punishment.<sup>8</sup>

Real pain takes many forms; we must begin by examining what physical pain is (or rather, what it is perceived to be) and by noting how this physical manifestation of pain is related to psychological, emotional, and



spiritual states. Michael Bond provides a typical modern definition of pain, which I include here because it is illustrative of the elusive and “subjective” (to use Bond’s term) nature of pain, which is evident even in scientific writing:

Pain is a subjective experience arising from activity within the brain in response to damage to body tissues, to changes in the function of the brain itself either as a result of damage due to injury or disease, or to changes of a more subtle nature perhaps depending upon biochemical changes which also appear to play a role in producing mental illness.<sup>9</sup>

In their discussion of “the puzzle of pain”, however, Melzack and Wall problematize the issue still further; they point out that the relationship between injury and pain, although commonsensical, is tenuous at best, and often leads to confusion. Instead of offering a clinical definition of pain, they instead offer a clinician’s perspective on the many variables which make up the pain equation:

The link between pain and injury seems so obvious that it is widely believed that pain is always the result of physical damage and that the intensity of pain we feel is proportional to the severity of the injury. In general, this relationship between injury and pain holds true...however, there are many instances in which the relationship fails to hold up...some people are born without the ability to feel pain...and many of us have injuries...without feeling any pain until many minutes or hours later. In contrast, there are severe pains that are not associated with any known tissue damage or that persist for years after an injury has apparently healed.

Clearly, the link between injury and pain is highly variable: injury may occur without pain, and pain without injury.<sup>10</sup>

It is clear, then, that there is no easy answer to the question, "what is pain?", and that even to modern medical minds there are issues which may be illuminated through the examination of spiritual and emotional components of pain. This is not the forum for an extended technical discussion of the anatomical basis of pain sensations; the body of information relating to the various phenomena involved is immense, but here I will attempt a very brief synopsis of pertinent medical opinions concerning the physical basis of pain sensation, and cite additional references in the notes.

Bond suggests that it is standard to determine what pain is by charting what is experienced as "painful"; this basic concept has led to the construction of paradigms for measuring pain. Bond attempts to provide a means of determining levels of pain, or "noxious stimuli", by distinguishing between that which a subject finds "painful", and that which a subject finds "unbearable" (this thresholds model is a common one):

Measurement of sensitivity to a noxious stimulus reveals the presence of two levels of response in all human beings. The first, known as the pain perception threshold, is reached when the quality of the experience produced by applying stimuli such as heat or pressure changes and pain is felt for the first time. The second, known as the severe pain threshold, is reached when the pain becomes unbearable on increasing the strength of the stimulus.<sup>11</sup>



It is significant that Bond stresses that a sensation becomes painful when "the quality of the experience...changes"; this concept of "pain quality" is central to many modern notions of pain. Unpleasant stimuli become noxious stimuli, and can be grouped together as such, more or less simply on the basis that subjects find them painful. Roger Trigg offers a typical analysis of pain quality:

There must be some similarity between various sensations which is sufficiently marked to induce us to group the sensations together as the same kind of sensation and give the same name to all. It is this for which we have coined the term "pain-quality".<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, of course, this still begs the question of what it is that comprises this elusive pain quality, and, by extension, pain itself.<sup>13</sup>

At this point a brief overview of the history of philosophical perceptions of the nature of pain is in order. Pain has long been considered to be linked closely with emotion, and indeed, among the ancients it was not grouped with the senses.<sup>14</sup> It is only since the time of Descartes that a rational, physiological attempt has been made to classify pain as a sensory phenomenon; Descartes' conception evolved into what is known now as "specificity theory".<sup>15</sup> Descartes conceived of the nervous system as a series of channels leading from various receptors to the brain; when painful stimuli activated these receptors, messages to that effect ran through the channels:

He suggested that the system is like the bell-ringing mechanism in a church: a man pulls the rope at the bottom of the tower, and the bell rings in the belfry. So, too...a flame sets particles in the foot into activity and the motion is transmitted up the leg and back and

into the head where, presumably, something like an alarm system is set off. The person then feels pain and responds to it.<sup>16</sup>

Debates have raged since Descartes concerning whether it is more accurate to perceive pain as sensory or affective,<sup>17</sup> but it now seems as though the ancients were (at least partially) correct.<sup>18</sup> In any case, the traditional view in western culture has been that pain is an affective-- rather than sensory--state, and this position arose from the common observation that pain is an interior sense only remotely related to objects and events outside of the body (see my discussion of "interiority", below):

Reflecting the integral role of emotions in painful experiences, throughout most of recorded history pain was characterized as an affective feeling state rather than a sensation. To the ancient Greeks, it was an essential emotional component of the human spirit--the negative counterpart of pleasure. Aristotle was responsible for the enduring idea that pain is an affect, a "passion of the soul", distinct from the classic five senses. The enduring concept recognized pain as an affective experience, like sadness or bitterness, signaling something to be avoided or terminated, but not as a sense, because it was not referable to any specific quality of external objects.<sup>19</sup>

It is my assertion that pain, in the context of Old English poetry, likewise was perceived as an affective, emotional, and spiritual state. Turning again to *The Dream of the Rood* for evidence, I will examine this spiritual and emotive element in the Anglo-Saxon conception of pain. I then will illustrate how the Anglo-Saxons projected this interior



state outwards, giving public voice to the personal silence of pain with the language of weapons and wounds.

One of the most intriguing literary devices employed in *The Dream of the Rood* is the marriage between the emotive state of the dreamer and the contrasting physical manifestations of both pain and glory displayed in turns by the cross; perhaps nowhere in Old English literature is the relationship between pain and emotion made more clear. As I noted above, the dreamer's initial reaction to perceiving the cross is one of fear and apprehension; but his emotive links with the experience of the cross are more deliberately forged than that, and in fact at times seem to be mirrored by the cross itself. When he first notices that the cross has begun to bleed from one side, the dreamer exclaims that he was "disturbed by sorrows", and "afraid":

Eall ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed.

Forht ic wæs for þære fægran gesyhðe. (ll. 20b-21a)

[I was completely disturbed by sorrows. I was afraid because of  
that beautiful sight.]

He then refers to himself as "troubled" (*hreowcearig*, l. 25) as he remains in contemplation of the cross. The dreamer clearly attributes to himself, then, a number of emotional states throughout his experience, including fear, anxiety, and sorrow. What is noteworthy is that the cross attributes to itself analogous emotional states as it undergoes its experience. These states include anxiety and sorrow (ll. 59 and 79-80), as well as humiliation (ll. 46-48). It is most notable, however, that, in relating its emotional state immediately following the death of Christ, the rood mirrors the dreamer's words of ll. 20-21, and refers to itself as





affliction should suffice to illustrate amply the close link between emotional and physical pain in the context of Old English religious verse.

The Old English *Elene* provides us with two excellent examples of emotional and spiritual sorrow, each of which is bound up with manifestations of physical torment. When Judas, the deceitful leader of the Jews, refuses to reveal to Elene the hiding place of the true cross, she has him cast into a "dry pit" for seven days and nights, where his spiritual sorrow clearly seems to be a result of his physical state of deprivation and bondage:

Heht þa swa cwicne      corðre lædan,  
 scufan scyldigne      --scealcas ne gældon--  
 in drygne seað      þær he duguða leas  
 siomode in sorgum      seofon nihta fyrst  
 under hearmlocan      hungre geþreatod,  
 clommum beclungen... (ll. 691-696a)

[She commanded him then thus by a band to be led away, the guilty one thrust into a dry pit--the servants did not delay--where deprived of company he remained in sorrows a period of seven nights within his prison, tormented by hunger, bound with fetters.]<sup>21</sup>

This sorrow, and the physical torment associated with it, soon causes Judas to see the error of his ways, and he unearths the cross for Elene. Not long after the invention of the cross, the devil rises up in fury and confronts Judas, who, although formerly his servant, is now his enemy. The Devil's speech likewise links spiritual sorrow to physical

imprisonment and torture, that of the devils in hell, which--tellingly--  
mirrors Judas's earlier confinement:

Hwæt, se Hælend me  
in þam engan ham      oft getynde,  
geomrum to sorge. (ll. 920b-922a)  
[Lo, the Savior in that narrow dwelling often enclosed me, as a  
sorrow to miserable ones.]

It is most significant that the devil refers to his imprisonment in the terms *geomrum to sorge*, or "as a sorrow to miserable ones", as such a "to--" construction as this (designating purpose) usually marks both the agency and the object of an action; in this case, *sorg* or "sorrow" is clearly denoted as the direct result of the aforementioned imprisonment. Spiritual or emotional sorrow, then, is in both of these cases clearly the result of, and therefore to be associated with, physical manifestations of distress.

The Old English version of *Judith* offers another example of spiritual *sorg* linked directly with physical affliction; indeed, although *sorg* is traditionally glossed as "care" or "anxiety", or alternatively as "sorrow", "grief", "affliction", or "trouble" (clearly denoting an abstract and spiritual/emotional, rather than a concrete and physical, state),<sup>22</sup> in this case the reading implies a kind of "grief", "affliction", or "trouble" which might well be perceived as a euphemism for some sort of physical attack. In this speech Judith is displaying the severed head of Holofernes to the Bethulians, and is recounting to them the (mostly physical) evils which they have suffered at his hands:



Holofernes unlyfigendes;  
 þe us monna mæst morðra gefremede  
 sarra sorga ond þæt swyðor gyt  
 ycan wolde...(ll. 180-183a)

[Lifeless Holofernes, who upon us performed the most of murders  
 of men, of grievous afflictions, and who greater [afflictions] yet  
 wished to add...]<sup>23</sup>

Such a phrase as "grievous afflictions", especially in apposition as it is with "the most of murders", seems clearly to indicate that here the abstract emotional state of *sorg*, although undoubtedly present, can also be projected outward (in an act of description) onto those concrete physical acts of pain, torment, and murder which are themselves responsible for the sorrow.

It is likewise clear in the Old English version of *Daniel* that a term such as "sorrow" or "distress" may be used euphemistically to describe physical torment. After the three youths have been cast into the furnace, the poet describes their well-being in terms of their emotional as well as their physical states:

Freobearn wurdon  
 alæten liges gange, ne hie him þær lað gedydon.  
 Næs him se sweg to sorge ðon ma þe sunnan scima...  
 (ll. 262b-264)

[The noble youths were delivered from the attack of the fire; they  
 did to them there no harm. To them the roaring flame was no  
 more distressing than this, namely, what sunshine is...]<sup>24</sup>

The fire did them no harm, and neither were the flames in any way distressing to them; clearly here we have an instance of actual physical torment (or rather, the absence thereof), and the nature of the physical state of the three putative victims is described with reference to their emotional or spiritual perceptions of the physical event. The flames did them no more damage than the rays of the sun, and thus the youths felt no more "anxiety" than if they were walking about on a summer's day. The use of *sorg* here effectively underscores the perceived relationship between physical pain and emotional or spiritual state.

The Old English *Andreas* offers us two examples of victims of physical torments who beseech God (or his agent) to put an end to the physical turmoils which give rise to their spiritual *sorg*; in both of these cases it is clear that the emotional anxiety referred to by *sorg* is the direct result of the physical afflictions of which the supplicants are victims. Early in the poem, the apostle Matthew has been captured, tortured, and imprisoned by the cannibalistic Mermedonians; after having his eyes put out and being forced to drink an evil potion (which renders its victims into cattle-like brutes awaiting the slaughter), Matthew entreats God for deliverance. God responds to his prayer that Matthew's period of torment and confinement will be brief, and that Andrew will deliver him within twenty-seven days:

Is to þære tide      tælmet hwile  
 emne mid soðe      seofon ond twentig  
 nihtgerimes,      þæt ðu of nede most;  
 sorgum geswenced,      sigore gewyrðod,  
 hweorfest of henðum      in gehyld Godes.  
 (ll. 113-117)



[There is until that time a measured period--indeed, in truth twenty-seven nights all told--until you will be allowed out of suffering; afflicted by sorrows, glorified by victory, you will depart from humiliations into the protection of God.]<sup>25</sup>

When God describes Matthew as "afflicted by sorrows", it is clear in this context that he is referring to physical as well as emotional phenomena; the emotional state of the sufferer is here, as elsewhere, largely the result of his physical tribulations. Later in the poem we see an analogous (although inverted) example of *sorg* brought on by physical tribulations. Andrew has himself been a prisoner of the Mermedonians for some days, and has suffered harsh torments at their hands; after reminding God of his promise, however, Andrew is restored to health and causes a miraculous flood which wreaks havoc in the city of the cannibals. The fire of angels without, and a rising flood within, cause a great deal of death and destruction, and the Mermedonians question their wisdom in keeping Andrew prisoner. Finally, one amongst them speaks out, suggesting that, if they release the holy man, their sorrows will come to an end:

Nu ge magon sylfe      soð gecnawan,  
 þæt we mid unrihte      ellþeodigne  
 on carcerne      clommum belegdon,  
 witebendum.      Us seo wyrd scyðeð  
 heard ond hetegrim;      þæt is her swa cuð!  
 Is hit mycle selre,      þæs þe ic soð talige,  
 þæt we hine alysan      of leoðobendum  
 ealle anmode      (ofost is selost),  
 ond us þone halgan      helpe biddan,

geoce ond frofre;      us bið gearu sona  
 sybb æfter sorge,      gif we secað to him.

(ll. 1558-1568)

[Now you can recognize for yourselves the truth, that we in sin afflicted the foreigner with fetters, with cruel bonds, in prison. Fate, cruel and fierce, injures us; that is thus known here! It is much better, as I consider truth, that we with one mind release him from limb-fetters (the more quickly the better), and ask the holy one for help for us, for comfort and relief; there will be peace after sorrow for us immediately if we go to him.]

As in the case above, the sorrow referred to here is an emotional state, to be sure, but also is related to and brought on by the physical destruction (and fear of such destruction) of the Mermedonians by fire and flood. As we will see below, physical torment does not always result in pain, and therefore must not in all cases be equated with emotional or spiritual sorrow in the context of these poems; what is significant about these examples is that the Anglo-Saxon poets clearly perceived a link--in many cases--between physical and emotional pain.

Finally, the Old English *Phoenix* attributes a kind of "baleful" sorrow to the race of man after the Fall; it seems clear in context that this *sorg* is not simply the recognition of disobedience to God and a concurrent fall from grace and communion with him, but also that it is a deep-rooted grief founded in the certain knowledge of the bitter trials of mortal life and certain physical death which await each human being as a result of this original sin:

                         þær him bitter wearð  
 yrmþu æfter æte,      and hyra eaferum swa



sarlic symbel, sunum and dohtrum;  
 wurdon teonlice toþas idge  
 ageald æfter gylte; hæfdon Godes yrre,  
 bittre bealosorge; þæs þa byre siþþan  
 gyrne onguldon þe hi þæt gyfl þegun  
 ofer Eces word. Forþon hi eðles wyn  
 geomormode ofgiefan sceoldon  
 þurh nædran niþ; þa hio nearwe biswac,  
 yldran usse, in ærdagum  
 þurh fæcne ferhð, þæt hi feor þonan  
 in þas deaðdene drohtað sohton,  
 sorgfulran gesetu. (ll. 404b-417a)

[For them and also for their children there was bitter woe after  
 eating, a banquet grievous to the sons and the daughters; busy  
 teeth were grievously punished for their guilt; they gained God's  
 wrath, bitter baleful-sorrow. Since then the offspring have paid  
 the penalty for it with sorrow, because they ate that food against  
 the Eternal word. Consequently, sorrowful they had to relinquish  
 the joy of their native land through the malice of the serpent, when  
 it grievously deceived our forefathers in former days through  
 guileful spirit, so that they far thence into this valley of death  
 sought abode, more sorrowful dwellings.]<sup>26</sup>

The "bitter woe" and "bitter baleful-sorrow" that the sons of Adam must  
 face is that they have forsaken paradise for the "more sorrowful  
 dwellings" of this mortal world, this "valley of death". In this reference  
 the emotional and spiritual state of *sorg* is clearly associated with--and,  
 in fact, the result of--the knowledge of that most bitter of physical  
 torments, death itself. In all of these cases we see direct links between

spiritual and/or emotional states such as anxiety, care, and sorrow, and manifestations of physical torment, imprisonment, and death; further, there is often a clear causal relationship between this physical affliction and the ensuing emotional state. Physical and spiritual/emotional pain seem inextricably bound together in the conceptual framework of these poems.

It is clear, both specifically in the context of *The Dream of the Rood* and in Old English poetry more generally, that the Anglo-Saxons conceived of a link between physical and emotional pain; the exact nature of this relationship is somewhat less clear, but in the examples which we have examined it often appears to be somewhat causal in aspect. Physical affliction, imprisonment, and bodily destruction (or the threat thereof), seem in many cases to give rise to a concurrent state of emotional anguish, anxiety, or distress. It also is significant that an element of spirituality seems present in many of these cases, and though it is by no means fair always to equate "spiritual" with "emotional", in the context of these poems it seems clear that what we might perceive of as an emotive state was, for the Anglo-Saxons, often an important indication of spiritual nature. This should not be surprising when we consider the highly spiritual nature of Old English literature in general, and this type of material specifically. What is important about all of this in the context of my larger discussion is the clear link between the emotive and/or spiritual and the physical in Old English verse, and how the perceptions of the Anglo-Saxons regarding the spiritual aspects of physical pain resonate with modern conceptions of this same relationship.

Perceptions of pain vary from culture to culture, and from era to era, as do the models through which various cultures understand the links between the physical, the psychological, the emotional, and the



spiritual with regard to these self-same perceptions of pain. Since the time of Descartes, western medical thought has tended to view these links as less and less important; in recent years, however, it has become clear that these links do exist, and valuable insight into them is gained by examining the perceptions of other cultures:

The broadening constructs [of medical models of pain] are consistent with nontechnological, religious and philosophical world views of pain. In a classic monograph, Keele (1957) observed that non-Western cultures assign greater weight to the emotional qualities of pain. For example, he stated: "Though recognizing pain as a sensation, Buddha, and indeed Hindu thought in general, attached more significance to the emotional level of the experience." The cultural-specificity of concepts of emotion in pain and the importance of alternative orientations toward pain in the traditions of non-Western cultures have been described by Tu (1980). In Western culture, unidimensional sensory formulations of pain have yielded to multidimensional concepts that assign importance to cognitive and emotional dimensions as well as sensory components (Melzack & Casey 1968). The concept of suffering has also reemerged to encompass the broad range of thoughts and feelings provoked by major, traumatic and ongoing crises and the meaning this has for the person (Szasz 1957; Buytendijk 1961; Fordyce 1988).<sup>27</sup>

It is now accepted by physicians, as well as by psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists, that the emotional component to physical pain, although not always clear, is always present; indeed, we have had to rethink our own cultural conceptions of pain in order to

explain the growing corpus of clinical data which forces us to confront the emotive element of pain. In our examination of the Old English examples above, it became evident that the Anglo-Saxons perceived a causal link between physical distress and emotional anguish; an interesting modern conception is an inversion of this model: it is now asserted that emotional distress is often a trigger for the perception of physical pain:

...complaints of pain may be precipitated or exacerbated by emotional and social crises rather than tissue insult. For example, in the couvade syndrome, the precipitating event for a husband's complaints of aches and pains characteristic of pregnancy and labour appears to be the wife's complaints. Similarly, injured children occasionally do not become alarmed or display pain until they observe that the injury has upset a parent. These complaints appear to represent genuine distress rather than purposeful attempts to derive benefit or avoid activities.<sup>28</sup>

Further, Roger Trigg argues that the emotive "anguish" elements of the pain experience are themselves, in fact, that elusive pain-quality which separates the experience of a mere stimulus from the experience of a painful stimulus. Such a view serves to explicate further the Anglo-Saxon model of anguish as a result of physical pain, and underscores the fact that the causal relationship implied by the Anglo-Saxon conception of the relationship between the emotive and physical aspects of pain does seem to have resonance with modern conceptions:

If the "anguish" components of the pain experience are anything besides the pain-quality or the qualities of different species of



pain, they can only be our reaction to the pain-quality. If they are not the components of the "total pain experience" which give us anguish, then they must be that anguish. In that case, they are not very different from the "suffering", which...is one of the "pain components". In connection with pain, "suffering" implies distress or a high degree of dislike. To ask if someone suffered much as a result of the pain of a disease is to ask whether he was distressed or whether he found it exceptionally unpleasant...within the group of the emotional components we must distinguish between the emotions which take the pain *per se* as their "object" and those which take its significance, but that is the only ground of distinction.<sup>29</sup>

Modern 'conceptions of the link between physical and emotional pain, however, suggest that such a causal link is perhaps too reductive; though an emotional component surely exists, it is not necessarily a cause or a result, or indeed, need not be perceived of as playing any consistent role in the nature of pain. Rather, although this emotive element does certainly play some role, it is a shifting, complementary one, which may or may not serve as a cause or effect of a physical manifestation of pain:

Emotional distress serves not only as a component of pain, but it may be a consequence of pain, a cause of pain, or a concurrent problem with independent sources.<sup>30</sup>

It is clear from recent medical, psychological, and anthropological studies, that although perceptions vary from culture to culture, most cultures do understand links between the physical and non-physical

aspects of pain to exist; further, these same studies suggest that perception of pain by an individual is, at least to some extent, affected by that individual's culturally-ingrained preconceptions concerning pain. Although every individual perceives a similar sensation within given sensory parameters, ingrained cultural factors affect whether an individual's perception of such a sensation is or is not painful:

There is now evidence that the majority of people, regardless of cultural background, have a uniform *sensation threshold*...the sensory conducting apparatus, in other words, appears to be essentially similar in all people so that a given critical level of input always elicits a sensation. Cultural background, however, has a powerful effect on the *pain perception threshold*...the most striking effect of cultural background, however, is on *pain tolerance levels*...[such] differences in pain tolerance reflect different ethnic attitudes towards pain.<sup>31</sup>

In order to understand what is and what is not perceived of as painful to any given individual or group, then, it is vital to understand that culture's conception of pain; in order to do so, we must take into account the emotional, spiritual, or psychological factors which shape that conception. In the context of Anglo-Saxon culture, we must expect that conception to be heavily influenced by the spiritual and intellectual traditions of both Latin Christianity and Germanic tribal relationships. Both traditions place a heavy emphasis on such ideals as selfless devotion and loyalty to one's lord, the enthusiastic embrace of hardship, deprivation, and sacrifice in pursuit of such ideals, and the contempt of one's own life and happiness if purchased at the cost of such honor. In such a context, it is not surprising that the cult of the cross, which is



founded upon an acknowledgment of one's own unworthiness in the light of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, should find such fertile ground; neither is it odd that a poem such as *The Dream of the Rood* should explicate so clearly conceptions of pain in which the physical torment of the savior is inextricably bound together with the sorrow, anguish--and guilt--of the rood, the dreamer, and the reader.<sup>32</sup>

The relationship between psychological, emotional, and spiritual states and the physical experience of pain is particularly illuminating, as it would appear that there are times when pain is not painful at all;<sup>33</sup> an interesting example of this paradox may touch upon modern perceptions of medieval metaphors of pain. We have been taught to read saints' lives metaphorically, denying the relationship between fanciful representations of martyrdom and the real thing on the basis of such obvious inconsistencies as the painless--and indeed, sometimes pleasurable--torture of some of these holy victims. Recent research, however, has documented contemporary cases of self-mutilation which suggest that pain and "exaltation" are often opposite sides of the same experiential coin.

There are many documented examples of holy victims of what would seem to be torment or mutilation who appear to achieve a heightened state of spiritual ecstasy or exaltation instead of pain. Melzack and Wall cite instances of a particular ritual which takes place in remote villages in India.<sup>34</sup> Each year a man is chosen for the honor of traveling from village to village suspended from a scaffold built on the top of a cart. His role is to bless the children and the crops in each village. He hangs from a rope suspended from the scaffold and attached to two skewers which are inserted through the muscles in his lower back. As the cart moves between villages he holds himself up by the ropes, but during the blessing he swings back and forth over the villagers,

apparently suffering from no pain, and, indeed, displaying an expression of some exaltation; numerous other such practices in India, notably those performed by religious leaders, have been documented. Many of these have been questioned by rationalists seeking to break the grip of charlatans in rural areas. In any case these rituals are certainly reflected by rites elsewhere in the world, including numerous documented rites of passage amongst, for instance, Amerindian tribes.

Whether or not these practitioners actually have their pain transformed into exaltation through spiritual preparation is beside the point. There are physical reasons, such as the release of endorphins, which might answer just as well in many instances.<sup>35</sup> There are also many complex psychological and emotional factors which may come into play in some of these situations. For example, any discussion of such exaltation necessarily gives rise to some speculation concerning the possibility of finding pleasure in pain, and related psychological states such as masochism. Although it would be radically reductive to assume that states of spiritual transcendence of pain necessarily are related to such seemingly self-destructive behavior patterns as masochism, a brief analysis of some of the driving psychological forces behind these patterns may help to illuminate our discussion of such transcendence. David Bakan has argued that the rise of masochistic tendencies in an individual really has to do with a subconscious desire to preserve, rather than to destroy, the self. What is unique about such individuals is, to Bakan, their ability to differentiate between their sense of ego annihilation and their sense of the nature of pain:

I suggest that the person who engages in masochistic behavior is one in whom the sense of annihilation and pain per se are relatively strongly differentiated and in whom, furthermore, the



sense of possible annihilation itself is strong. In masochistic behavior, inflicting pain upon oneself is an effort to rebind the sense of annihilation to pain per se, thus affording the ego the sense of control over sources of annihilation.<sup>36</sup>

In other words, while the normal human perceives pain as a threat to the self, an alarm, as it were, signally possible encroaching annihilation, the masochist perceives, at a sub-conscious level, that this is a false alarm, and that the pain which they perceive is in no way a harbinger of the overwhelming sense of annihilation which threatens to engulf them; in such a context, engaging in activities in which the masochist controls the self-inflicted pain relieves such an individual of some of the sense of impotence he or she feels concerning the omnipresent annihilation fear. That such a relationship between the perception of pain and the fear of ego annihilation exists is proven by some clinical examples which serve to underscore the anxiety element so central to our conceptions of pain. (Note my discussion of *sorg* and the emotional component of pain.) A striking illustration of this relationship is to be found in reports concerning patients who experience pain, but who, due to surgical or chemical blocks, no longer associate their pain with ego annihilation, and therefore do not suffer from their pain:

A characteristic remark often made by patients who have been treated for pain by barbiturates or morphine, or who have undergone prefrontal lobotomy, is, "My pain is the same, but it doesn't hurt me now." Such a remark indicates that these medical measures somehow result in the separation of the sense of annihilation from pain per se and in a reduction of the sense of annihilation.<sup>37</sup>

Such reactions suggest that it is this very annihilation anxiety which lends to a particular stimulus the elusive pain quality. Such a suggestion has important implications for my discussion of spiritual transcendence of pain; in cases where the subject suffers no such anxiety (sometimes, perhaps, due to spiritual preparation or perspective), and indeed, in cases such as that of the Christian martyrs, where the subject even welcomes death, we could expect that the perception of physical pain will have an entirely different character from those cases in which such anxiety is present and strong (see my discussion of sacrifice and salvation, below).

Roger Trigg, although differing from Bakan as to the root cause of masochism, calls into question the semantic logic of defining "masochism" as "the enjoyment of pain",<sup>38</sup> and suggests ways of looking at the pleasure of masochism which may prove to have some spiritual valence. Trigg argues that pain logically can be enjoyed by the masochist, although there are elements which make the pain experience painful, and these can not be enjoyed; Trigg alludes to such anxiety components of pain as "distress". To Trigg, this distress is an emotional complement to pain, both physical and mental, and it, unlike the pain itself, cannot be enjoyed:

It can be no accident that every combination of pleasure and distress turns out to be different from enjoyment of distress. It must be that the total experience of being distressed is not in itself the kind of thing which we can find pleasant. It would indeed be very strange if the process of finding something unpleasant could itself be pleasant. There would be a fundamental clash between our view of the situation as bad for us in some way and our view of the same situation with a few extras as good for us in some



way. If we are told that it is the extras which make the difference, we are probably being taken back to the position that what is being enjoyed is the fact that we are being distressed, our feelings of distress, or our expression of our emotion.<sup>39</sup>

Whatever its root cause, this distress, anxiety, or suffering is the emotional element which gives pain its peculiar character; it is that pain quality which distinguishes the painful experience from the ordinary one, and, although individuals such as masochists can be said to enjoy pain, they cannot be said to enjoy suffering. What then, to Trigg, is significant about the masochist's experience? Does the masochist not perceive the suffering, although welcoming the pain, as Bakan seems to suggest? Likewise, is it the peace of mind of the flagellant or martyr which allows such a person to transcend the normal pain experience? Perhaps. But Trigg offers an explanation which is still more suggestive in the context of our spiritual exploration. Trigg suggests that, although the suffering itself cannot be said to be enjoyed (or it could not be called suffering), the significance of the suffering, that which it represents to the sufferer, might well transcend the suffering itself:

If all this is correct, it is a dangerous simplification to talk as if masochists enjoy *suffering*. The word "suffering" implies the presence of distress, and we have agreed that it is logically impossible to enjoy this. The most plausible candidate to be the "object" of masochistic enjoyment in a combination of enjoyment and suffering might well be "the fact that one is suffering". The masochist could well enjoy the significance of the suffering. If the suffering represented punishment for him and he desired punishment (for suitable psychological reasons), the situation at

once becomes more intelligible. The experience of suffering would not itself be important. What it meant to the masochist might well be.<sup>40</sup>

This concept is significant in the larger context of my discussion for obvious reasons: if (in the mind of the victim) the significance of both the pain and the suffering outweigh the components themselves, then it is possible to see how, even to one experiencing both extreme pain and its complementary emotional anxiety, this physical experience might be transcended.

Certainly such psychological and emotional factors may be seen as sometimes related to spiritual matters, but they are not necessarily identical; it is clear, in any case, that spiritual concepts such as purification through suffering and sacrifice, and salvation through martyrdom, are cultural commonplaces, and the critical objectivity of the clinical observer in no way lessens the reality of the spiritual experience to the practicing believer. Spiritual matters are by nature complex and shifting confluences of cultural, emotional, and psychological valences, and in the end it may not matter all that much exactly what mechanisms are at work. The significance model offered by Trigg, however, does offer intriguing possibilities, especially in the spiritually-charged environment of Anglo-Saxon conceptions of the overlapping natures of pain, suffering, sacrifice, and salvation. Shirley Panken quite rightly points out that, even in our (relatively) rational and empirical culture, pain and suffering are valued spiritual "commodities", which are often seen as "the price of the ticket" to salvation:

The "pleasure in pain" orientation may find some degree of validation in the stress in modern American and Western-



European culture on the value of pain and suffering as a necessary prelude to salvation. This indicates, both to the superego and to others, that we are good or striving to be good. Pain and suffering might be all too readily substituted for goal-directed effort and accomplishment.<sup>41</sup>

In the context of the Old English homiletic tradition, it is clear that what is somewhat true today must have been much more the case in Anglo-Saxon England. Though the suffering aspects of pain might sometimes be alleviated through various spiritual, psychological, or physical mechanisms, they need not be so in order to tempt the martyr to the passion. Indeed, in the context of the significance of such a sacrifice (see my discussion of pain's relationship to issues of spiritual identity, below), agonizing suffering (in emulation of the Divine made fully human) is in fact the ultimate badge of Christ-like martyrdom. Though the pain be fraught with suffering, the significance of the experience (coupled with the promise of eternal bliss) is reward enough to incite the saint to embrace the most horrible fate; and again, such willingness to sacrifice oneself on the altar of one's beliefs is hardly unknown today:

Of considerable interest are those personalities with intact ego strength, who, for rational purposes, embrace situations involving pain, danger, or uncertainty--for example, revolutionary or social causes--and experience satisfaction in doing so.<sup>42</sup>

Granting that often the suffering aspects of pain, though not at all alleviated, might be willingly experienced for the sake of some higher significance, it is nonetheless true that such suffering is, at times, transcended, and pain transmuted into exaltation (see my discussion of

"transmutation" in Chapter Five). Whatever the physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual mechanism(s) involved, the point here is that individuals undergoing such ordeals as these Indian spiritual rituals sometimes seem to experience exaltation rather than pain, and ample such instances have been documented. This being the case in a late twentieth-century "rational" culture, have we any reason to doubt that the Anglo-Saxons believed in such altered states? The very existence of the saints' cults, the popularity of hermits and flagellants and their ilk, along with the culture of self-denial--which later led to anchorites and mysticism--argues against this.

Utilizing such real world links between mental and spiritual states and perceptions of physical pain, I will attempt to illustrate that pain, in Old English literary terms, is a state of mortal spiritual experience; the same sorts of physical stimuli which cause pain in some cause a heightened spiritual state--a state of exaltation--in others. This exaltation is a non-mortal state brought on by a communion with the divine<sup>43</sup>. I would argue that the issue of spiritual identity is the key determiner in these cases; in other words, the spiritual state of the subject sometimes determines the nature of pain reception (see discussion of the painful nature of "transmutation" in Chapter Five).

Pain, like death, is a quintessentially mortal experience; so much so, in fact, that the divine can participate in these uniquely human states only by a supreme act of will and sacrifice. Likewise, mortals can transcend the human experience to reach a divine state of exaltation only by conjoining a particular state of mortal purity with the largess of divine grace. For an example of the former act of divine sacrifice we need only turn back to *The Dream of the Rood*. Christ first appears in this poem as a heroic figure--a "young hero"--determined to mount the cross and redeem mankind. Here the poet adapts Germanic conceptions



of the heroic and the divine to the Christian template of the crucifixion, and the result illuminates a great deal about Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the mortal nature of suffering and death. Christ mounts the cross eagerly, without the slightest sign of misgiving or trepidation which an audience familiar with the gospel accounts might expect:

Geseah ic þa Frean mancynnes

efstan elne mycle      þæt he me wolde on gestigan.

...Ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð,      (þæt wæs God ælmihtig),

strang ond stiðmod;      gestah he on gealgan heanne,

modig on manigra gesyhðe,      þa he wolde mancyn lysan.

(ll. 33b-34 & 39-41)

[I saw then the Lord of mankind hasten with great courage, in that he wished to mount upon me. ...The young hero disrobed himself --that was God almighty-- strong and resolute; he mounted the high gallows, courageous in the sight of many, when he wished to redeem mankind.]

The rood then recounts the grisly nature of the pain of crucifixion and the ensuing death of Christ; it is only through this ultimate sacrifice that Christ may become fully human, and it is only through the human portion of his dual nature that he can experience pain and "taste bitter death":

Geseah ic weruda God

pearle þenian.      þystro hæfdon

bewrigen mid wolcnum      Wealdendes hræw,

scirne sciman;      sceadu forð eode,  
 wann under wolcnum.      Weop eal gesceaft,  
 cwiðdon Cyninges fyll.      Crist wæs on rode.  
 (ll. 51b-56)

[I saw the God of hosts violently racked. Darkness had covered with clouds the corpse of the Ruler, that clear radiance; a shadow went forth, dark under the clouds. All creation wept, lamented the fall of the King. Christ was on the cross.]

It is perhaps most significant that Christ, after his death, is referred to as “weary of limb” (*Aledon hie þær limwerigne...: “They laid down there the limb-weary one...”*; l. 63a), a particularly human designation. The divine does not become “weary”, it does not require rest, and neither does it experience pain nor death; these are uniquely human experiences, and in utilizing vocabulary such as *limwerigne*, the poet clearly marks for us the significance of this inversion.

The flip side of this experiential coin is the mortal who, through communing with the divine, experiences exaltation when we would expect such a one to be in pain. This state of exaltation is not a common one, and holy men and women do, quite often, experience pain. There are times, however, when the most horrific of physical tortures seem to elicit a state of rapturous ecstasy instead of horrendous agony and death. This may be especially true in situations where the painful plight of evil-doers may be contrasted to advantage against the sublime exaltation of the righteous (this might be most common in the case of fiery tortures, and this would be significant in the context of my discussion of the fire of judgment, in Chapter Five). Two such studies in contrast may be found in *Juliana* and in *Daniel*. In both cases attempts to consign the righteous to the torment of flames backfire (literally!), and the heathen



torturers are consumed by the flames while the holy victims remain “blithe” and sing the praises of God. Juliana is cast into a bubbling cauldron of lead:

Het þa ofestlice,      yrre gebolgen,  
 leahtra lease      in þæs leades wylm  
 scufan butan scyldum.      þa toscaden wearð  
 lig tolysed;      lead wide sprong,  
 hat, heorogifre:      hæleð wurdon acle,  
 arasad for þy ræse.      þær on rime forborn  
 þurh þæs fires fnæst      fif ond hundseofontig  
 hæðnes herges.      þa gen sio halge stod  
 ungewemde wlite;      næs hyre wloh ne hrægl,  
 ne feax ne fel      fyre gemæled,  
 ne lic ne leoðu.      Heo in lige stod  
 æghwæs onsund,      sægde ealles þonc  
 dryhtna Dryhtne.

(ll. 582-594a)

[Then he--enraged with anger--commanded the sin-less one, the one without guilt, to be thrust speedily into the surge of the lead. Then the fire was scattered and set free; the lead burst out far and wide, hot and fiercely ravenous: men were terrified, overtaken by the onslaught. There seventy-five in number of the heathen army were consumed by burning through the blast of the fire. Then the holy one yet stood with uninjured beauty: not her hem nor robe, nor hair nor skin, nor body nor limb, was damaged by the fire. She stood in the flame completely uninjured, and said thanks for all to the Lord of lords.]<sup>44</sup>

She is altogether unharmed, however, and not in the slightest distress or pain whatsoever. Not her hair, skin, or robe are in any way harmed, and she seems, in fact, to be in a sort of ecstatic state as the seventy-five heathens are consumed, while she sings her prayers of thanksgiving. The three youths in *Daniel* undergo a similar ordeal, and the results are much the same:

Hreohmod wæs se hæðena þeoden.      Het hie hraðe bærnan.  
 Æled was ungescead micel,      þa wæs se ofen onhæted,  
 isen eall ðurhgleded.      Hine ðær esnas mænige  
 wurpon wudu on innan,      swa him wæs on wordum gedemed.  
 Bæron brandas on bryne      blacan fyres,  
 (wolde wulfheort cyning      wall on stealle iserne,  
 ymb æfæste),      oðþæt up gewat  
 lig ofer leofum      and þurh lust gesloh  
 micle mare      þonne gemet wære;  
 ða se lig gewand      on laðe men,  
 hæðne of halgum.

(ll. 242-252a)<sup>45</sup>

[The leader of the heathens was angry; he commanded them readily to be burned. The fire was unreasonably great when the oven was heated, the iron was completely heated through. Into it there many servants threw wood, as to them it had been appointed in words. They bore brands into the blaze of the bright fire, (the wolf-hearted king wished an iron wall in that place, around those faithful to the law), until the flame went upward above the beloved ones, and through eagerness it slew a much greater number than was fitting, when the flame turned upon the hateful men, the heathens, and away from the holy ones.]



The youths, too, remain cheerful, and sing their praises of the Almighty, while outside the oven those feeding the flames are consumed. The youths are protected by their relationship with God, however, and feel no more pain within the furnace than they might experience from the summer sun or the dawn breeze:

Him þær owiht ne derede,  
 ac wæs þær inne ealles gelicost  
 efne þonne on sumera sunne scineð,  
 and deawdrias on dæge weorðeð,  
 winde geondsawen.

(ll. 273b-277a)

[Nothing at all harmed them there, but it was within there of all things most just like when in summer the sun shines and dewfall comes in the day, spread about by the wind.]

In both of these cases it is the spiritual identity of the subject, their relationship to the divine, that lifts them from the realm of mortal pain, bodily destruction, and death, and grants them in their place ecstasy, comfort, and exaltation.

Our understanding of torture by necessity must be related to our understanding of pain, and both seem to be bound up with issues of identity. If spiritual identity, or spiritual state, determines the nature of pain reception, then we can expect to see two discrete models of pain within the framework of Anglo-Saxon “transformative” verse. Just as the fire of judgment is a painful transformation for the sinful but a pleasant warming for the righteous (see discussion of the fire of

judgment in Chapter Five), the spiritual transformation wrought through the application of torture in an Old English literary context can be either coercive or voluntary. In the terms of our definition of pain it is vital that we distinguish between these two perceptive states: that is, between pain and exaltation. Both occur as a result of stimuli which we would expect to produce pain, and both seem related to spiritual identity and transformation in the Old English literary tradition. They are, however, two discrete metaphorical models, as sure as their literal counterparts in the real world are entirely different experiences.

Pain, according to David Bakan, "is ultimately private in that it is lodged in the individual person",<sup>46</sup> and indeed, can exist only within the body and consciousness of each of its individual victims; pain can never be experienced collectively by unindividuated subjects.<sup>47</sup> Pain is, then, fundamentally and necessarily a personal and intensely isolating experience; the reasons for this are linguistic and conceptual as well as physical, and they seem to feed off one another in a repetitious cycle of the alienation of the subject of the pain. The central reason for the isolating nature of pain is its interiority;<sup>48</sup> pain exists within the individual subject,<sup>49</sup> and no external referent exists which may be utilized to express the nature of this experience<sup>50</sup>. Try as the subject might to describe the experience, the language available is simply inadequate to the task:

We may use descriptors such as splitting, shooting, gnawing, wrenching or stinging, but there are no "outside," objective references for these words. If we talk about a blue pen or a yellow pencil we can point to an object and say "that is what I mean by yellow" or "the colour of the pen is blue." But what can we point to to tell another person precisely what we mean by smarting,



tingling, or rasping? A person who suffers terrible pain may say that the pain is burning and add that "it feels as if someone is shoving a red-hot poker through my toes and slowly twisting it around." These "as if" statements are often essential to convey the qualities of the experience.<sup>51</sup>

Elaine Scarry has suggested that this interiority of pain acts, not just to diminish the utility of language, but to "actively destroy it", rendering the victim (at first) unable to communicate the experience, and then (in cases of intense pain) actually depriving the victim of the capacity of speech, leaving its subject only a subarticulate vocabulary of moans and cries with which to describe the pain:

Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned.<sup>52</sup>

The interiority of this experience and the linguistic barrier associated with it makes pain at once both linguistically inexpressible and emotively unsharable.<sup>53</sup> Pain, then, can be seen to isolate and to alienate the individual from the group, and thus necessarily such personal experiences of pain must be seen to be linked to the identity of each of its individual subjects.

Pain has no external referent, and therefore lacks the objects necessary to give voice to the experience.<sup>54</sup> Weapons and wounds, however, although in reality the agents and symptoms of pain and not the thing itself, sometimes act as referents by association, thereby giving "voice" to the "voiceless":

As an actual physical fact, a weapon is an object that goes into the body and produces pain; as a perceptual fact, it can lift pain and its attributes out of the body and make them visible. The mental habit of *recognizing* pain *in* the weapon (despite the fact that an inanimate object cannot "have pain" or any other sentient experience) is both an ancient and an enduring one. ...The point here is not just that pain can be apprehended in the image of the weapon (or wound) but that it almost cannot be apprehended without it: few people would have difficulty understanding Michael Walzer's troubled statement, "I cannot conceptualize infinite pain without thinking of whips and scorpions, hot irons and other people."<sup>55</sup>

Such a language of weapons and wounds is utilized extensively in *The Dream of the Rood*. Here the poet conveys the intensely private and largely inexpressible horrors of the torment of the crucifixion through graphic and even loving attention to detail. These details include descriptions of weapons (such as the cross itself, nails, and arrows or spears), mention of related acts of violence which suggest the use of weapons (such as axes and the rack), and numerous references to wounds and physical consequences thereof (such as recurring descriptions of blood and bleeding--always significant in any discussion of Christ).

There are several striking descriptions of wounds in *The Dream of the Rood*, but the most significant recurring theme is that of blood and bleeding, both the bleeding of Christ and--perhaps still more tellingly--that of the Rood itself. The first such description is, in fact, one of the Rood, which the Dreamer early on perceives bleeds from its right side:



Hwæðre ic þurh þæt gold      ongytan meahte  
earma ærgewin,      þæt hit ærest ongan  
swætan on þa swiðran healfe.

(ll. 18-20a)

[However, I through that gold could perceive the ancient agony of wretched ones, when it first began to bleed upon the right-hand side.]

It is significant, of course, that the Rood bleeds "on the right-hand side", in that this bleeding is therefore clearly marked as representative of Christ's own wounds, and by extension representative of his pain.<sup>56</sup> But bleeding does not always necessarily signify pain, and so the poet makes a point of illuminating the relationship between the two in the context of this poem. This association between blood and pain is explicated clearly by the description of the origin of the wounds which caused the bleeding in the first place; the phrase with which this relationship is explicated, "ancient agony of wretched ones", is a powerful verbal statement of pain, to be sure, but it is a bit pallid in contrast with some of the descriptions of bleeding and wounding which follow. On the one hand, I think that this is a good example of how ordinary language fails in the attempt to describe the horrors of pain; on the other, used in conjunction with the language of bleeding wounds which the poet constructs, this phrase--which occurs in the narrator's first description of blood and wounds--helps to place the later descriptions of blood in their proper context of violent torture and struggle.

The Dreamer mentions bleeding once more, when he describes the shifting dual nature of the Rood:





with that of the Savior. In this powerful symbolic context of blood, this commingling confirms the Rood's status as a symbol of the suffering of Christ, and, most importantly, validates the "voice" of the Rood which gives witness to the pain of Christ. The Rood mentions bleeding once more, and this reference is significant because it leads me from my discussion of blood to that of weapons and the specific wounds wrought thereby.

After Christ has been "lifted" from his "heavy torment" and removed from the cross, the Rood stands bereft of its burden, naked as it were, but for the flowing blood and scarring wounds which mar its surface and bespeak the horrific death which Christ has just suffered:

Genamon hie þær ælmihtigne God,  
 ahofon hine of ðam hefian wite.      Forleton me þa hilderincas  
 standan steame bedrifenne;      eall ic wæs mid strælum  
 forwundod.

(ll. 60b-62)

[They took there almighty God, they raised him from that heavy punishment. The warriors left me to stand drenched with blood; I was all wounded with shafts.]

Once again, the words which the poet has to describe the pain of Christ, or indeed, pain in general, are pale and unreal in the context of the enormity of the crucifixion; a phrase such as *hefian wite* --"heavy torment" or "grievous punishment"--is an abstraction, an intellectual attempt to describe torment which in practice distances still further an already alienated audience from the reality of Christ's pain. However, the language of blood, weapons, and wounds which follows this passage

(a description of wood dark and glistening with blood, pitted with gaping holes where it has been pierced by shafts) vividly reasserts the reality of the crucifixion, and shocks the audience out of its complacency.

Further, in its vibrant and colorful detail, this language provides the visual and almost tactile image necessary to attempt to bridge the gulf of unreality and silence which separates the sufferer of pain from those who do not share that suffering. An earlier example, describing how the Rood received its wounds, is perhaps still more disturbing.

þurhdrifan hi me mid deorcan næglum;      on me syndon þa dolg  
gesiene,

opene inwidhlemmas.

(ll. 46-47a)

[They pierced me with dark nails; the wounds are visible upon  
me, open malicious wounds.]

"Dark nails" have been "driven through" the flesh of both Christ and Rood, leaving the horrendous, open wounds and blood which later bespeak the pain of Christ. This image, of sharp, ugly spikes biting into soft, bloody tissue, can cause an almost visceral reaction in the most disinterested of readers. Here, where abstractions of pain and torture have failed, visualizations of wounds and their agents succeed in communicating to some extent the horrible nature of the pain of the crucifixion; it is not a communication that is possible through words alone, however. We must, to a certain extent, be "shown" the pain. Like Doubting Thomas, we must be shown the wounds of Christ--feel the gaping ridges with our fingers, as it were--in order to reach even an approximation of understanding of their significance to the victim of their pain.



The most notable weapon invoked by the poet to describe the pain of the crucifixion is, not surprisingly, the cross itself. It is telling that the poet seems to distinguish between the *sylicre treow* (l. 4) or *sigebeam* (l. 13)--the Rood which represents the victory of the sacrifice of Christ--and the *gealga* or *gealgtreow*--the "gallows" which was the instrument of his sacrificial torment and death. These two "trees" are, of course, one and the same, but at first the poet is careful to distinguish between the two natures of the Rood. Early on, in fact, we are informed that the Dreamer beheld a "glorious creation" which was not at all the "gallows of a criminal":

Ne wæs ðær huru fracodes gealga. (l. 10b)

[There was not, indeed, the gallows of a criminal.]

The implication is that the Rood is a far more wondrous creation than any common gallows, and that Christ, the living God, could not suffer death through such a contemptible means. This position is justified to a certain extent through our knowledge of the Rood itself, which, unlike any other instrument of torture, is given both consciousness and conscience, along with a voice to make its story intelligible. It is of considerable significance, however, that this self-same *sigebeam* --which is not to be confused with a gallows--is, in fact, later referred to as just that; the first such reference occurs in the Rood's own description of Christ mounting the cross:

...gestah he on gealgan heanne,

modig on manigra gesyhðe,      þa he wolde mancyn lysan.

(ll. 40b-41)

[...he mounted the high gallows, courageous in the sight of many,  
when he wished to redeem mankind.]

Though the Dreamer took care to make a distinction between the Rood and a more common instrument of torment and execution, the Rood has no such delicate sensibilities concerning itself, and describes its role in straightforward and uneuphemistic language. It is of great significance that the Dreamer himself, after having heard the Rood's story from its own lips, modifies his own conception of the cross, and acknowledges its dual nature; it is both instrument of death and agency of life, and, granted its own voice in the vision of the Dreamer, it is witness to destruction, death, resurrection, and redemption. The Dreamer makes reference to the dual nature of the Rood in his final mention of it, directly before he closes with a description of the victorious homecoming of Christ made possible through his death on the cross:

Si me Dryhten freond,

se ðe her on eorþan      ær þrowode  
on þam gealgtreowe      for guman synnum.

(ll. 144b-146)

[May the Lord be a friend to me, he who here on earth previously  
suffered upon the gallows-tree for the sins of mankind.]

Here the Rood is described as "gallows-tree", a conflation of the two earlier forms which had been in opposition to one another; with such a conflation the Dreamer recognizes that the Rood, though worthy of veneration for the wondrous transformation and opportunity for



redemption which it represents, and though transformed itself through that process, must first and foremost be recognized as the agency of Christ's torture and death; without such agency, no such redemption would have been possible. The Rood, then, must be acknowledged as a "gallows" before a "victory-wood". Such an acknowledgment is of the first importance to my discussion, because the Rood, which then must be seen as an instrument of torture as well as a symbol of salvation, is given a voice in this poem, and is in fact the primary narrator of the most important aspects of the story. Such a literary device takes Scarry's concept of the language of weapons and wounds a step further; here the most important symbolic representation of physical and spiritual pain available in the western world is given a voice with which to articulate its own nature. Here a weapon--the very instrument of Christ's torture and death--is given not just a metaphorical or representational voice value (as Scarry suggests), but is provided with an actual literary voice with which to articulate the suffering of the Savior. It is clear that our Anglo-Saxon poet understood the difficulties in expressing the interior experience of pain, and--with this attempt to resolve these difficulties--he anticipates modern philosophical conceptions of giving voice to the voiceless nature of pain.

Pain, then, as far as we have been able to define it, is primarily an interior and intensely private state; this interiority of pain at first seems paradoxical, as all normal humans participate, to some degree or another, in the suffering of pain. We have established, however, that as universal as pain may be, it exists within the body, has no real external referent, and so defies description and even tends to break down language itself. Such resistance to communication offers rich areas of exploration for linguists, just as the very nature of pain itself has been the subject of controversy amongst philosophers, theologians, and

medical practitioners from time immemorial right down to the present day. Pain seems to be a complex phenomenon which varies to some extent or other within individuals, cultures, and circumstances, and which is made up of a varying and synergistic combination of physiological, psychological, emotional, and spiritual factors. All of this seems to have been understood, to one degree or another, from the time of classical thought on, and although our knowledge of the physiological and psychological factors involved has improved drastically within the last few centuries, it now seems as though our rational approach offers only a partial answer to the "puzzle of pain".

It seems, at least in the context of poetry, that the Anglo-Saxons understood pain to be a largely affective state, closely related to spiritual matters. *The Dream of the Rood* offers us fascinating insights into the Anglo-Saxon perception of these matters, and indeed, in its use of the Rood as narrator and explicator of pain, this poem is a profound statement on the link between language and pain. Born out of the Anglo-Saxon fascination with the nature of the cross, and from the larger context of the cult of the cross, *The Dream of the Rood* takes the pain of Christ--and the significance of that pain--as its central theme, and develops this theme in a number of significant ways. First of all, the poem utilizes the cross's symbolic value as a universal touchstone of pain to overcome the almost insurmountable alienation and isolation which individual victims of pain suffer. The poet does this both through a first-person narration of the passion and a graphic description of the torments thereof; both of these techniques serve to make the passion real, bridge the gap of isolation between individual sufferers, and reflect the universal nature of the gift of salvation. Secondly, through his unique portrayal of the shifting dual nature of the Rood itself and by extension that of Christ, the poet underscores the necessity and indeed



centrality of the suffering of Christ to the salvation of mankind. Christ had to suffer and die to ensure that what was once fully divine also could become fully human, and therefore likewise ensure that humans might have a bridge to the divine. Further, this shifting nature highlights the individual state of transmutation that can and must take place in the soul of every believer. Pain then becomes, not an isolating agent, but a means through which every member of the audience of the poem is brought together through the powerful spiritual binding agent of common experience of pain, and the common hope of salvation which is bound up with such an understanding of the spiritual nature of pain. Finally, the poet utilizes a language of weapons and wounds to bring pain out of the body, and to give it the external referents necessary in order to be able to communicate its nature. Pain, in an Anglo-Saxon literary context, is a spiritually significant state, as well as a potentially transformative force; this conception of the dual nature of pain--as register of spiritual identity and agent of spiritual change--is one which I turn to now, in my discussion of torture, the systematic and deliberate application of the powerful force which is "pain".

## CHAPTER TWO NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The relationship between metaphoric and literal pain is especially volatile in the context of Western Christianity; see David Bakan, *Disease, Pain, and Sacrifice: Toward a Psychology of Suffering*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1968. Note especially pages 58-59:

Pain has played a central role in the religious thought of Western civilization. For her disobedience in the Garden of Eden, Eve is condemned to bring forth children in sorrow (Gen. 3:16); and the central image in the history of the Western world has been that of a crucifixion, undoubtedly one of the most painful forms of execution ever devised. I regard it as indicative of something important in both the mind of man and the nature of our culture that the dominant image in the history of Western civilization has been that of one obviously suffering pain. Pain must, in some sense, be a touchstone for ultimate concern. It is also noteworthy that in spite of all other differences many of our secular philosophies and our religious tradition should converge in giving pain a central place.

That the Anglo-Saxons embraced this tradition of holy suffering is self-evident; that they perceived a relationship between real and symbolic pain seems likewise clear. In fact, in the context of the Old English penitential and homiletic traditions, it might well be argued that the Anglo-Saxons perceived this relationship far more clearly than we do. For a treatment of such a subject, see my discussion of Graham D. Caie's concept of an "eschatological present" in Chapter Five.

<sup>2</sup> For a succinct introduction to the cult of the cross and the uniquely Anglo-Saxon manifestations thereof, see Michael Swanton, ed. *The Dream of the Rood*. Old and Middle English Texts, G. L. Brook, gen.



ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1970. Pages 42-52. Before the conversion of Constantine, the cross was widely considered to be a shameful representation of the death of Christ, symbolizing as it did the ignoble gallows of a criminal. After Constantine's conversion (effected by his famous vision of the cross), the cross became an important imperial symbol and was eventually adopted by the church (Swanton, page 42). The cross quickly became a popular symbol of veneration in the east, and various ceremonies, cults, traditions, and relics sprang up around it; this popularity was widespread in the west by the end of the seventh century (Swanton, page 45). Before the middle of that century we have records of various cross stories extant in Britain, and in 633 Oswald of Northumbria erected a giant wooden cross before the battle of Heavenfield, thereby attempting to reenact Constantine's strategy (Swanton, page 45). The most significant and peculiarly Anglo-Saxon outgrowth of this cult was the widespread popularity of large standing stone crosses, which became objects and locations of worship; by 744 these icons had reached such ascendancy that Boniface complained that they were taking the place of the regular churches (Swanton, page 47). Over 1,500 of these stone crosses survive, and there is reason to believe that many others of wood have been lost to us (Swanton, page 47). The most famous of these standing stone crosses is the Ruthwell Cross, upon which appears a considerable passage from *The Dream of the Rood*. The link between this poem, the Ruthwell Cross, and the cult of the cross more generally, is a telling one; the cross was an extremely important and emotionally and spiritually charged symbol in early England, and Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the cross stressed its dual nature as representative of both the death and the triumph of Christ (Swanton, pages 51-52). I will explore the significance of this

perception of duality further in my discussion of the dual nature of the Rood, below. What is still more telling in the context of my argument is that The Ruthwell Cross, in both the words and the pictures inscribed in its surface, gives voice to the suffering of Christ in a way analogous to that of the textual voice of the speaking cross in *The Dream of the Rood* (see my discussion of the "voice of weapons and wounds", below).

<sup>3</sup> Bakan, page 67.

<sup>4</sup> All citations from *The Dream of the Rood* are from Swanton; all translations are the author's. For related examples of sin or guilt as a wounding force, see also: *Christ & Satan*, ll. 155-156; *Andreas*, l. 407; *Christ*, l. 1313 and l. 1321; see most especially the discourse on sin as the wounding weapon of the enemy in *Christ*, ll. 759b-777a.

<sup>5</sup> Note that particular graphic force is lent to this passage through onomatopoeia; Swanton points out that the combination *inwid-hlemm* occurs only in this one instance, and the second element usually represents the crashing sound of a blow (for his discussion, see page 116).

<sup>6</sup> In the words of John J. Bonica, "As the records of every race and civilization are examined, one finds ubiquitous testimonials to the omnipresence of pain"; cited from Michael Bond, *Pain: Its Nature, Analysis and Treatment*. New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1984. Page v. See also Bakan, page 58:

Pain has a significant place in a number of world views which attempt to give meaning to our experiences. In the hedonistic world views, pain, together with what is sometimes regarded as its counterpart, pleasure, has been taken as a basic human experience, as a phenomenon from which other experiences and phenomena derive. In the thought of a number of classical social theorists--



Bentham, Adam Smith, and others--pain is a given and constitutes the basis for explaining the complex interactions of men and their arrangements.

My point is that pain is, at some level, a constant of the human experience, and that it has been recognized as such across a broad range of cultures, eras, and disciplines.

<sup>7</sup> See Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985. Scarry discusses the linguistic and conceptual necessity of such an association. By conceiving of "pain" as inextricably linked with "punishment", it becomes possible to provide the internal and inexpressible with external referents and, hence, "voice". See my discussion of the language of weapons and wounds in *The Dream of the Rood*. See also Scarry, page 16:

...the fact that the very word "pain" has its etymological home in "*poena*" or "punishment" reminds us that even the elementary act of naming this most interior of events entails an immediate mental somersault out of the body into the external social circumstances that can be pictured as having caused the hurt.

<sup>8</sup> Bond, page 52. Bond's work is a useful primer for medical information concerning pain.

<sup>9</sup> Bond, page 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ronald Melzack and Patrick Wall, *The Challenge of Pain*. 2nd ed. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1988. Page 3.

<sup>11</sup> Bond, page 34.

<sup>12</sup> Roger Trigg, *Pain and Emotion*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1970. Page 27.

<sup>13</sup> In any case, it is clear that various stimuli may, in various contexts, cause the exact same painful sensation to be perceived; this

phenomenon has been observed for time out of mind, and Bond discusses the theories to which it has given birth, as well as modern conclusions deriving from these schools of thought:

The means by which noxious stimuli eventually give rise to pain has been a subject of discussion for centuries. Stimuli, such as heat, cold, touch and pressure, however produced, always give rise to the same sensation and it is well known that if the same stimuli are increased above a certain threshold pain occurs. These observations led to two of the early theories about the generation of pain...In summary, the two theories are: 1. A sensory theory which proposes that pain is a sensory phenomenon in its own right with specific receptors, routes of transmission through the central nervous system, and centres of registration, appreciation and interpretation in the brain. 2. An intensity theory which takes the view that specific receptors for pain do not exist and that pain arises as a result of stimulation by any means so long as the intensity of that stimulation passes a certain threshold. Nowadays it is generally accepted that elements of both theories are necessary to a general theory of pain. For example, there are nerve fibres which are specific for pain, and again, stimulation of non-specific fibres may give rise to pain, and also to other forms of sensation too, dependent upon the strength of the stimulus supplied and the pattern or coding of neural impulses that results. (Bond, pages 21-22)

In 1965 a revolutionary new theory was postulated by Melzack and Wall; called "gate control" theory, it combined some elements of earlier theories, and answered some of the inadequacies thereof. Bond supplies an approachable synopsis of gate control theory:



In general terms, the theory proposed by Melzack and Wall stated that information arising as a result of noxious stimulation is modified in its passage from peripheral nerve fibres to those in the spinal cord by the action of a specialised "gating" mechanism situated in the region of the dorsal horns of the cord. Put simply, they said if the gate is in an "open" position information is transmitted to the brain, but if partially open or closed lesser amounts of information, or none at all, reach the brain. The "setting" of the gate and therefore the ease with which information leading to pain generation passes through it depends upon the balance of activity in large and small afferent nerve fibres, and in fibres descending from higher centres. (Bond, page 23)

Though gate control theory certainly may illuminate some of the physical mechanisms involved in transmitting painful impulses, it still leaves us without a satisfactory notion of just what "pain" and "pain quality" are; we are left in the compromising semantic position of defining a term reflexively: "pain" is a sensation which is "painful", which includes some peculiar "pain quality". For a more thorough grounding in the technical aspects of pain (accessible to the layman), see Melzack and Wall, *Challenge*; see especially the following sections: "Peripheral Nerve and Spinal Mechanisms" (pages 81-99), and "Brain Mechanisms" (pages 122-145); for more specific information relating to gate control theory, see "Gate Control and Other Mechanisms" (pages 165-193). For further discussion of the nature and import of pain quality, see Trigg (pages 26-34 and 146-147); see also Trigg's discussion of "pain intensity" and its relationship to attention (pages 150-151), which is particularly well-suited to my discussion of the "annihilation" of identity, below.

14 See Bakan, page 63.

15 See Melzack and Wall, *Challenge*, pages 149-150: "The traditional theory of pain is known as 'specificity theory'...[which] proposes that a specific pain system carries messages from pain receptors in the skin to a pain centre in the brain."

16 Melzack and Wall, *Challenge*, page 150.

17 See Melzack and Wall *Challenge*, pages 151-164, and also Melzack and Wall, eds. *The Textbook of Pain*. 3rd ed. New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1994. Pages 261-262.

18 See Melzack and Wall, *Textbook*, page 262:

Fortunately, alternative, comprehensive theoretical models have emerged which recognize affective qualities as integral and essential to the experience. They not only may be a consequence of pain, but also may have been instigated in advance of the experience and always arise as a component of the experience. Melzack and Wall (1965) and Melzack and Casey (1968) developed a model of pain in which tissue damage concurrently activates affective--motivational and sensory--discriminative components of pain. The nature and severity of pain then become consequences of affective and cognitive mechanisms as well as sensory events deriving from tissue damage.

19 Melzack and Wall, *Textbook*, page 261.

20 *Sorgum* is missing in the ms., but is supplied from the Ruthwell text; it also is to be expected in this context in conjunction with *gedrefed*, as the phrase is a stock one (see discussion thereof, below), and a dative object must be supplied to *mid*.

21 All citations from *Elene* are from P.O.E. Gradon, ed. *Cynewulf's Elene*. Methuen's Old English Library, A. H. Smith and F. Norman,



gen. eds. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1958. All translations are the author's.

22 Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988. Page 895.

23 All citations from *Judith* are from B.J. Timmer, ed. *Judith*. Methuen's Old English Library, A. H. Smith and F. Norman, gen. eds. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966. All translations are the author's.

24 All citations from *Daniel* are from R.T. Farrell, ed. *Daniel and Azarias*. Methuen's Old English Library, A. J. Bliss and A. Brown, gen. eds. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1974. All translations are the author's.

25 All citations from *Andreas* are from Kenneth R. Brooks, ed. *Andreas and the Fates of the Apostles*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1961. All translations are the author's.

26 All citations from *Phoenix* are from N. F. Blake, ed. *The Phoenix*. Old and Middle English Texts, G. L. Brook, gen. ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1964. All translations are the author's.

27 Melzack and Wall, *Textbook*, page 262.

28 Melzack and Wall, *Textbook*, page 267.

29 Trigg, page 149.

30 Melzack and Wall, *Textbook*, page 264.

31 Melzack and Wall, *Challenge*, pages 17-18. Idiosyncratic factors, both psychological and physical, also must play a role. See Bakan's discussion of the statistical difference in results of tests of pain threshold between "experienced" and "naive" subjects, pages 88-90.

32 See Michael Bond's discussion of the link between pain and guilt, page 51:

...pain may develop as a means of causing the person concerned to suffer, not because physical damage is present, but because the suffering seems necessary to relieve guilt about some earlier event in life, or even about thoughts which have raised guilty feelings...Therefore the significance of pain varies, that is, it may be symbolic of problems of both a physical and emotional kind. Three types of symbolisation have been identified and they are as follows: 1. Pain as evidence of physical damage. 2. Pain as a means of communication. 3. Pain as a means of manipulating others, expressing hostility, or relieving guilt.

See also Bond's discussion, on page 51, of individuals for whom such "guilt pain" is chronic:

...there are certain individuals for whom the presence of pain is essential for the prevention or relief of emotional turmoil. They are called "pain-prone people". The pain of which they complain is usually without an obvious organic cause and is therefore known as "psychogenic pain".

"Homo dolorosus" is T. Szasz's term for such individuals; Bond cites him on page 52.

33 Roger Trigg discusses the apparent paradox of such a position, and describes an important semantic distinction between "pain" and "painful"; see page 144:

Certainly the phrase "non-painful pain" is needlessly confusing, but it need not be regarded as self-contradictory, if it is realized that while the noun refers to the sensation the adjective refers to our reaction to it. If sensation and reaction are clearly differentiated we shall not be tempted to apply to the one a word which is more appropriate to the other.



See also Bond, pages 40-44:

...although measurements of pain are helpful when following a patient's progress under treatment, or when assessing the need for it, unexpected variations occur frequently and, for this reason, the many factors which influence pain must be considered when evaluating such measurements. The chief factors to be considered are: 1) The role of learning upon pain behavior. 2) The effect of environmental factors upon pain. 3) Personality. 4) The meaning of pain.

34 See pages 15-17. See also Bond, page 40: "We are not entirely certain that ability to experience pain and react to it is an inbuilt characteristic of man and animals"--although in practice it is quite rare to observe even very young subjects which do not react adversely to noxious stimuli; see also page 42:

Racial background has a powerful influence upon pain behaviour, although the ability to experience pain in response to noxious stimuli differs little between races. The differences show most obviously where tolerance of pain is concerned...The factor governing behaviour for all groups seems to be the level of approval given for the public expression of pain and emotion...External events around us affect both the severity of pain and behaviour associated with it. Intense and prolonged focusing of activities associated with a high level of physical and emotional involvement may prevent the appearance of pain....

35 See Melzack and Wall, *Challenge*, pages 139-140, for an introduction to endorphins and enkephalins. For further examples of physiological reasons for the absence of pain, see also their discussion of congenital analgesia and episodic analgesia, pages 3-8:

People who are born without the ability to feel pain...sustain extensive burns, bruises and lacerations during childhood, frequently bite deep into the tongue while chewing food, and learn only with difficulty to avoid inflicting severe wounds on themselves...most people who are insensitive to pain learn, with difficulty, to avoid damaging themselves severely. However, they survive because they have language to symbolize potential danger and to communicate. Animals, who have no such verbal communication, would have died. ...Cases of congenital analgesia are rare. However, there is a much more common condition which most of us have experienced at one time or another: being injured but not feeling pain until many minutes or hours afterwards. The injuries may range from minor cuts and bruises to broken bones and even the loss of a limb...the condition has no relation to the severity or location of the injury...it has no simple relation to the circumstances...the victim can be fully aware of the nature of the injury but no pain is felt...the analgesia is instantaneous...the analgesia has a limited time-course...[and] the analgesia is localized to the injury.

See also Bakan, pages 87-88.

36 Bakan, page 83.

37 Bakan, pages 85-86.

38 See Trigg, pages 157-158:

There are many philosophers who would cast doubt on the intelligibility of enjoying pain, usually out of a desire to define pain as a "sensation which is disliked". Certainly enjoyment of pain must be parasitic on the normal link between a sensation of pain and dislike. Otherwise, as we have seen, the concept of pain



could never be taught. Someone who merely claims to “enjoy pain” would make us suspect that he did not really understand what pain was, unless he gave us evidence that he did by frequently using the word normally. Even if he talked of pain in circumstances where we would expect him to feel it, it might still be open for us to conclude that he was not feeling pain at all if he showed no sign of dislike. He would have had to have given proof that he had learnt the concept properly, by using, at least at some period in his life, the word “pain” of sensations he obviously disliked. It is therefore of considerable importance that the masochist apparently only enjoys certain pains in certain circumstances. He usually uses the word “pain” perfectly normally.

39 Trigg, page 157.

40 Trigg, page 157. See also Shirley Panken, *The Joy of Suffering: Psychoanalytic Theory and Therapy of Masochism*. New York: J. Aronson, 1983. Page 139:

Where masochistic suffering seems to be “enjoyed” or to give pleasure, one must question the subjective meaning, as well as the cultural context of such “pleasure”. The subjective feeling of being “happy”, when not a quality of the state of well being of the entire person, is illusory. What might be meant is need for drama, crisis, sensation, stimulation, or a high tension level, thereby emphasizing one’s identity or acquiring a spurious feeling of aliveness.

41 Panken, page 141.

42 Panken, page 141.

43 See David Bakan; Bakan argues that, as an ego becomes “individuated”, or conscious of its unique “selfhood”, it becomes capable of experiencing pain (I discuss this concept more fully in my treatment of the isolating nature of pain, below); on this level, consciousness of pain is inextricably bound together with consciousness of the ego’s own mortality. Further, Bakan suggests that, as the ego develops as the central organizing force (“telos”; see Bakan’s definition on pages 33-34) of the organism, it recognizes that it is itself just a part of a larger, and perhaps immortal, organizing structure. See especially page 91:

With its emergence as the manifestation of the central telos of the organism, the conscious ego acquired pain and purpose; and it sometimes purposes immortality. Pain and mortality make up the tragedy of man. Within these he squirms around. That conscious ego, however, is also capable of becoming identified with a larger telos of which the conscious ego is itself but a part. That larger telos appears to be immortal; and perhaps through its cultivation man can overcome the many subtragedies associated with the denial of his mortality.

In such an attempt to transcend the confines of the mortal, I would argue that the ego’s attempt to communicate with the divine likewise transmutes “pain” into “exaltation”; note, for example, the experience of Andreas, discussed below.

44 All citations from *Juliana* are from Rosemary Woolf, ed. *Juliana*. Methuen’s Old English Library, A. H. Smith and F. Norman, gen. eds. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1955. All translations are the author’s.

45 See Farrell’s note to lines 243-244a & 248a-250b, on page 61:



It is significant that the fire kindled by those who do not possess *ræd* is unreasonably, or immoderately, large. The usual gloss for *ungescead* in this context is "exceedingly"...but the prime reading of "unreasonably", "immoderately", suits the sense of the passage equally well, if not better than "exceedingly". This idea is followed through in the description of the fire's attack in 248a-50b. Neither passage has a source in the Vulgate.

46 Bakan, page 61.

47 See Bakan, page 59:

The individual person, insofar as he is an individual, is already to a large degree decentralized from the larger social telos. Pain and autonomous individual existence are linked in a certain inexorable manner. Pain does not exist until there is an organism which has been individuated.

48 Interestingly, although pain is an interior phenomenon, victims often counteract the absence of an external referent by objectifying their pain as alien to the ego; see Bakan, pages 73-75:

Again, paradoxically, pain is both psychologically determined and ego-alien...the phenomenally ego-alien quality of pain is indicated by White and Sweet in the following manner: "In patients we have studied the pain has almost universally been described as 'it,' an objectified stimulus which causes varying degrees of stress. On the whole the patient related this stimulus to the 'I' by describing 'it' as present in a certain part of the body."

49 See Bakan, pages 65-66:

...the normal person in our society develops an ego boundary which more or less coincides with the physical body as bounded by the skin...A concept useful in understanding the nature of pain

is distality. Distality may be defined as the *phenomenal distance* between an event or an object and "me," or simply "how far away from me" something appears to be. ...But consider the distality associated with pain. If we were to rank the sense modalities in accordance with the distality characteristic of each of them, and if we considered pain to be a sense modality, then clearly vision would be at the head of the list and pain at the other extreme, after touch. If the distality associated with touch is something slightly greater than zero, *the distality of pain is less than zero...*(pain) does not tell anything at all about (the external) world's nature. The information contributed by pain is location within the body....

50 See Scarry, page 5:

Contemporary philosophers have habituated us to the recognition that our interior states of consciousness are regularly accompanied by objects in the external world, that we do not simply "have feelings" but have feelings *for* somebody or something, that love is love of *x*, fear is fear of *y*, ambivalence is ambivalence about *z*. If one were to move through all the emotional, perceptual, and somatic states that take an object...the list would become a very long one and...it would be throughout its entirety a consistent affirmation of the human being's capacity to move out beyond the boundaries of his or her own body into the external, sharable world. ...[H]owever...physical pain--unlike any other state of consciousness--has no referential content. It is not *of* or *for* anything. It is precisely because it takes no object that it, more than any other phenomenon, resists objectification in language.

51 Melzack and Wall, *Challenge*, pages 36-37. See also Bakan, page 64:



In attempting to explain the nature of pain one may borrow language associated with the other sense modalities. But the actual experience of pain is utterly lonely, without words of its own to describe it. One may attempt to reach out of the loneliness in some way, to describe it as "dull" or "sharp," or to take it as in some way connected with the redemption of mankind. But it remains true, as Beecher said, that "pain cannot be satisfactorily defined, except as every man defines it introspectively for himself."

52 Scarry, page 4.

53 See Scarry, page 4:

Thus, when one speaks about "one's own physical pain" and about "another person's physical pain," one might almost appear to be speaking about two wholly distinct orders of events. For the person whose pain it is, it is "effortlessly" grasped (that is, even with the most heroic effort it cannot *not* be grasped); while for the person outside the sufferer's body, what is "effortless" is *not* grasping it (it is easy to remain wholly unaware of its existence; even with effort, one may remain in doubt about its existence or may retain the astonishing freedom of denying its existence; and, finally, if with the best effort of sustained attention one successfully apprehends it, the aversiveness of the "it" one apprehends will only be a shadowy fraction of the actual "it"). So, for the person in pain, so incontestably and unnegotiably present is it that "having pain" may come to be thought of as the most vibrant example of what it is to "have certainty," while for the other person it is so elusive that "hearing about pain" may exist as the primary model of what it is "to have doubt." Thus pain comes

unsharably into our midst as at once that which cannot be denied and that which cannot be confirmed.

54 Hence the necessity to associate pain with its agents and its physical symptoms. See Scarry, page 16:

Both weapon (whether actual or imagined) and wound (whether actual or imagined) may be used associatively to express pain. To some extent the inner workings of the two metaphors, as well as the perceptual complications that attend their use, overlap because the second (bodily damage) sometimes occurs as a version of the first (agency). The feeling of pain entails the feeling of being acted upon, and the person may either express this in terms of the world acting on him ("It feels like a knife...") or in terms of his own body acting on him ("It feels like the bones are cutting through..."). Thus, though the phrase "language of agency" refers primarily to the image of the weapon, its meaning also extends to the language of the wound.

55 Scarry, page 16.

56 Though the biblical accounts do not specify on which side Christ was speared, medieval tradition assumed it was on the right. See Swanton's note on this, page 109.



### CHAPTER THREE: Public Pain, the Body as Document, and Torture as a Language of Power and Identity in Old English Poetics

Pain is central to torture, and our exploration of the perception of the nature of pain in Anglo-Saxon poetics has important repercussions regarding our understanding of the function of torture in the context of Old English literary conventions. Torture, as I have defined it, is the deliberate and systematic application of pain as a means to achieve some specific end; further, within a context in which pain is perceived as a spiritually charged and potentially transformative force, the nature of torture likewise must be related to issues of spiritual identity and of transformation. Indeed, in our analysis in Chapter One of the nature of torture in Anglo-Saxon historical records and laws, such a relationship suggested itself on a number of occasions.

In poetic contexts, however, it will become clear that this relationship between pain, torture, and spiritual nature and transformation is far more than suggestive; it is central. Anglo-Saxon poets understood pain as an interior and affective state, and although they exploited the links between pain and spiritual state and identity, they also understood the difficulty in expressing the reality of this intensely personal phenomenon. However, this very conception of the paradox of pain may have led them to a deeper understanding of one of the fundamental functions of torture: just as pain can destroy (external) language, as it can break down the ability to share a measure of self-awareness between individuals, pain also can be utilized to destroy (internal) consciousness of self, and thus it can function to break down the individual's awareness of its own identity. The primary function of torture in an Old English poetic context has to do with issues of spiritual identity, and is twofold: first, to make manifest the spiritual natures of

those individuals involved in the act of torture; second (when necessary), to utilize pain to break down and reformulate spiritual identity. In this sense the pain applied to the body of the victim during torture is utilized, first to reduce the spiritual identity of that victim to a blank surface, and second to inscribe a new identity upon that surface. In this chapter I will begin my exploration of this function of torture, while in Chapter Four I will extend this exploration into a detailed discussion of the metaphor of the body as text upon which torture is utilized to write a language of personal, political, and spiritual power; in Chapter Five I will utilize a related metaphor--that of transmutation--in order to explicate more fully these same issues of spiritual nature and transformation.

I will begin this chapter with a discussion of the public nature of Anglo-Saxon torture: witnessing is central to the function of such acts, as it is only through such public nature that torture acts may be seen to signify. In other words, the torture acts themselves, and/or the bodies upon which these acts are wrought, must be viewed in order to disseminate information regarding these crucial issues of spiritual identity, transformation, and power. In the course of this chapter I will also develop much more fully the model of the nature of torture as a form of language to which I alluded in Chapter One; in certain contexts language acts may serve the function of physical acts, and I argue that the converse of this performative function of language is likewise true: that is, that physical acts may serve the function of language. I illustrated this point at some length in my discussion of Anglo-Saxon historical and legal records (in Chapter One), where the nature of these language acts was largely political and social. Refining this basic premise in the context of more fully developed contemporary semiotic and linguistic theories I find that, in Old English religious verse, torture



operates on a level of language concerned with issues of spiritual identity and power. I conclude this chapter with a detailed theoretical analysis of the function of torture as an expunging and reconstituting force, before implementing this model in Old English literary contexts in Chapters Four and Five.

Witnessing is an important aspect of pain and torture in Anglo-Saxon literary culture; without this element, the social purposes and cultural meanings of personal suffering and torture acts become blurred and indistinct. Such witnessing takes place on a variety of levels: that of the writer transmitting and transforming information concerning the event, that of the audience reading and interpreting the resultant text, and that of the audience of the event itself, who are often described in that text, and the role of whom may or may not be suggested by the author of the text. In this chapter I argue that a primary literary role of this last group is to underscore the importance of the witnessing of public acts in Anglo-Saxon poetics; further, I will go on to explain how the importance of witnessing itself serves to emphasize the role of public acts in general--and public acts of torture and suffering in particular--as texts in and of themselves. That is, these acts serve as metatextual signs which convey information concerning the relationships between personal and political power and autonomy, spiritual identity, and the nature of spiritual transformation in the context of Anglo-Saxon literary culture. I will begin with a brief discussion of the centrality of acts of witnessing to *The Dream of the Rood*, and then discuss how the importance of witnessing in such texts suggests that the events witnessed must be understood as performative language acts.

*The Dream of the Rood* is a dream vision, and as such participates in a long tradition of such poems which purport to record prophetic visions imparted to a poet during sleep. Such texts are, by definition,

concerned with what I have termed witnessing; that is, it is the self-proclaimed duty of such dreamers to impart to others the content of the vision which has been granted to them through supernatural agencies. We learn in the first line of this poem that the dreamer wishes to share, to recount, that which he has dreamed; further, the main action of the rood's own narrative is framed by descriptions of witnessing and an exhortation to record and to declare the substance of the vision which the dreamer has witnessed. Directly after his first description of the rood, the poet pauses to note the extent of the retinue gathered to gaze upon the holy cross:

Beheoldon þær engel Dryhtnes ealle,  
 fægere þurh forðgesceaft.      Ne wæs ðær huru fracodes gealga.  
 Ac hine þær beheoldon      halige gastas,  
 men ofer moldan      ond eall þeos mære gesceaft.<sup>1</sup>

(ll. 9b-12)

[All beheld there the angel of the Lord, fair throughout eternal creation; indeed, that was not the gallows of a criminal there, but holy spirits gazed thereon, men across the earth and this glorious creation.]

A multitude of angels and men, from across the earth and all creation, join together to behold, to gaze upon, to witness the spectacle of the cross. The poet repeats the verb *beheoldon* ("to behold, gaze on, watch over") twice within the space of two lines here; it is clear that the function of this audience is quite simply to be an audience. While the dreamer has been allowed this vision in order to record and to recount it to other men, the multitude of angels and holy spirits serve their purpose simply by gazing upon the wondrous rood. Over the course of the next



fifteen lines the poet directly refers to his own self-conscious acts of observation of the cross four times: “*Geseah ic wuldres treow...*” (l. 14b) [I beheld the tree of glory...]; “*Hwæðre ic þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte...*” (l. 18) [However, through the gold I could perceive...]; “*Geseah ic þæt fuse beacen...*” (l. 21b) [I beheld the shifting symbol...]; “*Hwæðre ic þær licgende lange hwile beheold hreowcearig Hælendes treow...*” (ll. 24-25) [However, lying there a long while, troubled, I gazed upon the Saviour’s cross...]. What the dreamer witnesses here--and indeed, what is witnessed by the onlooking heavenly host--is a constant metamorphosis between glory and suffering, between ecstasy and torture. This metamorphosis recalls and clarifies that of Christ, and thus it is particularly significant that it is witnessed.

Further, although the rood’s tale of its experiences comprises less than seventy lines altogether, no fewer than three times it underscores the importance of acts of witnessing to the poem. In lines 30-31 the rood describes how it came to be wrenched from its root and fashioned into a “show” or a “spectacle”; the language here implies that the humiliation of the rood was achieved for visual effect, to be witnessed by a crowd:

Genaman me ðær strange feondas, geworhton him þær to  
wæfersyne...<sup>2</sup>

[Strong enemies seized me there and wrought me there into a  
spectacle for themselves...]

A few lines later the rood describes how bravely Christ mounted the cross--like a young Germanic hero--and here the rood makes a point of mentioning that this act took place before a multitude of witnesses; Christ’s passion and death were public events, and this public nature is highlighted:

...gestah he on gealgan heanne,  
 modig on manigra gesyhðe,      þa he wolde mancyn lysan.  
 (ll. 40b-41)

[...he mounted onto the high gallows, courageous in the sight of  
 many, when he wished to redeem mankind.]

Finally, the rood describes the death of Christ, and the arrival of his followers to take away the body; here the rood overtly proclaims its own role as witness as well as method of execution and fellow-sufferer: "Ic þæt eall beheold." (l. 58) [I witnessed all that.]. The rood's choice of words here evokes the earlier description of the multitudes witnessing its own state of constant metamorphosis, and, indeed, echoes the poet's own experience of watching the rood. Further, in each of these examples that which is witnessed has at its heart a painful and humiliating act of public torture. The dreamer and the multitudes of angels and holy men gaze upon the spectacle of a rood which is now gilded and bejeweled, now blood-soaked and wounded; this shifting nature represents the duality of the experience of a savior who is at once a divine immortal and a suffering victim. These acts of witnessing are themselves echoes of those which took place at the crucifixion itself. Both the humiliation of the rood and Christ's passion are recounted in the rood's narrative, and acts of witnessing are especially noted; the centrality of the public nature of these experiences is constantly recapitulated. The rood's narrative ends with an exhortation to the dreamer to recount his vision and to explain the significance of that which he has witnessed:

Nu ic þe hate,      hæleð min se leofa,  
 þæt ðu þas gesyhðe      secge mannum,



onwreoh wordum      þæt hit is wuldres beam,  
 se ðe ælmihtig God      on þrowode  
 for mancynnes      manegum synnum  
 ond Adomes      ealdgewyrhtum.  
 Deað he þær byrigde;      hwæðere eft Dryhten aras  
 mid his miclan mihte      mannum to helpe.  
 He ða on heofenas astag.      Hider eft fundað  
 on þysne middangeard      mancynn secan  
 on domdæge      Dryhten sylfa,  
 ælmihtig God,      ond his englas mid,  
 þæt he þonne wile deman,      se ah domes geweald,  
 anra gehwylcum      swa he him ærur her  
 on þyssum lænum      life geearnaþ.  
 Ne mæg þær ænig      unforht wesan  
 for þam worde      þe se Wealdend cwyð.  
 Frineð he for þære mænige      hwær se man sie,  
 se ðe for Dryhtnes naman      deaðes wolde  
 biteres onbyrigan,      swa he ær on ðam beame dyde.  
 Ac hie þonne forhtiað,      ond fea þencað  
 hwæt hie to Criste      cweðan onginnen.  
 Ne þearf ðær þonne ænig      unforht wesan  
 þe him ær in breostum bereð      beacna selest.  
 Ac ðurh ða rode sceal      rice gesecen  
 of eorðwege      æghwylc sawl,  
 seo þe mid Wealdende      wunian þenceð.  
 (ll. 95-121)

[Now I command you, my beloved man, that you should report  
 this sight to men , reveal through words that it is the tree of glory,  
 that which almighty God suffered upon for the many sins of

mankind and for the ancient deeds of Adam. He tasted death there; however, the Lord afterwards arose with his mighty power, as an aid to men. He then ascended into the heavens. Hither again will the Lord himself come to this earth, almighty God, and his angels with him, to seek mankind on doomsday, so that he--who possesses the power of judgment--then will judge each of those as he earlier here in this fleeting life earns for himself. There none may be unafraid because of the word which the Ruler will speak. He will ask in front of the multitude where that man may be who, for the sake of the name of the Lord, would be willing to taste of bitter death, just as he previously did upon the cross. But they will be afraid then, and little will think of what they might begin to say to Christ. None there need be terrified who previously bears in his breast the best of signs. But through the cross each soul which intends to dwell with the Ruler shall seek the kingdom from the earthly way.]

Here the rood once again underscores the public nature of the crucifixion; on doomsday Christ himself will recall his suffering, to the shame and distress of the sinful, while those who have properly interpreted and followed the sign of salvation will have nothing to fear. The judgment of mankind will take place in public, and Christ the judge will ask "in the presence of the multitude" who will be willing to suffer as he himself did upon the cross. This final exhortation makes manifest the purpose and meaning of the passion, and also clarifies the importance of the witnessing of the passion and the public nature and function of torture. Without a witness to record and recount the crucifixion, no one might be converted to follow Christ, all humanity would be damned, and Christ's suffering would have been in vain. It is only through witnessing



that an act of torture becomes a public document which may be received and interpreted as a sign or symbol representing an abstract spiritual or political statement. The dreamer's vision of the rood, which underscores the duality of Christ's nature, helps to clarify exactly how such interpretation may take place. It is Christ's own passion, however, which serves as the fundamental template through which we may begin to understand the significance of witnessing to torture, and it is only through recognizing this fundamentally public nature that we may begin to examine torture acts as language acts, and tortured bodies as social documents. I turn now to a discussion of how public violence may be seen--not as incoherent and inexplicable--but rather as a carefully composed and articulated language of power and identity.

"Language" often is defined as any system of sounds, signs, or symbols which can be used to communicate or express information, commands, or other meaning.<sup>3</sup> The term "language" is sometimes confined to spoken and written communication, and is then seen as a subsection of semiotics, which deals more generally with any possible sign system.<sup>4</sup> Since I study levels of communication which are restricted to the written word, such a distinction is relatively unimportant; I therefore will refer to all such levels of communication as "language", even those which have to do with non-logocentric communicative acts. These language acts take place within texts, and take the form of narrative descriptions of spoken or written words, gestures, facial expressions, non-articulate noises, and physical acts. What distinguishes such narrative descriptions as language acts is that they conform to a conventional role which allows them to be understood within a particular cultural context; language is by definition conventional, in that the members of a particular community are able to communicate with each other by means of adhering to understood and

accepted forms and methods of language transmission.<sup>5</sup> These forms and methods vary from culture to culture, and often even within quite small and intimate communities within subcultures. The point is that without proper cultural information these words, gestures, expressions, and acts cease to be intelligible. Conversely, to those within the communities at stake, the cultural context is clear, and these language acts are instantly recognizable as such; communication is often instantaneous, and often may take place on a variety of levels simultaneously.

I argue that the narrative descriptions of pain and torture which I examine are--in the particular cultural context from which they are drawn--to be understood as language acts in their own right. By this I mean that they are to be understood on several levels, including but not restricted to the literal meaning of the words and sentences on the page. I maintain that torture in Anglo-Saxon England was understood as a performative act of language; that is, the acts themselves--with or without the accompaniment of commentary--were understood to convey specific political and spiritual meanings.<sup>6</sup> Textual records which describe such acts of torture therefore must be seen as invoking a political and religious language of "public pain".

I will explore just such a multiplicity of language levels in Old English religious poetics. Pragmatics, that particular area of language study which focuses upon how the actual use of language is governed by social interaction and cultural context, is pertinent to my argument, and thus a discussion of pragmatics will provide a foundation for an exploration of torture as language. I will move on to a more detailed examination of what I will call performative acts of language, that is, those statements which do not convey information so much as they perform the functions of physical acts. Classic examples of performative



acts of language are the words spoken at weddings, baptisms, and oath-takings; they tend to be highly ritualistic in nature, and I argue that it is no coincidence that many of these acts of performative language are part and parcel of the systems of secular law and religious ceremony.<sup>7</sup> I will look in some depth at the public nature of such language, and explore the significance of witnesses to such acts. I then will refer briefly to an actual example of the performative function of texts in Anglo-Saxon England (*Domsdæg Boc*), and move into a specific discussion of torture as performative speech act in Old English religious poetics, distinguishing between the various levels of personal and political power such language expresses. I will conclude with an examination of how--exactly--these acts of torture work; that is, if we are to understand torture as a level of language in this context, what is the practical message which this language is to convey? In other words, in the first part of this chapter I will build an argument proving that this textual torture must be understood within the context of Anglo-Saxon literary culture, and that within this context it is clear that pain and torture acts comprised levels of language communicating information concerning the nature of personal and political power and autonomy. In the concluding part of this chapter I will discuss the exact nature of the substance of this information.

In order to develop a working definition of pragmatics, we need to consider briefly the relationship(s) between what we term "signs" and what we understand by "meaning". Volumes have been devoted to semiotics, and there is no need for an overview here; as I will use it, the term "sign" refers to anything at all used self-consciously in an attempt to communicate information. I classify "meaning", then, as any information which a user may attempt to communicate through signs, and I define "user" as any member of a particular language community

who is able to encode/decode meaning into/out of signs within the communicative context of that community. Working within the parameters of these definitions, then, we are concerned with three operational levels of semiotics: syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. Roughly speaking, syntactics is the study of how signs interact with one another, semantics is concerned with the relationships between signs and meanings, and pragmatics has to do with how users actually utilize signs to convey meaning within their socio-linguistic context. That is, pragmatics is that branch of linguistics which studies how language is used in real-life situations to communicate information in a practical manner.<sup>8</sup>

What makes pragmatics difficult to define is that it is so easily--and indeed, so often--conflated with semantics. Syntactics has to do with relationships concerned with order and structure, and thus is removed from the level of meaning upon which both semantics and pragmatics seem to operate. The fact that both semantics and pragmatics have to do with meaning is the source of the confusion. The key to conceiving of these levels as discrete from each other is remembering that semantics operates on the level of abstract meaning, and is therefore not dependent upon context, while pragmatics is rooted in specifics, and is therefore context-sensitive:

In practice, the problem of distinguishing "language" (*langue*) and "language use" (*parole*) has centered on a boundary dispute between semantics and pragmatics. Both fields are concerned with meaning, but the difference between them can be traced to two different uses of the verb *to mean*: [1] What does *X* mean? [2] What did you mean by *X*? Semantics traditionally deals with meaning as a dyadic relation, as in [1], while pragmatics deals



with meaning as a triadic relation, as in [2]. Thus meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language, whereas meaning in semantics is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, in abstraction from particular situations, speakers, or hearers.<sup>9</sup>

It is this very context-sensitivity which makes pragmatics important to my own study. I wish to explore the relationship between cultural context and communication, and to push wider the parameters within which we understand what language is and how it works in the specific cultural context of Anglo-Saxon literature. In these terms pragmatics can be used as a theoretical construct for understanding a conventional language of power relationships embedded within descriptions of torture and pain; such an understanding depends upon reconstructing as much of the pertinent cultural context as possible, and interpreting these descriptions of torture as signs in the light of that context.<sup>10</sup> This understanding of pragmatics brings us back to the concept of language as convention; while meaning may exist on an abstract, personal, and intellectual level, communication can take place only within a structured, shared system of public and conventional signs. Semantics--the abstract level of meaning in a user's mind--acts in combination with pragmatics--the practical level of using signs to relate meaning--and syntactics--the structural level of how signs work together--in order to affect communication. While semantics and syntactics may or may not operate on a conventional level, pragmatics are by definition context-sensitive:

If one accepts the definition of a sign as something necessarily constituted by a subject it is clear that all signs stand in an essentially pragmatic relation to those who use or interpret them.

The syntactic and semantic structures of a language provide a system that enables speakers to transcend the private and contingent aspects of their experience and, using signs, to express specific referring intentions...to interpret an utterance as a symbolic expression of an intention one must have information about the context of use. 11

This relationship between context and language is that aspect of pragmatics pertinent to my discussion. Now I will turn to describing and defining some of the context pertaining to this study; I am specifically interested in how instances of suffering and torture act as signs communicating information about power. I will begin, however, with a more general discussion concerning the relationship between physical acts and linguistic signs.

The communication of ideas is a primary function of language, but it is not its only one; although I have argued that signs are utilized in order to communicate information between language users, it would be radically simplistic to assert that all such language acts merely transmit information concerning each individual's perceptions and ideas. Far from merely commenting upon and recording the context of the user, some uses of language perform the tasks of physical acts, and transform that very context. Such instances are known as performative language acts, and common examples thereof include wedding vows and christenings:

[M]any utterances do not communicate information, but are equivalent to actions. When someone says "I apologize...", "I promise...", "I will..." (at a wedding), or "I name this ship...", the utterance immediately conveys a new psychological or social



reality. An apology takes place when someone apologizes, and not before. A ship is named only when the act of naming is complete. In such cases, to say is to perform...*performatives*...[are] very different from statements that convey information (*constatives*). In particular, performatives are not true or false. If A says "I name this ship...", B cannot then say "That's not true"!<sup>12</sup>

Performative language acts are highly conventional; indeed, they draw their active force from their conventional power within the context of a particular cultural milieu, and are both meaningless and powerless outside of such a context. Further, these acts tend to be highly ritualistic in nature, and often are key elements of religious sacraments such as baptisms, christenings, weddings, and the like:

At a Roman Catholic Mass, the speaking of the words *This is my body* is believed to identify the moment when the communion bread is changed into the body of Christ. Several other situations, apart from the magical and the religious, illustrate this "performative" function of language--such as the words which name a ship at a launching ceremony.<sup>13</sup>

The type of performative which I am describing is known as a "declarative", and the ritual power of such statements--especially in religious and legal contexts--is such that they do in an objective sense act to alter reality. While there are truisms that "talk is cheap" and "actions speak louder than words", there are very many contexts in which words do have the force of actions. These declarative speech acts do convey meaning, of course, but that meaning is cultural and carries a

social--rather than linguistic--meaning. The social role which they play is both the source of their power and the sense of their meaning:

...declarations do not have an illocutionary force...rather, declarations are conventional speech acts, and derive their force from the part they play in a ritual. In any event, most of the verbs associated with declarations (such as *adjourn*, *veto*, *sentence*, and *baptize*) essentially describe social acts, rather than speech acts...<sup>14</sup>

Because of the irreversibility of language in such settings, and due to the potential for abuse and misrepresentation, the ritual conventions surrounding such language acts often are quite elaborate, and must be followed very closely. Further, two safeguards against abuse are usually built into the system, the first having to do with institutional validation, and the second having to do with public nature. One might refer to the first of these mechanisms as that of authorization. Usually these acts only are valid if performed by, or in the presence of, an authorized official of some sort:

DECLARATIONS are illocutions whose "successful performance...brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality"; eg resigning, dismissing, christening, naming, excommunicating, appointing, sentencing, etc. In this, these actions are, as Searle says "a very category of speech acts": they are performed, normally speaking, by someone who is especially authorized to do so within some institutional framework. (Classical examples are judges sentencing offenders, ministers of religion christening babies, dignitaries naming ships,



etc.)...the person who makes a declaration uses language as an outward sign that some institutional (social, religious, legal, etc.) action is performed.<sup>15</sup>

Generally, then, the safeguard of authorization limits the power to perform most of these acts to a very select number of authorized officials; such exclusivity both limits the potential for abuse and increases the cultural power of the ritual act. One might refer to the second of the ritual safeguarding mechanisms as that of witnessing; that is, usually such performative acts are recorded and acknowledged as valid only if they take place before a group (sometimes a prescribed number) of witnesses. Such a safeguard both acts as a check on the power of the authorized officials and brings such rituals into the public sphere, where they often are imbued with tremendous cultural power:

...on the whole we can tell exactly, if we know the conventions, when a speech act such as naming a ship, making a vow, sentencing a criminal, or of bidding at an auction is performed, and when it is not...in these verbal rituals, the performative is often an important ingredient: *I name this ship...I bid...I vow...I bequeath...*, etc. This is because on the whole it is important for society, or some social group, to know precisely when that category of speech act has been performed.<sup>16</sup>

Even the terms "declaration" and "perform" imply a public forum and an audience. In these cases the word spoken--or the word written--is equivalent to the deed done, the judgment passed, the sentence carried out. But without an audience--hearers, readers, members at large of the institution involved--the words are robbed of their locutionary force: no

act of communication can take place, and so the word/deed is an empty sign. This is not to say that the event does not take place, but rather that it is--without an audience--bereft of significance, a meaningless symbol. Performative acts of language can have meaning only within their particular cultural/institutional context, and in the presence of an audience able to discern the meaning of that particular sign within that particular context. These are public and institutional acts; they are part of, record, and reflect public and institutional change. Without an audience they cease to have meaning.

This public aspect of the nature of performative language acts holds true across a wide spectrum of cultures and language communities; I argue that Anglo-Saxon England is a case of particular note, however, due to the synthesis in this culture of Germanic and Christian elements, both of which emphasized the public nature of performatives in certain important ritual elements. Germanic traditions concerning the public nature of oath-taking, acknowledgment of guilt, trial by ordeal, etc., combined with the centrality of performatives to several key Christian sacraments (baptism, christening, the act of transubstantiation in the Mass, excommunication, etc.) and the growing importance of confession to the Christian tradition to create a culture in which performatives were particularly important and commonplace (see my discussion of the importance of oaths, ordeal, etc., in Anglo-Saxon culture in Chapter One). Within this culture many rituals centered around performative language acts, and--in the context of this culture--these ritual words took on the significance of acts.

I wish to explore--not just how ritual language may function as action--but also, conversely, how ritual acts may function as language. The ritual acts of torture which I examine occur, of course, in texts, and so we are confronted with a written level of language (the torture



narrative) which represents a physical level of language (an act of torture) which, in its turn, represents a semantic level of meaning (e.g. the power relationship between two people, and between at least two political levels); but I do not wish to cloud the issue by examining too many levels at once. My point is that we are dealing with textual records of physical acts, and so we must examine the written language both as a sign conveying narrative information and as a sign conveying semiotic information. This directive takes as its first principle that physical acts may serve as linguistic signs. I base this assumption on our understanding of the nature and definition of signs, and--by analogy--on our understanding of the nature and function of performative acts of language. I argue that language as act is analogous to act as language; specifically in terms of this examination, the objects of study are physical acts recorded (in written language) in texts. These textual acts are "language" acts not only in terms of their immediate means of expression (written words on the page), but also in terms of the physical acts which they represent: just as the words "I baptize you" signify that at that precise moment a baptism has taken place, and the ritual act of sprinkling water over the head (a meaningless gesture without the proper words) serves to echo, clarify, and formalize this performative sign, so the message "I have power over you" is encoded in an act of physical torture, and the words with which this act is witnessed and recorded serve to echo, clarify, and formalize this ritual statement concerning a hierarchy of personal, political, or spiritual power.

The Domesday Book offers an example of the language of power articulated through physical symbols in eleventh century England; this example is particularly relevant as it involves a written record. Here we can examine--simultaneously--both the performative power attributed to the written word, and the signifying power of ritual acts and physical

objects in early England. It is important that we do not conflate these two levels of meaning: the first level has to do with the symbolic value of the comprehensive collection and compilation of property, legal, and taxation records; the second level has to do with the symbolic function which the physical objects which resulted from this act of compilation--the copies of the Domesday Book--served. The former level is performative in that the act of writing down these records in effect causes the legal situations which they describe--which may have been fluid--to become static realities. In this way, William's statement that he intended "to bring the conquered people under the rule of written law" was very literally performative; and the very act of writing that law made that law take effect.<sup>17</sup> English law was fundamentally different after the Domesday Book, and this change also is a direct result of William's performative act:

Unwritten customary law--and lore--had been the norm in the eleventh century and earlier in England, as in all communities where literacy is restricted or unknown. Nevertheless two centuries later, by Edward I's reign, the king's attorneys were arguing in many of the *quo warranto* prosecutions against the magnates that the only sufficient warrant for a privilege was a written one and that in the form of a specific statement in a charter. Memory, whether individual or collective, if unsupported by clear written evidence, was ruled out of court.<sup>18</sup>

William introduced this concept--that writing could be comprehensive and unchallengeable--into English law; clearly such dependence on the legal "book" stems from a liturgical analogy, and such an analogy between temporal and divine authority is one to which I will turn



momentarily. Further, William's conception of his record as comprehensive and static was mirrored by his unwilling subjects; even the name *Domesdæg Boc* comes from the Anglo-Saxon perception that these records--like the book of judgment on the last day--were permanent and not subject to appeal:

In a well known passage the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says that King William had the investigation made so narrowly that "there was no single hide nor virgate of land, nor indeed--it is a shame to relate but it seemed no shame to him to do--one ox or one cow nor one pig which was there left out and not put down in his record." This description obviously exaggerates in order to emphasize the frightening--and shameful--thoroughness of the Domesday survey. Similarly Fitz Neal explained a century later that the book had been called *Domesdei* "by the natives" because it seemed to them like the Last Judgment described in Revelation. The tremendous image of Christ in majesty, seated as a judge holding the book of the Scriptures or laws, would have been familiar to anyone entering a Romanesque church, either sculpted over the doorway or as a mural painting within. Fitz Neal is explaining that by his time Domesday Book was of symbolic rather than practical importance: "That is why we have called the book *The Book of Judgment*, not because it contains decisions on difficult points, but because its decisions like those of the Last Judgment are unalterable." For Fitz Neal Domesday Book was a majestic and unchangeable memorial of the Norman Conquest.<sup>19</sup>

The latter level of meaning has to do with recording and manifesting a political statement concerning power through the sign of

ritual events and objects, and the Domesday Book is fundamentally a ritual object; it is this second level with which we are primarily interested in the context of this argument. The act of compiling the book--which was hated by the native populace--confirms the status of the English as a conquered people, subject to William, the property of which people is catalogued by their conqueror both as a means of recording his new wealth and of asserting his status as ruler.<sup>20</sup> Further, the object itself, which was seldom "used"--in the sense of being opened and consulted as a legal text--served as a symbolic object signifying the new political realities of William's reign. The completed Domesday Book was an ornate and elaborate sign, not a mundane and workaday census:

The earliest copies of it likewise suggest that its function was symbolic rather than practical. Two multi-coloured editions were made: one in the twelfth century (the manuscript called *Herefordshire Domesday*) and another in the thirteenth (the Exchequer Breviate), the most elegant manuscript ever produced by the royal administration. But the Breviate was of no practical value because it omitted all details of land use. *Herefordshire Domesday* has some marginal notes updating it, making it more useful than the Breviate, yet even here the work is left uncompleted. Embellished like liturgical texts, these manuscripts reinforce the idea that Domesday Book was seen as a secular book of judgment. A surprising fact about Domesday Book is that it seems to have been used so rarely in the two centuries after it was made. There are only ten references extant specifically to the use of information connected with Domesday Book between the time it was made and the death of Henry I in 1135.<sup>21</sup>



Whether carried through the streets as part of an official procession or stored away in an archive, the physical object of such a compilation was a public record of--and statement concerning--power relations in early Anglo-Norman England.<sup>22</sup> This statement is not complex; it reads: "I have power over you; you are subject to me, and all your property and rights flow from me; I have written these in my book of judgment." The analogy between divine and temporal power expressed through this statement cannot be over stressed. The Anglo-Saxons called this text *Domesdæg Boc* because they understood this analogy, and William produced physical objects reminiscent of liturgical manuscripts in order to underscore this relationship. This example illustrates that power relationships were understood to be conveyed through a language of acts and objects in early England; further, the fact that the objects in question are books, and that these books were understood to convey information on a variety of levels, underscores the complexity of textual semiotics within this culture. The fact that these signs were public documents reiterates the importance of witnessing in this context, and finally, the analogy between temporal and divine authority and power provides a framework for understanding the relationship between temporal and divine torture and judgment in the literary contexts which I wish to discuss.

Torture, judgment, and execution tend to be public acts within the context of Anglo-Saxon literary culture; the concept of witnessing is central to this public nature, as is a sense of spectacle: of the social necessity for public display. These acts quite often are described as taking place before a multitude, a crowd, or the people; such phrases are clearly formulaic, but I argue that such a rote sense of the public nature of these acts serves to reinforce my position that such a nature was

considered a commonplace. Further, not just punitive acts, but ritual social acts in general seem to have been conceived of as witnessed, and this conception may illuminate fundamental cornerstones of Anglo-Saxon cultural expectations concerning the nature of public domain, law, and social interaction; while my discussion focuses on the public and spectacular nature of torture and related applications of punishment and pain, I will point out instances of terms and concepts which apply to a variety of social, political, and spiritual acts and practices which appear to have been treated as public in nature.

*Andreas* offers a model of the Anglo-Saxon cultural conception of the centrality of public reputation, and therefore the concurrent necessity of public witnessing and attestment of glory and honor. Christ commands *Andreas* to be ever mindful of his reputation, and to follow Christ's own example through public suffering and torment which will be transformed into everlasting glory and the salvation of those who properly interpret this sign, just as Christ turned death into life and damnation into salvation through his own passion:

Wes a domes georn;  
 læt þe on gemyndum,      hu þæt manegum wearð  
 fira gefrege      geond feala landa,  
 þæt me bysmredon      bennum fæstne  
 weras wansælige,      wordum tyrgdon,  
 slogon ond swungon.      Synnige ne mihton  
 þurh sarcwide      soð gecyðan,  
 þa ic mid Iudem      gealgan þehte;  
 rod wæs aræred,      þær rinca sum  
 of minre sidan      swat ut forlet,  
 dreor to foldon.      Ic adreah feala



yrmþa ofer eorðan;      wolde ic eow on ðon  
 ðurh bliðne hige      bysne onstellan,  
 swa on ellþeode      ywed wyrðeð.

(ll. 959b-972)

[Be ever eager for glory; let it remain in your thoughts how it has  
 come to be known to many men throughout many lands that  
 unblessed men reviled me, tight bound in bonds. They taunted me  
 with words, they buffeted me and flogged me. The sinners could  
 not prove the truth by sarcasm. Then in the sight of the Jews I  
 overspread the gallows-cross and the rood was upreared, where  
 one of the men spilt blood from my side, gore, on to the ground. I  
 put up with many miseries on earth; in this I wanted out of kindly  
 intention to set you an example such as will be demonstrated in  
 this foreign nation.]

Here Christ describes his own passion as a public act, and defines and  
 interprets the importance of this public nature; he offers his experience  
 as a model to Andreas, and his exhortation to “be ever eager for good  
 renown” underscores the peculiarly Anglo-Saxon values of witnessing  
 and reputation in this context. It is impossible not to call to mind the  
 concept of reputation in *Beowulf*, and most especially the often criticized  
 final half-line thereof; it has often been suggested that this is a Germanic  
 concept of worldly fame at odds with Christian sensibilities, but such a  
 position may bear reexamination in the light of the Christian conceptions  
 of witnessing which I have uncovered.

We are presented with an inversion of this model of divine  
 sacrifice in the actions of the Mermedonians:

Ða ic lungre gefrægn      leode tosomne

burgwara bannan;      beornas comon,  
 wiggendra þreat,      wicgum gengan,  
 on mearum modige,      mæðelhegende,  
 æscum dealle.      þa wæs eall geador  
 to þam þingstede      þeod gesamnod,  
 leton him þa betweonum      taan wisian  
 hwylcne hira ærest      oðrum sceolde  
 to foddurþege      feores ongyldan;  
 hluton hellcræftum,      hæðengildum  
 teledon betwinum.

(ll. 1093-1103a)

[I have heard that the people, those dwelling in the city, were then quickly summoned together. The men came, a multitude of warriors riding on horses, intrepid upon their mounts, conferring together, proud of their spears. When the people were gathered all together at the assembly place then they let the lot distinguish between them which of them should first forfeit his life as fodder for the others. They cast lots with hellish arts; with heathen rites they reckoned among themselves.]

This unholy act of sacrifice is a distorted reflection of Christ's own; this too is a public act, although here its public nature has less to do with the necessity of witnessing and attesting to the act itself than with that of participating in the sacrifice. All must take their chance at being chosen, and all must witness that all are equally at risk. The text to be read in this act--far from being one of life and redemption--is one concerned with the loveless and deadly power of society over the individual outside of the Christian community. This act of cannibalistic sacrifice must also be read as a subversion of both the act of divine sacrifice itself, and the



sacrament of the eucharist which signifies that sacrifice (see discussion, below).

The divine sacrifice is properly replicated and explicated in the martyrdom of the saints, and in *The Fates of the Apostles* we can find a template for understanding the public nature of martyrdom and the need for attesting to and relating the nature of Christ's identity and sacrifice. *Fates* begins with a description of the duty of the apostles to act as public witnesses to Christ's divinity:

Halgan heape      hlyt wisode  
 þær hie dryhtnes æ      deman sceoldon,  
 reccan *fore rincum*.

(ll. 9-11a)

[Fate guided the holy throng as to where they should glorify the law of the Lord, relate it before men.]<sup>23</sup>

*Fates* overtly describes the role of the apostles as public witnesses, and then several times formulaically describes the public nature of the martyrdoms of the saints themselves. Just as we are told about the public nature of the ministry of the apostles, that the apostles were commanded *reccan fore rincum*, "to relate before men" (l. 11), we likewise learn about the public nature of their martyrdoms. We are told, for instance, that Andreas *heriges byrhtme...gealgan þehte*, "in the clamor of the host...was stretched upon the gallows" (ll. 21-22); that Philip *aþangen wæs hildeƿorðre*, "was hung by a hostile troop" (l. 41); and that James *fore sacerðum swilt þrowode*, "suffered death in front of the priests" (l. 71). The inference to be drawn is that these martyrdoms serve as texts for the conversion of the pagan witness and the emulation of the Christian reader.

Furthermore, the poetic diction of witnessing reinforces Thomas's role as a type of Christ and explicates the relationship between sacrifice and redemption through the repetition of the same formulaic phrase to invoke the public, witnessed nature of both Thomas's miracle of giving temporal life to the dead, and the miracle of his own translation--through martyrdom--into a type of Christ. These two parallel events act as texts which are read publicly to their witnesses; both speak about the glory and power of God almighty, and both offer the hope of salvation to those witnesses wise enough to read and to interpret these signs correctly. Further, the public display of these signs offers this hope to others who hear of these events second-hand:

Syððan collenferð      cyniges broðor  
 awehte for weorodum      wundorcræfte  
 þurh Dryhtnes miht,      þæt he of deaðe aras  
 geong ond guðhwæt      (ond him was Gad nama);  
 ond ða þam folce      feorg gesealde  
 sin æt sæcce.      Sweordræs fornam  
 þurh hæðene hand,      þær se halga gecrang,  
 wund for weorodum...

(ll. 50-61a)

[Then this man of exalted spirit by miraculous power, through the might of the Lord, revived the king's brother in front of the multitudes so that he rose up from the dead, a young man brave in battle (and his name was Gad). And then in the strife. Thomas gave up his life to the people. Sword-violence by a heathen hand destroyed him; the saint fell there wounded in front of the multitudes.]



*Juliana* offers a case study of the role of public witnessing in Old English religious verse. Each crucial point in Juliana's story is within the public domain: her rejection of her pagan suitor's affections, Eleusius's humiliation in the face of her insults, her condemnation at his hands, and finally Juliana's passion and martyrdom, which ends in the conversion of the very pagan witnesses which her death was meant to entertain. Even the devil's temptation of Juliana and her rebuke and torment of the demon contain references to public witnessing. Both the forces of evil and those of good seem concerned with the importance of public acts in this poem. At the beginning of the poem Juliana publicly-- *on wera mengu*, "in a multitude of men"--rebuffs the advances of Eleusius on the grounds that he is a pagan (ll. 44b-57); Eleusius's rage at this rejection seems founded more on the public nature of his humiliation than on his distaste for "blasphemy":

Me þa fraceðu sind  
on modsefan      mæste weorce,  
þæt heo mec swa torne      tæle gerahte  
fore þissum folce...

(ll. 71b-74a)

[These insults are most painful to me in mind, in that she so grievously attacked me with blasphemy before these people...]

When Juliana refuses to recant, Eleusius sits in judgment *for þam folce*, "before the people", and commands her flogging (ll. 184-198). After Juliana has endured six hours of savage beating while suspended from her hair, Eleusius orders her taken down and cast into a prison cell. Here a devil appears to her in the guise of an angel, and counsels Juliana to forego further torture by making sacrifice before the pagan gods, and

therefore avoid certain destruction, *deað fore duguðe*, "death before the multitude" (l. 256). Clearly the devil wishes to avoid a public martyrdom, which will translate Juliana into a type of Christ, and therefore serve both as a public testimony to the glory of God and as a tool for the conversion of others. Juliana is not deceived, however, and turns the tables on the demon, seizes him with her hands, and forces him to recount his evil deeds. Amongst the many sins he recounts is that he caused the soldier at Christ's crucifixion to pierce his side with a spear as the crowd looked on (l. 291b). After he has been utterly humiliated Juliana sets the devil free, but he returns as she is being led to execution and demands--*for corpre*, "before the multitude"--vengeance for this persecution (ll. 614b-627a). Juliana is led to the border of the country, where she preaches to the multitude of witnesses sent to view her execution; the narrative does not inform us of the exact point at which she succeeds in converting this crowd, but evidently the demon's first impulse--to avoid a public martyrdom--was the right one. In his rage and thirst for vengeance after his failure he spurs the crowd on, and in the long run this seems to have been contrary to his purposes. Immediately after she gives up the ghost, the *stearcferðe*, "cruel crowd", which had wished to destroy Juliana *purh cumbolhete*, "through hateful violence" (ll. 636-637) changes utterly, venerates the saint, and returns with her body to the city. The narrator marks this drastic shift, which can be attributed only to the act of witnessing itself:

Ungelice wæs

læded lofsongum      lic haligre  
micle mægne      to moldgræfe,  
þæt hy hit gebrohton      burgum in innan,  
sidfolc micel.      þær siððan wæs



geara gongum      Godes lof hafen  
 þrymme micle      oþ þisne dæg  
 mid þeodscipe.

(ll. 688b-695a)

[In a different manner was the body of the saint escorted by a great throng with songs of praise to the grave, so that they brought it within the city, a great multitude. There since that time with the passing of the years God's praise has been exalted among that nation with great splendor up to this day.]

It is clear in this poem--both through the demon's initial desire to avoid Juliana's public martyrdom, and the radical conversion in the crowd of witnesses following that execution--that witnessing is a key element to persecution, torture, and execution, and that this element is volatile and potent. Further, it appears that both the followers of God and those serving Satan are aware of this potency and volatility, and both seek to cause these forces to serve their own ends. This particular example reinforces our conception that--in an Old English literary context--the passion and martyrdom of saints are public and witnessed acts, and the public nature of the signs represented by these acts serves both as a text for the conversion of those witnessing the acts and as a record for the reader of the relationship between torture, spiritual identity, and political power.

The inversion of witnessing by servants of Satan underscores the importance and the moral necessity of public display in the context of Anglo-Saxon religious poetics; in *Elene* the hope and glory of victory associated with the sign of the cross--the symbol of Christ's public execution, his death as a path to life--is the central unifying theme. Early in the poem the public display of this sign--and the public avowal of the

message which it represents--reaffirms our understanding of the importance of public acts in this spiritual context. After the sign of the cross appears to Constantine in his dream, he causes banners to be made which utilize that sign; significantly, the poet focuses on the public display of these banners:

þa wæs þuf hafen,  
segn for sweotum,      sigeleoð galen.

(ll. 123b-124)

[Then the banner was raised, the standard before the troops, and a victory-song was sung.]

As soon as these are raised "in the presence of the troops" and before the enemy Huns, the Huns flee before the Romans, and victory is assured. The public display of this sign--which symbolizes Christ's torment, and thus the redemption of mankind--clearly is the cause of the victory. Constantine summons wisemen to interpret this mysterious emblem, and the Christians among them assert, *for þam heremægene*, "before the assembled people" (l. 170) that the cross is in fact the symbol of the king of heaven, representing his own act of sacrifice when he was tormented on the rood *for hergum*, "before the multitudes" (l. 180). Constantine's desire to recover the true cross, and Elene's subsequent quest to implement this desire, reiterates the centrality of public display and avowal in this poetic context. There are layers of signs at work here: the cross symbolizes a public act of torture, which in turn signifies a greater truth concerning spiritual identity and power, but the driving force of this narrative is the need to display and to interpret these signs in public, and the sinfulness of failing in this responsibility. When Elene subsequently travels to the holy land to discover--for the purpose of public display and



veneration--the actual rood which the sign of the cross invokes, we are offered an example of one who should have witnessed publicly to the sacrifice of Christ, but who instead sinned through his desire to hide and to obscure that which should have been public and manifest. After Elene has called forth the wise men of the Jews three times to enquire as to the whereabouts of the cross, we learn from Judas's disclosure to the other leaders that he knows of this cross, and has reason to want it to remain undiscovered:

Nu is þearf mycel  
 þæt we fæstlice      ferhð staðelian,  
 þæt we ðæs morðres      meldan ne weorðen,  
 hwær þæt halige trio      beheled wurde  
 æfter wigþræce,      þy læs toworpen sien  
 frod fyrngewritu,      ond þa fæderlican  
 lare forleten.  
 (ll. 426b-432a)

[Now the need is great that we should firmly set spirit so that we do not become betrayers of that murder, or of where that holy tree was hidden after strife, lest wise ancient scripture should be abolished, and the patriarchal lore abandoned.]

In the context of this poem it is clear that the greatest sin possible is the withholding of witness to the truth; Judas knows for what the cross stands--indeed, knows the truth of Christ's divinity--but is blinded by iniquity and the desire to conceal the sins of his fathers.

Elene herself articulates the sin of thus withholding witness, first by threatening and then exhorting the Jewish leaders as a group; here she promises them death and hellfire in payment for their sinful silence,

and then assures them that they will be unable to hide their sin, nor will they for long keep the miracle which the cross represents hidden:

Ne magon ge ða word geseðan      þe ge hwile nu on unriht  
 wrigon under womma sceatum;      ne magon ge þa wyrd  
 bemiðan,  
 bedyrnan þa deopan mihte.

(ll. 582-584a)

[Though you may not verify those words--which you for a while now in sin have concealed under a lurking-place of sins--you may not keep secret that event, nor may you hide that profound power.]

The other leaders quickly turn on Judas, and Elene first demands from him that he reveal that truth which he has for long *mannum dyrndun*, "kept secret from men" (l. 626b), and then threatens him with his own destruction. Tellingly, in contrast to the secretive and duplicitous nature of the Jews, Elene promises that Judas's execution will be a public testament to his sin, and will take place before his own people, unless Judas repents of this sinful secrecy and reveals the truth:

Ic þæt geswerige      þurh Sunu Meotodes,  
 þone ahangnan God,      þæt ðu hungre scealt  
 for cneomagum      cwylmed weorðan  
 butan þu forlæte      þa leasunga,  
 ond me sweetollice      soð gecyðe.

(ll. 686-690)

[I swear that by the Son of the Creator, by the crucified God, that you shall be destroyed through hunger in front of your kinsmen



unless you abandon these lies and plainly announce to me the truth.]

Finally, through a period of torment and conversion which is also a public, witnessed event, Judas recants, finds the cross, and verifies its authenticity before a host of witnesses. Immediately after his conversion, Judas prays to God to lead him to the buried cross; significantly, in the course of this prayer he relates not the public nature of Christ's death, but instead he asserts that it is the witnessed character of the resurrection which is proof positive of Christ's spiritual identity, and therefore also of the limitless power of God:

No ðu of deaðe hine  
swa þrymlice,      þeoda Wealdend,  
aweakte for weorodum,      gif he in wuldre þin  
þurh ða beorhtan mægð      Bearn ne wære...  
(ll. 780b-783)

[By no means would you have awakened him from death so gloriously before the people, Ruler of nations, if he were not your Son in glory by that radiant maiden...]

The final miracle which determines which of the three unearthed crosses is the true one also takes place *for weorodum*, "before a multitude" (l. 867a). *Elene* is a prime example of counterpoint between righteous revelation through the public display and interpretation of symbols of Christ's passion--and the importance of attesting to the witnessing of this act--and the sinful withholding of such witnessing.

In *Judith* we are offered an example of how the public display of physical proof acts as a key component in testifying to the truth of the

text of a physical act. Judith's beheading of Holofernes is a crucial sign which she interprets to her listeners, and the public display of his gory head serves as a witness--after the fact--to the truth of her testimony:

þa seo gleaw het      golde gefrætewod  
hyre ðinenne      þancolmode  
þæs herewæðan      heafod onwriðan  
ond hyt to behðe      blodig ætywan  
þam burhleodum,      hu hyre æt beaduwe gespeow.

(ll. 171-175)

[Then the prudent gold-adorned woman commanded her attentive handmaiden to disclose the head of the warrior, and to display it--the bloody object--as proof to the citizens how for her it fared in battle.]

The terms *onwriðan* and *ætywan* are particularly significant here, as is *behðe*. Judith wishes "to uncover", "to set free", "to disclose" a hidden truth, and "to reveal", "to show", "to make manifest" the nature of that truth. In the context of the Anglo-Saxon cultural imperative for public display this seems a noteworthy turn of phrase, but it is even more so in juxtaposition with my earlier discussion of the sinful nature of concealing truth. It is Judith's duty--and, by analogy, that of all who would be righteous--to testify to the glory of God, and to reveal tokens of his might. Here that token is a bloody head which Judith displays to *behðe*, "as evidence" of the victory which she has achieved through the power of the almighty. Here we see the themes of witnessing and public display combined with an act of interpretation, echoing the purpose of most of these passages. The point is not that Judith displays a severed head and takes credit for a bold murder, but rather that she discloses to



the Bethulians that this head is a sign of the victory which they as a group shall be granted over their enemies. Individual acts of physical violence speak a language of power in these contexts, and witnessing is central to that power. The bloody head of Holofernes can be read simply as evidence describing the individual power of a holy woman over a depraved man, but it is also a prophetic text foretelling the coming military and political power of the chosen people over their enemies, and the spiritual power of God and the church over Satan and his dominion. Further, it is only in the public display and exegesis of such a text that it takes on its spiritual and political power. Without such public expression, the decapitation of Holofernes has meaning only to the individuals involved; with such expression, it transcends the mortal and literal and signifies greater spiritual truths.

Acts of interpretation are central to the nature of witnessing in these literary contexts, and it is only through such interpretation that we begin to see how the public nature of torture is related to themes of power and spiritual nature in Old English poetics. In *Daniel* we are offered a model for interpreting the meaning of the texts composed by physical acts, and this model reaffirms yet again the centrality of the public nature of such acts, and the importance of witnessing to any coherent interpretation thereof. After Nebuchadnezzar and his followers have witnessed the miracle of the three youths in the furnace, the Babylonian king calls together a multitude of his people to recount and to explain this phenomenon:

Onhiggað nu        halige mihte,  
 wise wundor Godes.        We gesawon  
 þæt he wið cwealme gebearh        cnihtum on ofne,  
 lacende lig,        þam þe his lof bæron;

forþam he is ana      ece Drihten,  
 Dema ælmihtig,      se ðe him dom forgeaf,  
 spowende sped,      þam þe his spel berað.  
 Forðon witigað      þurh wundor monig  
 halgum gastum      þe his hyld curon...  
 Swa wordum spræc      werodes ræswa,  
 Babilone weard,      siððan he beacen onget,  
 swutol tacen godes.

(ll. 472-480 & 486-488a)

["Consider now the holy power, the wise miracle of God. We have seen that he protected against death, the leaping flame, the boys in the oven, those who bore his praise; therefore he alone is the eternal Lord, the almighty Judge, he who gave glory to them, thriving success, to those who bear his message. Therefore he makes known through many miracles to those holy spirits who have turned to his protection..." Thus in words spoke the leader of the host, guardian of Babylon, when he understood that symbol, the clear token of God.]

Here we are dealing with an attempt at torture and execution which is unsuccessful; but the failure of this act is in itself an illuminating and significant text. As Nebuchadnezzar himself points out, the protection of the youths in the furnace by the angel of God reveals the truth of the nature of the power struggle between God and Satan, between the forces of good and those of evil; further, his terminology betrays both the importance of witnessing and of the relationship between public nature and revelation in such acts of spiritual significance. *We gesawon*, "we have seen", "we have witnessed" and *forþam*, "therefore", we must understand the omnipotence of God, and



read the truth of this power through *swutol tacen*, "this clear token"; there seems, especially through the use of *forþam*, to be an almost causal relationship between the act of witnessing and the objective reality of those acts witnessed. There certainly is a direct relationship between the public nature of such acts and the public interpretation of the power hierarchies involved. Nebuchadnezzar's words offer to us a template both for understanding the spiritual significance of witnessing and for interpreting the texts of acts of physical violence in the context of Old English poetics; these texts speak a language of personal, political, and spiritual power, and this language articulates Anglo-Saxon perceptions of spiritual and temporal truths, and the relationships between them.

Thus far in this chapter I have explored how certain kinds of language may be utilized to perform the function of acts, and also the ritual and public nature of many of these language acts; conversely, I have utilized this linguistic model of performative language in order to examine how physical acts of torture may speak a language of power and identity, and have likewise noted the ritual and public nature of such discourse. Further, the acts which I have examined may be accessed only through texts, and therefore serve a semiotic function upon a textual level at one remove from the performative level of articulation which they purport to represent. In other words, each torture narrative is a literary record which represents the physical level of language signified by an act of torture, which in turn represents a semantic level of meaning which has to do with issues of identity and power. Therefore, in order to clarify the relationship between textual records of performative language acts and the semantic significance of the latter, I have studied briefly the potential function of texts as ritual objects used to invoke just such a language of power and identity. In order to do this I illustrated how a written text performed a ritual role which was understood to express,

through the performative language of the ritual act and not the written records themselves, the reality of Norman political power in early Anglo-Norman England. At this point I turn to a more in-depth discussion of a model for understanding the nature and function of torture within an Anglo-Saxon literary context. Torture may take many forms and serve many functions--often simultaneously--but the examination of textual acts of torture in Old English poetry in the light of what one might term the "transformative" model of torture may perhaps offer us a unified and coherent vision of what otherwise seem to be diverse and incoherent acts and traditions of literary violence.

Torture, as I have defined it, is the deliberate and systematic application of pain for a particular reason or reasons. This application of pain is always a manifestation of power relationships: such relationships are always discernible on a personal level (i.e. the power relationship between the two persons involved: the torturer and the victim), and often on political and spiritual levels. There are many different possible aims or reasons for torture (see Introduction for a more detailed analysis of the nature and aims of torture); these include (but are not limited to): evidentiary aims (as in the ordeal), judicial aims, punitive aims, political aims, coercive aims, sadistic aims, semiotic aims, and transformative aims. Often a particular act of torture might comprise a whole range of these aims at the same time. The model of torture most clearly related to Anglo-Saxon poetic traditions is that which is concerned with the destruction and the subsequent reformulation of identity, that which we might term the transformative model of torture. Transformative aims, in conjunction--to a somewhat lesser extent--with semiotic and other aims, are central to the models of torture which I will examine at length in Chapters Four and Five. The utility of the transformative model of torture in an Old English poetic context is due in large measure to the



Anglo-Saxon traditions concerning the relationship between the soul and the body (discussed in Chapter Two), traditions which Anglo-Saxon examples of literary torture exploit to much advantage; further, this relationship and the literary models of torture constructed upon it, are remarkably consistent with modern conceptions of the function and utility of torture. Such transformative torture, both in contemporary political contexts and in Old English literary contexts, is utilized in order to affect a "turning away", a change, a political, psychological, religious, and/or spiritual transformation of the most profound nature.

Pain, as we discussed in Chapter Two, is a nearly universal human phenomenon. Pain is also an interior and affective state, which--through its bridging of the gap between the objective physical reality experienced by the body and the subjective emotional and psychological perceptions generated by the mind (or soul)--is uniquely suited to the exploitation (through torture) of the link between body and identity. For both of these reasons, pain is a primary component of torture, and the transformative model of torture is predicated upon an understanding of the relationship between the body and identity, and the effect of intense pain upon such a relationship. Intense pain is, as Elaine Scarry has put it, "world-destroying";<sup>24</sup> it "includes a relentless 'unmaking' of the world".<sup>25</sup> Scarry discusses the breakdown, under torture, of the individual's will, and finally, identity; under intense physical torment the individual's entire being becomes focused on the pain. David Bakan has discussed this same phenomenon, a sort of "alienation" of the self as it were, which he refers to as the "imperative of pain":

To attempt to understand the nature of pain, to seek to find its meaning, is already to respond to an imperative of pain itself. No experience demands and insists upon interpretation in the same

way. Pain forces the question of its meaning, and especially of its cause, insofar as cause is an important part of its meaning. In those instances in which pain is intense and intractable and in which its causes are obscure, its demand for interpretation is most naked, manifested in the sufferer asking, 'Why?'<sup>26</sup>

The "imperative of pain", then, is that it forces its victim to think about the pain, and this imperative exerts power over such a victim in direct proportion to the severity of the pain in question. There is, during the immediacy of extreme pain, a vacancy of conscious being something akin to a *tabula rasa*. As the identity of the individual becomes subsumed by the totality of the pain, it is not the pain itself, but rather the agency of that pain, which increases in reality as the identity of the victim recedes. Bakan refers to this "alienation of the self", to this rendering of the individual identity into a *tabula rasa*, as a "sense of annihilation".<sup>27</sup>

Some contemporary theories of torture suggest that systematic and deliberate applications of pain are in reality overt manifestations of political power, the projection of the "will" of the state, regime or other agency inflicting the pain into the body, soul, and ultimately the identity of the victim of that pain. Issues of power (and powerlessness) are at the very core of what torture is all about; it is a precondition of torture that the torturer's power--in the context of the act of torture--is absolute and all-consuming, while the victim of torture is (by definition and necessarily) completely powerless in relation to the torturer. According to the assessment of the fundamental basis of contemporary torture offered by Amnesty International, all of the various methods and contexts of torture are constructed to emphasize and render into irrefutable fact--in the consciousness of the victim--this fundamental



axiom of torture; that is, that the victim is bereft of all power, and that all power (over the victim's body, mind, and identity, over the pain, over the minutiae of life, in short, over the world) rests firmly and irrevocably with the torturer:

Essential to torture is the sense that the interrogator controls everything, even life itself. The pistol cocked at the temple, the meticulous procedure of mock execution by firing squad, burial alive in a deserted area: each is a means of demonstrating to the victim that the team of torturers has absolute power. ...the purpose is to convince the victim that he or she is powerless in the hands of those with the techniques, the equipment and the determination to destroy any vestige of resistance.<sup>28</sup>

Torture is, therefore, at its most basic level not about bodies or even about pain, but about power. Torture always utilizes pain (or the threat of pain) on some level, whether that be physical, spiritual, emotional, psychological, or some combination thereof, but while torture uses pain, torture is about power; it is crucial that we do not confuse means and ends in our examination of the functions and purposes of torture.

Further, although torture is undoubtedly depraved and immoral, and many torturers are undoubtedly sadistic, it does not follow that torture is therefore illogical and capricious; although random acts of illogical, capricious, and even unintelligible violence can and do occur, these are not, according to our definition, torture. As Amnesty International has concluded, torture always has a method, torture always has a rationale, and torture always has a goal; and this goal is, on some level, always concerned with power, whether that power is personal, political, spiritual, or other:

Torture does not occur simply because individual torturers are sadistic, even if testimonies verify that they often are. Torture is usually part of the state-controlled machinery to suppress dissent. Concentrated in the torturer's electrode or syringe is the power and responsibility of the state. However perverse the actions of individual torturers, torture itself has a rationale: isolation, humiliation, psychological pressure and physical pain are means to obtain information, to break down the prisoner and to intimidate those close to him or her. The torturer may be after something specific, like a signature on a confession, a renunciation of beliefs, or the denunciation of relatives, colleagues and friends, who in turn may be seized, tortured and, if possible, broken.<sup>29</sup>

While torture is about power, torture by definition utilizes pain; it is the very nature of torture that it "aspires to the totality of pain".<sup>30</sup> The application of pain is, however, only the first phase in the process of torture; its purpose is to "unmake" the individual during the duration of that pain, to destroy the consciousness which was the individual, and to focus all awareness on the all-consuming pain itself. It is the purpose of the second phase of torture, then, to write upon this blank slate. "Torture", then, means "change"; torture utilizes pain to affect transformation. If, as I remarked above, torture is about power, we must understand this power to be, fundamentally, the power to change, the power not only to bend the will of the victim to that of the torturer, but to enter the very soul of the victim and to replace the former will with the latter. Contrary to the definition of the term "torture" upon which legal historians insist--that is, as a judicial process of utilizing pain in order to reveal hidden truth--the etymology of the word "torture" suggests that it



has always been associated with a sort of “change”, a “turning away” that resonates with the anthropological and sociological model of torture which I have explicated. The Modern English word “torture” ultimately derives from the Latin *torquere*, meaning “to twist” or “to whirl”;<sup>31</sup> according to the *OED*, Modern English has retained this etymological sense in the figurative meaning of the word “torture”:

3. *fig.* a. To act upon violently in some way, so as to strain, twist, wrench, distort, pull or knock about, etc.
- b. To ‘twist’ (language, etc.) from the proper or natural meaning or form; to distort, pervert.<sup>32</sup>

In the terms of the transformative model of torture, this figurative meaning is reflected in the actual process of the production of the desired spiritual identity through the systematic destruction of the body. The application of pain is the motive force of this “turning”, and this change seems to have to do with power, with notions of identity, and with perceptions of reality: the pain which the torturer afflicts upon the victim becomes the means by which the reality of the torturer becomes the all-consuming perception of the victim:

...torture, in its structure, converts bodily pain into disembodied, political power. The prisoner’s pain, that is, serves through its unquestionable and all-absorbing physical reality to confer a corresponding reality and objective existence upon whatever political group or regime or state authorizes the torture.<sup>33</sup>

Pain is the identifying characteristic of torture, but it is not its object; the object of torture is to transfer the victim's perception of reality to the torturer:

...for the duration of this obscene and pathetic drama, it is not the pain but the regime that is incontestably real, not the pain but the regime that is total, not the pain but the regime that is able to eclipse all else, not the pain but the regime that is able to dissolve the world.<sup>34</sup>

Scarry's concept of "world-destroying" really has to do with the destruction and transformation, under torture, of the individual's will, and, finally, identity.<sup>35</sup>

Although Scarry's discussion of this world-destroying function of torture is largely non-literary, Edward Peters discusses a modern literary example which both illustrates this expunging and reformulating nature of contemporary political torture and resonates with Anglo-Saxon poetic texts interested in issues of spiritual transformation. In George Orwell's *1984*, the authorities who arrest and torture Winston Smith are already well aware of every facet of his transgression; the torture which O'Brien inflicts upon Smith is designed, not to produce a confession of already documented guilt, but rather to transform Smith from a social misfit with deviant ideology into a model of Party faithfulness. This transformation is achieved, first by coercing Smith into greater and greater degrees of cooperation and compliance, and finally by forcing him to choose to betray his loyalty to his beloved, thereby destroying the final human link to his old self and simultaneously recasting him into a paragon of Party virtue:



The information which the device invariably extracts, however, is already known to Smith's interrogators; what the torture sessions seem to be designed to do, in fact, is simply to establish Smith's co-operation. The final and greatest torture is designed to transform forced co-operation into broken-willed assent to the principles of the party. In Room 101 each victim is threatened with a torture that consists of the single thing in the world which he or she fears most...each victim may avoid the actual torture application only by betraying the last remaining human ties and assenting to the supremacy of party and state.<sup>36</sup>

This literary conception of torture clearly has nothing to do with the procuring of criminal evidence, and everything to do with what Scarry terms the world-destroying function of torture. Smith is destroyed and reformulated in the Party's image, just as the duplicitous Jew Judas, in the Old English verse *Elene*, is destroyed and reformulated into the model Christian bishop Cyriacus (see my discussion below in Chapters Four and Five).

In the course of the next two chapters it is my purpose to examine the relationship between torment, pain, and identity in a number of Old English poetic texts. In *Elene*, for example, Judas's torment, and his subsequent metamorphosis and conversion, have often been perceived of as central to the poem; I am particularly interested in the nature of that conversion, and the period of purgation in the pit which makes such a conversion possible. This purgation is imposed upon Judas by Elene (who intentionally acts as God's agent), and hence the conversion which follows it must be seen as coercive; the coercive, painful nature of Judas's transformative experience is important, because it provides a direct parallel to the transformative process which the souls undergo in

the fire of judgment described in the closing passage of the same poem. An inversion of this paradigm may be found in the experience of Andreas (in *Andreas*), whose identity as a type of Christ is written, as it were, on the page of his body, through the torture of the Mermedonians (who, although they incidentally further the Divine agenda, do not do so through their own volition). Although Andreas does not wish to be tormented, he is a willing servant of the Lord, and thus his transformation is, on some level (and certainly in contrast to the coercive conversion of Judas) voluntary. I examine the relationships between a number of experiences of bodily destruction and spiritual reformulation (including these) in the light of the theoretical model concerning the transformative nature of torture which I have developed in the latter part of this chapter. In Chapter Four I apply this understanding of the nature of pain and torture to a discussion of the concepts of inscription and the body as text as these notions manifest themselves in a number of Old English poems, including *Andreas*, *Elene*, and *Judith*. In Chapter Five I examine at more length Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the relationship between physical bodies and spiritual natures. Utilizing the concept of transmutation to illustrate this relationship, I examine the relationship between physical models of material purgation and Old English Doomsday accounts (such as those found in *Elene*, *Christ III*, and *Judgment Day II*) which are concerned with related descriptions of spiritual reduction and reformulation. As I shall illustrate in the next two chapters, Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the relationship between the body and the spirit (as exemplified in both the model of inscription and that of transmutation) are especially significant in the context of a conception of the "refashioning" power of torture, because the "remaking" of a soul presupposes the "unmaking" of it in the first place, and the relationship between flesh and spirit is the key to understanding both the process of



destruction and that of production. Further, in an Old English poetic context, it is only through a process of deliberate, systematic application of physical pain that this spiritual unmaking and its concurrent remaking are affected; in broad terms, therefore, torture acts, in such examples, as a spiritually productive means of physical destruction.

## CHAPTER THREE NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lines 9a-10b provide us with a very famous crux of translators and editors. The manuscript reading is quite awkward, and is often emended; *engel*, *ealle*, and *fægere* are particularly troublesome. I have stayed as close as possible to the manuscript text, which makes *engel* masculine accusative singular and the object of the sentence, to be understood as the rood, or alternatively, Christ himself. *Beheoldon* is clearly preterit plural, and therefore *ealle* is the only likely subject (masculine nominative plural), here denoting "all the heavenly host". According to such a reading *fægere* would also be masculine nominative plural, and would therefore refer to *ealle*: "All the beautiful heavenly host." Many editors emend *engel* to *engla*, and there have been other clever alternative readings (see Swanton, pages 103-105.) In any case, the basic sense as regards my argument remains the same: a group of witnesses gaze upon the cross, or perhaps Christ. I offer the manuscript reading in order to avoid possible confusion regarding my translation, but in essence this crux does not affect my argument.

<sup>2</sup> Swanton argues that the verb-first structure of this sentence emphasizes the importance of the action to the sentence, and is used to make explicit the violence of that act (see pages 111-112); this is particularly relevant in the context of my argument that acts of torture must be witnessed. The syntax of this sentence underscores the physical violence which the rood undergoes, while the vocabulary (specifically *wæfersyne*) emphasizes the visual nature of this violence.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the definition provided in David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. Page 424: "The systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs, or written symbols in a human society for communication and self



expression." Such a definition is reductive, of course, as language is an open-ended system, and there are so many exceptions to any rule applied to it. See Crystal's discussion of the problem of defining "language", and his attempt to "identify the various properties that are thought to be its essential defining characteristics". (Pages 396-397)

<sup>4</sup> See Crystal, page 399.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the conventional nature of language, see, for example, R.A. Waldron, *Sense and Sense Development*. 2nd ed. The Language Library, Eric Partridge and David Crystal, gen. eds. London: André Deutsch Limited, 1967. Pages 16, 34, and 190. See also Carol A. Kates, *Pragmatics and Semantics: An Empiricist Theory*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1980. Pages 104-105 (partially cited below).

<sup>6</sup> I should mention at this point that my use of the term "performative" coincides roughly with that subdivision of performatives that linguists such as Geoffrey Leech (who have criticized the "performative fallacy") would term "declarative", and therefore falls within an area which is not nearly so controversial as some linguistic theories concerned with performatives. There is a considerable body of literature contributing to a debate concerning the relative merits of the "performative hypothesis" and an alternative "pragmatic analysis". See Geoffrey Leech, *Explorations in Semantics and Pragmatics*. Volume 5 of *Pragmatics and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary Series of Language Studies*. Herman Parret and Jef Verschueren, eds. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B. V., 1980. Pages 59-77. Leech begins his critique with an overview of the primary sources of the performative theories (and their critics) of the seventies. See also Leech's *Principles of Pragmatics*. From the *Longman Linguistics Library*. R. H. Robins and Martin Harris, eds. London: Longman, 1983. Pages 174-197. Declaratives seem to be the

one aspect of the performative hypothesis upon which there is general agreement, and so the more complex linguistic points which Leech argues are of little note to this discussion. Leech is useful to my argument in that he carefully delineates and defines those verbal acts which form an integral part of a ritual action as declaratives, and confirms that they must be seen as the motive participating force of any such action; it is clear that in these cases "to say is to do". See my discussion below. See also Crystal page 121 for a succinct discussion of the types and effects of speech acts which might be useful for understanding how and why declaratives form a unique subdivision of language acts:

In speech act analysis, we study the effect of utterances on the behavior of speaker and hearer, using a threefold distinction. First, we recognize the bare fact that a communicative act takes place: the *locutionary* act. Secondly, we look at the act that is performed as a result of the speaker making an utterance--the cases where "saying=doing", such as betting, promising, welcoming, and warning: these, known as *illocutionary* acts, are the core of any theory of speech acts. Thirdly, we look at the particular effect the speaker's utterance has on the listener, who may feel amused, persuaded, warned, etc., as a consequence: the bringing about of such effects is known as a *perlocutionary* act. It is important to appreciate that the illocutionary force of an utterance and its perlocutionary effect may not coincide. If I warn you against a particular course of action, you may or may not heed my warning. There are thousands of possible illocutionary acts, and several attempts have been made to classify them into a small number of types. Such classifications are difficult, because verb



meanings are often not easy to distinguish, and speakers' intentions are not always clear. One influential approach sets up five basic types (after J.R. Searle, 1976):

*Representatives* The speaker is committed, in varying degrees, to the truth of a proposition, e.g. *affirm, believe, conclude, deny, report.*

*Directives* The speaker tries to get the hearer to do something, e.g. *ask, challenge, command, insist, request.*

*Commissives* The speaker is committed, in varying degrees, to a certain course of action, e.g. *guarantee, pledge, promise, swear, vow.*

*Expressives* The speaker expresses an attitude about a state of affairs, e.g. *apologize, deplore, congratulate, thank, welcome.*

*Declarations* The speaker alters the external status or condition of an object or situation solely by making an utterance, e.g. *I resign, I baptize, You're fired, War is hereby declared.*

<sup>7</sup> See especially Leech's (*Principles*) comments concerning the necessarily ritual nature of such acts; only within such a highly-structured and conventional context can such speech acts have the force of actions (pages 206 and 216). See also my further discussion of this ritual nature, below.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview of pragmatics which distinguishes between syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics--and which offers a brief synopsis of the history of the criticism of pragmatics--see Kates. See especially her working definition of pragmatics on pages 104-105:

The definition of pragmatics most often given by linguists and psychologists is taken from the semiotic theory of Charles Morris (1938) based on the earlier work of the philosopher Charles

Peirce. Morris distinguished syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics, respectively, as the study of relations (1) among signs, (2) between signs and the referents, and (3) between signs and their human users. Elizabeth Bates (1976) notes that Morris's definition of pragmatics has been criticized because it does not recognize Peirce's distinction between signs (or things denoting something for someone) that can be interpreted independently of a referring situation (symbols and icons) and those that must be understood through the actual situation in which they occur (indices). A symbol is related to its referent through an arbitrary conventional bond, and an icon is related to its referent through a direct physical resemblance. In contrast, Peirce (1897) defined an index as a "sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object" (p.102). Concurring with this criticism, Bates (1976) redefines pragmatics as "the study of linguistic indices" (p.3). Despite this criticism, I shall continue to use Morris's definition and treat pragmatics very generally as the study of the ways in which people use signs to perform various communicative functions. I would hold that something becomes a sign only insofar as it is used or interpreted by a subject to express information. A sign is anything whatsoever that serves a semantic function--whether arbitrarily, iconically, or indexically. Thus things are not signs "in themselves." Whether or not something is a sign will depend on its use or its function in relation to a subject. In this sense the pragmatic level would seem to provide a foundation for syntactic and semantic relationships.

<sup>9</sup> Leech, *Principles*, pages 5-6.



10 For a definition of the broadest sense of pragmatics (which I am taking here) see Crystal, page 120:

Pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others. In theory, we can say anything we like. In practice, we follow a large number of social rules (most of them unconsciously) that constrain the way we speak...it is not yet clear what they all are, how they are best interrelated, and how best to distinguish them from other recognized areas of linguistic enquiry...As a result of these overlapping areas of interest, several conflicting definitions of the scope of pragmatics have arisen. One approach focuses on the factors formally encoded in the structure of a language (honorific forms, *tu/vous* choice, and so on). Another relates it to a particular view of semantics: here, pragmatics is seen as the study of all aspects of meaning other than those involved in the analysis of sentences in terms of truth conditions...[t]he broadest sees pragmatics as the study of the principles and practice underlying *all* interactive linguistic performance--this including all aspects of language usage, understanding, and appropriateness.

11 Kates, page 105. See also Waldron pages 37-45, 52-75, 90, 160, 172, and 186-200.

12 Crystal, page 121.

13 Crystal, page 12.

14 Leech, *Principles*, page 206. See also page 216:

...we also have to add to the set of verbs capable of acting as performatives those verbs, like *caution*, *nominate*, *resign*, *bid*, and *baptize*, which occur in declarations. These verbs are partially self-referring (in that, for example, *part* of the act of resigning may

consist in saying the words *I resign...*); but essentially they denote ritual social acts rather than speech acts.

15 Leech, *Principles*, page 106.

16 Leech, *Principles*, page 179.

17 M.T.Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*. London: Edward Arnold, 1979. Page 11. See also Crystal, page 12.

18 Clanchy, page 3.

19 Clanchy, page 18.

20 See Clanchy, page 7:

Making records is initially a product of distrust rather than social progress. By making Domesday Book William the Conqueror set his shameful mark on the humiliated people, and even on their domestic animals, in the opinion of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

21 Clanchy, pages 18-19.

22 For additional discussion of the Domesday Book as symbolic of power "like the regalia", see especially Clanchy, pages 74, and 121-122.

23 All citations from *The Fates of the Apostles* are from Brooks; all translations are the author's.

24 Scarry, page 29.

25 Morris, page 141.

26 Bakan, pages 57-58.

27 See Bakan, page 95: "...pain is simply too elusive to be grasped without taking the sense of annihilation into account. But the sense of annihilation is precisely the existentialist sense of being becoming non-being. In the discussion of the ego and its management of pain it became evident that there is an underlying process in which the ego tends to withdraw from the soma in preparation for its sacrifice."



- 28 Amnesty International, *Eighties*, page 19.
- 29 Amnesty International, *Eighties*, page 4.
- 30 Scarry, page 55.
- 31 For the etymology of "torture", see the entry for this term on page 655 of W. W. Skeat, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. New Edition Revised and Enlarged. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1946. Note the relationship and the common derivation Skeat ascribes to "torture" and "tort". See also the entry for "torture" on column 1523 of Ernest Weekley, *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*. London: John Murray, 1921. Weekley cross-references "torture" with "torment" for reason of common sense development; his etymology of "torment", on column 1522, is therefore of some interest:

OF. (*tourment*), L. *tormentum*, orig. warlike implement worked by twisting, for \**torquementum*, from *torquere*, to twist.

- 32 *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. XI, T-U. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1933. Page 170 (Ti-Tz).
- 33 Morris, page 141.
- 34 Scarry, page 56.
- 35 I am implying a somewhat more metaphorical application of this breakdown of identity.
- 36 Peters, pages 161-162.

**Torture, Text, and the Reformulation of Spiritual Identity  
in Old English Religious Verse**

by

Christopher Richard Fee

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to the University of Glasgow

Department of English Language

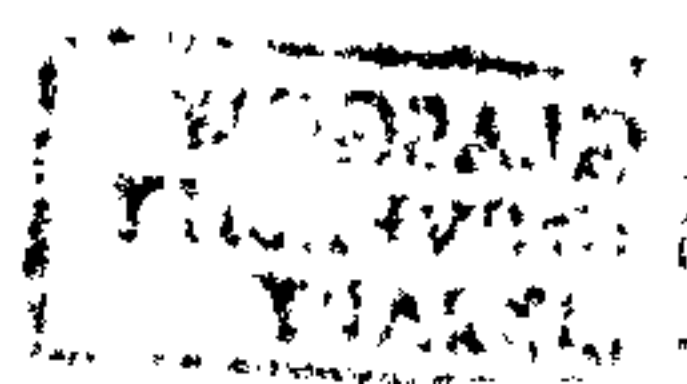
June

1997



**UNIVERSITY**  
*of*  
**GLASGOW**

© Christopher Richard Fee 1997





# Volume 2

Volume 2

## CHAPTER FOUR: Inscription or Infliction? Torture, Text, & Gender in the Old English *Andreas*, *Judith*, & *Elene*

"Writing the Body" has become something of a catch-phrase in recent years, as has "The Body as Text"; as clichéd as these concepts may be, they are of particular value to a discussion of torture in Anglo-Saxon texts, as they are by no means new. As medievalists we study cultures which took for granted that writing should take place upon membrane, or skin, and which understood gendered metaphors for the agency and the medium involved in what has come to be termed "inscription". These were also cultures in which torture played both a literal and a literary role. In such a context it should not be surprising to discover a number of works which use models of writing in conjunction with descriptions of torture and bodily destruction; nor should it seem strange that the rending of the flesh should often be conjoined with a reformulation of the spirit. In this chapter I propose to examine a number of such texts, and, as part of the larger project in which I attempt to determine the role of torture as a spiritual and political force, here I will examine how writing and torture are similar gendered metaphors in the poetic and didactic contexts of such works as the Old English *Andreas*, *Elene*, and *Judith*. In the first section of this chapter I will examine the philosophical tradition--ancient through medieval to modern--from which conceptions of inscription arise; in the second section I will deal with examples of actual inscribed objects which also have, through their inscription, metaphorical significance; in the third section I will examine texts in which a more abstract kind of writing--torture--renders the human body into a sign or symbol which betokens some deeper spiritual significance.



"Inscription" is an interesting term; its meaning in modern literary criticism--and indeed, feminist thinking at large--has narrowed considerably, and it now carries largely socio-political valence, referring to social and gender roles imposed--written, if you will--by cultural mechanisms upon the yielding text of the individual. Further, this model is itself construed as gendered; the concept of inscription, according to critics such as Carolyn Dinshaw, posits that writing is "a masculine act, an act performed on a body construed as feminine"; this use of the terms "masculine" and "feminine" implies "sexual identities that are socially constructed ideas," and which may be "performed by either sex":

...literary activity has a gendered structure, a structure that associates acts of writing and related acts of signifying...with the masculine and that identifies the surfaces on which these acts are performed...the page, the text...with the feminine.<sup>1</sup>

It might be useful at this point to outline the philosophical basis for this model, and to note some of the key concepts, none of which should seem too alien to most medievalists. Such concepts include the notion of the body acted upon as feminine, and the agency acting upon the body as masculine. Further, contemporary theorists tend to view gender itself as a cultural construct rather than a biological designation, and, as we shall see, this conception is not necessarily at odds with medieval formulations of what has come to be called "agency".<sup>2</sup>

Contemporary theorists commonly draw important distinctions between "gender constructs" and "biological designation".<sup>3</sup> Sheila Delany, for instance, discusses and further refines the concept of gender as cultural construct at some length, both in terms of woman in culture and of particular women in literary works.<sup>4</sup> For Delany, what it means

to be female is in every way but one not an accident of nature, but rather a conspiracy of culture:

Socially, individually, in every way but biologically, woman is made, not born. So, of course, is man. Each is a cultural artifact laboriously worked up, pieced together, written and re-written as a kind of palimpsest. Inscribed on this document, layer by layer, are other texts: scholarly disciplines, novels, poems, lyrics to popular songs, ad copy, television scripts, children's books and games and rhymes ("Sugar and spice..."), expectations, injunctions, permissions, and the English language itself.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Laqueur points out that gender, to the ancient and medieval mind, was--in a way perhaps surprisingly similar to that of Delany--more fluid and less constrained by empirical semiotics than modern minds tend to construe it; in fact, according to the paradigm Laqueur describes, we might re-render Delany's statement about the cultural construction of gender in the terms of the pre-Enlightenment one-sex model: "Socially, individually, in every way *and especially* biologically, gender is made, not natural." Gender, in the early texts which Laqueur examines, takes precedence over sex--that is, a cultural understanding concerning what it means to be male or female plays a role in determining how sexual biology is interpreted, and not vice-versa. This is not to imply that Laqueur provides evidence in classical and medieval medical texts of the sort of self-conscious perceptions of gender which contemporary critics favor; clearly the writers of these texts were attempting to define physical reality as they perceived it, not to achieve some sort of understanding of the sociological mechanisms of sexuality under which their cultures operated, as contemporary feminist thought does. What is



interesting to Laqueur about these studies is that the objective reality which they describe is so very different from our own, and provides, therefore, a valuable window into their cultural assumptions and preconceptions regarding gender:

...it is very difficult to read ancient, medieval, and Renaissance texts about the body with the epistemological lens of the Enlightenment through which the physical world--the body--appears as "real," while its cultural meanings are epiphenomenal. Bodies in these texts did strange, remarkable, and to modern readers impossible things. In future generations, writes Origen, "the body would become less 'thick,' less 'coagulated,' less 'hardened,'" as the spirit warmed to God; physical bodies themselves would have been radically different before the fall, imagines Gregory of Nyssa: male and female coexisted with the image of God, and sexual differentiation came about only as the representation in the flesh of the fall from grace. ...There are numerous accounts of men who were said to lactate and pictures of the boy Jesus with breasts. Girls could turn into boys, and men who associated too extensively with women could lose the hardness and definition of their more perfect bodies and regress into effeminacy. Culture, in short, suffused and changed the body that to the modern sensibility seems so closed, autarchic, and outside the realm of meaning.<sup>6</sup>

Laqueur argues that what was important, what was real, in the world of the one-sex model was what we perceive of as the cultural category of gender, while what is real to us, the physical, the biological--sex--was to our forebears a secondary, even arbitrary, and more

symbolic level.<sup>7</sup> Socially constructed roles, perceptions and expectations were determined by sex, to be sure, but these roles and perceptions were themselves influenced by cultural conceptions of gender, or “what it means” to be a man or a woman. Maleness and femaleness were construed according to a hierarchical social structure, which then determined the nature of bodily sexuality, and not the other way around.<sup>8</sup> Further, it was the male “sign” which served as the constant, and the female interpreted in this semiotic context.<sup>9</sup>

Such conceptions of gender as cultural construct have obvious resonance with my discussion of the gendered nature of torture, and it is equally obvious that the latter owes much to the former. Delany’s work, however, is more far reaching than this; in her series of essays she takes for granted that all literature is concerned with sexual politics, and she is specifically interested in the ways that literary descriptions of such sexual politics reflect political realities.<sup>10</sup> In such a context, masculine and feminine have to do with culturally constructed roles and expectations, and biological designation simply serves as a means of enforcing these cultural preconceptions. Language, as Delany points out, is one of the primary modes of the cultural coercion of gender, and often neither subtly nor subtextually. Delany studies a series of texts ranging from the medieval to the modern, and the purpose of her examination is to underscore the desire of the author to inscribe woman in two related ways. First, the writer constructs his heroine, not out of whole cloth, but piecemeal from the selection of culturally-encoded feminine information available to him; second, by constructing literary woman in this way, the author attempts to provide an exemplar and thereby further construct real-life woman:



The "woman" in most of these essays is the one written as literary character in a fictional text. Usually "she" is offered as an exemplary figure, whether a positive one...or a negative one....

The fictional character represents an effort to shape real woman-as-text. For me "she" also signifies a range of conditions--historical, economic, biographical, psychological--that enable "her" literary existence.<sup>11</sup>

Although many aspects of Delany's model of the cultural construction of gender seem to me to be sound, I must draw some distinctions between her conception of woman as literary figure versus man as literary composer, and my own model of female body and male agent.<sup>12</sup> In the literary context of torture, as I shall illustrate, gender has little to do with man or woman, and a great deal to do with perceptions of body and agency; further, the over-riding cultural paradigm in the texts which I examine is not a medieval understanding of the roles of men and women, but rather a Patristic notion of the Providential nature of all agency (see my discussion of agency, and the will of God, below). Moreover, as Laqueur quite rightly points out, the medieval understanding of body and gender roles was a logical extension of a cultural system heavily imbued with such Patristic formulations; in such a context, it should not be surprising to find a world in which sex--the body--is subservient to gender--the cultural understanding of societal roles--which is itself subservient to Providence--the Divine Will. The body is what God wills it to be, and as His Will is made manifest in the temporal world, Mankind's perceptions of the body may shift and flow.

Dinshaw goes further than Delany in describing the nature of gender as cultural construct; as noted above, she removes the decoy of biological designation from the equation, and also more fully extends the

gender-metaphor of writing. For Dinshaw "language (signifying activity) is essentially structured in relation to gender," and she attempts to provide "a fuller context for the idea...of the text as woman's body, inscribed, read, and interpreted by men".<sup>13</sup> Ann Rosalind Jones argues that language is necessarily gendered in such a manner, and that Dinshaw's "signifying activity" is in the end just another mode through which the male attempts to objectify and possess the world around him. In the introduction to her examination of Kristeva, Irigaray, Cixous, and Wittig, and their attempts to break out of phallogocentric discourse to redefine the relationship between woman's body and women's language, Jones reassesses the centrality of language to the process of masculine acquisition and objectification. Writing, according to Jones, is another way to consume and dominate the world:<sup>14</sup>

"I am the unified, self-controlled center of the universe," man (white, European, and ruling class) has claimed. "The rest of the world, which I define as the Other, has meaning only in relation to me, as man/father, possessor of the phallus." This claim to centrality has been supported not only by religion and philosophy but also by language. To speak and especially to write from such a position is to appropriate the world, to dominate it through verbal mastery. Symbolic discourse (language, in various contexts) is another means through which man objectifies the world, reduces it to his terms, speaks in place of everything and everyone else, including women.<sup>15</sup>

Such a desire to appropriate, to consume, to control, extends from the world of physical reality to that of creative potentiality; language can be used, in other words, not just to control and dominate the world around



us, but also to control and dominate the means by which we may communicate our experience in the world. Susan Gubar sees this male use of language, and specifically masculine conceptions of literary composition, as part of a long tradition in Western culture in which man attempts to appropriate woman's generative powers:

Our culture is steeped in such myths of male primacy in theological, artistic, and scientific creativity. Christianity, as feminist theologians have shown us, is based on the power of God, the Father, who creates the natural world of generation out of nothing. Literary men like Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Ruskin describe the author as priest, prophet, warrior, legislator, or emperor, reinforcing the idea most lucidly articulated by Gerald Manley Hopkins that "the male quality is the creative gift." The example of scientific overreachers from the Faust of Marlowe and Goethe and Mann to the most recent DNA biologists implies that scientific ingenuity seeks to usurp the generative powers of the womb, even as it tries to re-create the female in the male's image. But if the creator is a man, the creation itself is a female, who, like Pygmalion's ivory girl, has no name or identity or voice of her own...As Simone de Beauvoir has demonstrated in *The Second Sex*, the phallus as the transcendent incarnate turns woman's self into an object, an other.<sup>16</sup>

While it is important to acknowledge and to take into account these contemporary visions of gender as a cultural construct, and especially gender as it pertains to the act of writing, it is equally important to stake out exactly where and how far such notions will aid us in our examination of similar medieval concepts. Thus far I have

attempted to flesh out models of gender as cultural construct and literary activity as gendered, which credit the contemporary sources by which I am informed while simultaneously illustrating that these concepts are not so very different from ancient and medieval traditions. It remains for me to examine the concepts of "the body as text" and "inscription" in a similar manner. As I proceed, then, the concept of gender, as I take it, refers not to a biological designation, but rather to a description of socially constructed institutions. Therefore, although it is clear that I have set aside some of the gender implications of the modern argument, I hope to illustrate that the contemporary models of inscription and the body as text are appropriate to my discussion of Anglo-Saxon literary torture as a process of production through which, for example, Andreas's identity is "re-written" and Judas's is "re-cast".

Conceptions of a gendered division between body and spirit and between medium and agency were clear to medieval writers through Patristic sources; even the idea of woman as tablet, written upon by the stylus of man, is an ancient one.<sup>17</sup> The model of the masculine versus feminine dichotomy of spirit versus body has pre-Christian roots, and was certainly known to the Anglo-Saxons through various Patristic permutations. These sources are diverse, numerous, and well-known, and many are ultimately derived from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians:

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or blemish, but



holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds it and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--for we are members of his body. (Ephesians 5: 23-30)

Paul clearly describes what he envisages as the acceptable hierarchy within marriage, and he utilizes the analogy of the marriage between the Church and Christ to explicate and validate his position on appropriate gender roles within temporal marriage. He also makes a point of disavowing those beliefs and practices which condemn women and/or the fleshly as necessarily sinful or hateful. As the Church must submit to Christ, so must wives to their husbands, he says, and likewise must the flesh submit to the intellect (he implies). But although classical traditions dividing body from spirit along gender lines certainly existed, here Paul does not go so far as to make a direct philosophical connection between gender and what one might term "physicality".

Extrapolating from such unspecific sources as this epistle, then, the Church Fathers constructed rather elaborate hierarchies concerning the role of the Church in society, gender roles in marriage, and the relationship between the senses and the intellect. Although Paul does not specifically equate feminine with body and masculine with spirit, later moralists did, and it is not difficult to see how such arguments might be mounted from the original Pauline position. D.W. Robertson has explained the resulting levels of abstraction construed from Paul's description of gender roles as a series of moral hierarchies beginning with the gendered duality within an individual, and extending outward first into family relationships, and then into the relationship between the body of the Church and the Will of the Divine:

To begin with, a moral hierarchy was envisaged in man himself. In its simplest terms this might be expressed as the ascendancy of the reason over the sensuality, or, more elaborately, as the ascendancy of the higher part of the reason, whose function is wisdom, over the lower part of the reason, whose function is knowledge, and the ascendancy of the latter over the motion of the senses. The analogy between this scheme and the hierarchy of Adam, Eve, and the serpent in Genesis suggested a similar hierarchy in the family, where the relationship between husband and wife is sacramentally a reflection of the relationship between Christ and the Church, a relationship which St. Paul had compared with that between the spirit and the flesh.<sup>18</sup>

Much contemporary critical attention has been paid to the misogynistic philosophical position resulting from such a gendered understanding of body and spirit. As Robertson quite rightly points out, the moral hierarchy suggested by such models really has much more to do with an abstract understanding of the proper authority structure within each individual soul--i.e.: the flesh should be subservient to the intellect, and any reversal of this order is sinful and to be avoided--than with a literal interpretation of gender roles. Still, as many recent feminist readings of Patristic materials have underscored, abstract moral hierarchies aside, it is doubtless true that women were seen as weaker and more fleshly than men; further, this conception of the fleshly nature of women came to be the basis for a gendered understanding of the division between body and spirit:



Thus *woman* or *the feminine* symbolizes the physical, lustful, material, appetitive part of human nature, whereas *man* symbolizes the spiritual, or rational, or mental...the roots of this idea were multiple, scientific as well as theological. Ancient scientists had argued frequently that at the conception, woman contributes the stuff (or physical nature) of the foetus, man the soul or form. Patristic exegetes had regularly seen woman (or Eve) as representing the appetites, man (or Adam) as representing soul or intellect.<sup>19</sup>

The contemporary model of the gendered nature of inscription has--like the gendered model of the body from whence it descends--ancient origins, and likewise stems from misogynistic conceptions of the roles and the limitations of women. Page duBois has examined the roots of this tradition in the evolution of classical thought on the nature of gender, and it is likely that Patristic notions as well as modern conceptions likewise stem in some measure from these same sources:

The metaphor of the tablet...emphasizes the passivity and receptivity of female interiority...assumes that the mover of the stylus, the inscriber, the literate male who carves and marks the passive medium, alone has the power to generate the marks of the text, which will proliferate not on the tablet itself, but in the mind of the reader, who will again, himself alone, inscribe a new text on the tablet that has been erased, scraped clean.<sup>20</sup>

According to duBois, the idea of woman's body as object (in ancient Greek culture) underwent a gradual evolution from field, furrow, and oven, through stone to tablet.<sup>21</sup> She examines how, with each

conceptual and metaphorical shift, the language of man controlled more of the reality and the power of woman, while simultaneously moving away from the rural and agricultural to the urban and literary; she describes, as it were, a double-alienation of the female. Metaphorically, the reproductive capacity of woman was, first, controlled by man in intensifying degrees, from the farmer whose will is dependent upon the generative power of the soil, to the writer who utterly controls the resources of the tablet. Finally, the generative powers of woman were entirely appropriated and reinvested in the philosopher by Plato, and woman was reinterpreted as defective and phallus-less man by Aristotle:<sup>22</sup>

Aristotle furthers the process of establishing a logical, systematic instrument for thinking about the world, the process which Plato had begun...although women had long been subordinated to men in Greek culture, Aristotle rationalizes and explains their status in terms of abstract principles...women are seen as human beings, not things, but beings deficient in value. They are no longer metaphorical equivalents to the fertile field, the productive earth; they are measured against the one, the male, and discovered to be lacking in value, deficient, estranged metonymically, as a mere part for the whole and perfected being, who is male. Plato sees the good, the sun, the father, the son, as metaphorically substitutable one for the other, and the assimilation of female power to the philosopher who resembles all of these is perhaps an attempt to represent the wholeness, the absolute sufficiency of the good. Aristotle abandons this attempt to integrate male and female. He instead relies on a metonymic strategy, not by representing the female as a fertile field, as the space of



reproduction to be integrated into the male, but rather by claiming and accounting for the defective and partial nature of the female body. The male body is whole and complete, having come to its *telos*, having achieved perfection; the female body is a part for the whole, a thing lacking completion, lacking heat, lacking soul.<sup>23</sup>

Although both her objectives and her conclusions differ from those of Laqueur, it could be argued that duBois is describing the foundation of the “one-sex” model of gender which Laqueur traces for us from these philosophical beginnings to the ascendance of the “two-sex” model in the Enlightenment. In any case, these historians are not at odds insofar as both argue for what only can be described as the cultural construction of gender. Laqueur offered us evidence of the fluid nature of ancient and medieval concepts of sex which informs our understanding of gender as a culturally-driven concept; duBois in a like manner provides us with a description of the evolution of a classical philosophical tradition concerning the female body and gender roles which informs our understanding of the gendered nature of inscription.

Turning back to the point at hand, however, I say that the term “inscription” is interesting because its contemporary political and philosophical meaning is largely indebted to, and indeed rests upon, the core meaning of “engraving symbols upon a surface”. This kind of duality of meaning is significant in the context of my discussion, because I can think of at least one clear parallel in Old English. *Grafan*, the Old English source from whence we get such Modern English terms as “grave”, carries in some texts a multivalence reminiscent of that of “inscription”, and in similar settings of philosophical writing and reading. The primary meaning of *grafan* is “to dig, delve, dig up”, but it also carries a secondary meaning of “to grave, engrave, carve”.<sup>24</sup>

*Grafan* also has two derivatives which sometimes serve as antonyms. In *agrafan*, ("to engrave, inscribe"<sup>25</sup>), the *a-* prefix acts as an intensifier; in the examples which I will cite, *agrafan* has to do with making manifest spiritual truths by "engraving" them upon material objects.<sup>26</sup> In *begrafan*, ("to bury"<sup>27</sup>), the *be-* prefix performs an intriguing double function. This prefix can act either as an intensifier or it can have a privative sense (as in *beheafðian*--to deprive of a head);<sup>28</sup> in the contexts in which I am interested I would argue that this prefix both intensifies the literal meaning of *grafan*--burying involves, after all, the digging of a grave--and negates the metaphorical meaning of *grafan*, which has to do with inscribing truth or spiritual identity.

For example, it has often been argued that the speaker in *The Husband's Message* is the *beam* itself, and that *Riddle 60*, which immediately precedes it in *The Exeter Book*, is a prologue of sorts.<sup>29</sup> Since we may read both speakers as rune-inscribed pieces of wood, this thesis is intriguing in a discussion of inscription. In both cases we may argue that a personified material object has been utilized to convey a meaning composed upon it by an outside agent. Even more significant is the *beam*'s acknowledgment of this act of inscription, and the language it uses to describe this act:

Hwæt, þec þonne biddan het,      se þisne beam agrof (l. 13)  
 [Lo, he who inscribed this wood commanded [me] to beseech  
 you...]<sup>30</sup>

Here we have a striking example of an inscribed surface which is aware of its own composition; the fact that the *beam* is able to speak for itself lends a metaphorical as well as a literal level of significance to this act of engraving. On the literal level, we are presented with a text which



delivers a husband's thoughts to his wife; on the metaphorical level, we have a self-aware entity which is conscious of the extent to which it has been composed by an agency outside of itself. Such consciousness is common enough in Anglo-Saxon literature, of course, and is reminiscent, obviously, of that more famous *beam*, the Rood of *The Dream of the Rood*. What is significant about this example is the language of inscription, language which, as we will see, underscores the revelatory nature of such inscription in Old English texts. *Agrof* is the preterit third-person singular indicative of *agrafan*, and is commonly rendered "inscribed"; here such inscription refers literally to the runes cut into the surface of the wood, and figuratively to the deeper interior meaning made manifest through these exterior signs. As we shall see, such engraving has to do with physical inscriptions which reveal deeper spiritual truths, while diametrically-opposed acts of *begrafan*--"un-engraving", if you will--have literally to do with burying, and refer figuratively to attempts to hide or obscure spiritual significance.

But *The Husband's Message*, while illuminating nicely this dichotomy between "interiority" and "exteriority" in this type of inscription, has little to do with issues of spiritual identity or spiritual truths, which are my primary concern. For an excellent example which does deal with such issues, we may turn to *Andreas*.<sup>31</sup> When Andreas is conversing with the ship's pilot (the disguised Christ) on his voyage, Andreas recounts a particular miracle of the Savior which has bearing on a discussion of inscription. While preaching in the Temple of Solomon, Christ is angered by the willful blindness of the people of Jerusalem; noting the carven angels on the walls of the temple, Christ calls upon one to attest to his divinity:

Swylce he wrætlice      wundor agræfene,

anlicnesse      engla sinra  
 geseh, sigora frea,      on seles wage,  
 on twa healfe      torhte gefrætwed,  
 wlitige geworhte;      he worde cwæð:  
 “Ðis is anlicnes      engelcynna  
 þæs bremestan      þe mid þam burgwarum  
 in þære ceastre is;      Cheruphim et Seraphim  
 þa on swegeldreamum      syndon nemned.  
 Fore onsyne      ecan dryhtnes  
 standað stiðferðe,      stefnum herigað,  
 halgum hleoðrum,      heofoncyniges þrym,  
 meotudes mundbyrd.      Her amearcod is  
 haligra hiw      þurh handmægen,  
 awriten on wealle,      wuldres þegnas.”

(ll. 712-726)

[Thus he, Lord of victories, saw marvelous objects, wonders  
 engraved, images of his angels, on the walls of the hall on two  
 sides, splendidly decorated and beautifully wrought. He spoke  
 aloud: “This is an image of the most glorious of the species of  
 angels that there is among the inhabitants of that city: these are  
 called Cherubim and Seraphim amid the joys of heaven. They  
 stand unflinching before the face of the eternal Lord; with their  
 voices they extol in holy tones the majesty of the heaven king and  
 the tutelage of the ordaining Lord. Here, by dexterity of hand, is  
 marked down the beauty of holy beings and engraved on the walls  
 are the thanes of glory.”]

“Nu ic bebeode      beacen ætywan,  
 wundor geweorðan      on wera gemange,



ðæt þeos onlicnes      eorðan sece  
 wlitig of wage,      ond word sprece,  
 secge soðcwidum,      þy sceolon sel gelyfan  
 eorlas on cyððe,      hwæt min æðelo sien."

(ll. 729-734)

["Now I shall command a sign to appear, a wonder to take place in the midst of the people--that this image come down from the wall to the ground and speak words, tell in true words, whereby men shall come to believe in my parentage, what my lineage is."]

This "graven image" dares not disregard the command of Christ, and comes down off of the wall to preach to the people. This example is of particular note, because the concept of engraving or inscription serves a dual role here; as Christ points out, these stone "wondrous engraved images" are "carved through dexterity of hand", and they represent the "most glorious of angels"; the importance of the representational value of these carvings is emphasized by the repetition of such terms as "likeness" and "symbol". On a literal level these carvings represent an artisan's act of engraving images in stone. On a metaphorical level, however, this engraving signifies the "holy tones" of the voices of the angels glorifying the majesty of God--the timbre of which is made manifest as the angel climbs down from the wall and begins to sing those very praises. This act of inscription, then, serves not only to represent the appearance and the role of the angels in heaven, but also to make manifest the spiritual identity of Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of Mankind on earth. Such inscription or engraving, then, while on one level simply referring to a tangible act of artistry upon stone, on a deeper level refers to the spiritual truth which this engraving serves to represent; it takes the form of writing as well as that of sculpture, and this duality

of meaning is nowhere more clear than in the Old English account of the Ten Commandments. Here the writer uses the same form of *agrafan* to refer to God's words on the tablets as the *Andreas* poet used to describe the graven angels:

He sealde Moise twa stænene wexbreda mid Godes handa  
agrafene (*Exodus* 31:18)<sup>32</sup>

[He gave to Moses two stone tablets engraved by the hand of God]

In all of these cases of acts of literary inscription, *agrafan* serves on one level to describe actual material objects which have been engraved, while simultaneously referring to those spiritual truths which the physical inscription is meant to represent; such engraving, then, comprises both the appearance of exterior inscription and the manifestation of interior significance.

An interesting counterpoint to the physical and spiritual inscription of *agrafan* may be found in the use of *begrafan* in *Elene*. Forms of this term appear twice in this poem, and in both cases involve both a literal "burying" and a metaphorical "covering up" which serve to illuminate further my discussion of the spiritual significance of inscription. After his forcible conversion in the pit, Judas readily acquiesces to Elene's command and unearths the three crosses buried in the earth where the Jews had hidden them:

Ongan þa wilfægen      æfter þam wuldres treo,  
elnes anhydig,      eorðan delfan  
under turfhagan,      þæt he on twentigum  
fotmælum feor      funde behelede,  
under neolum niðer      næsse gehydde



in þeostorcofan; he ðær þreo mette  
 in þam reonigan hofe roda ætsomne,  
 greote begravene, swa hio geardagum  
 arleasra sceolu eorðan beþeahton,  
 Iudea cynn...

(ll. 827-837)

[He began then, eager of will and resolute of courage, to dig in the earth for the tree of glory beneath the turf-covering until, within a distance of twenty paces, he found [the crosses] concealed, hidden down in a deep pit, in a dark chamber; he came upon three crosses together there in that gloomy cell, buried in the soil just as that wicked host, the Jews, had covered them with earth in days of yore...]

Here *begravene* means “buried” or “hidden”, but it is clear in the context of the rest of the passage that, while the crosses were literally buried in the ground, the “host of wicked ones”--the Jews--had buried them specifically in order to keep the spiritual significance of the Cross secret from the world. All of the other terms used to describe the burial reinforce this duality: *behelede* and *beþeahton*, which both can mean simply buried or covered, also can imply hidden; *gehydde*, on the other hand, clearly denotes secrecy. The language used to describe the perpetrators of this crime also makes it clear that this is no innocent burial, but rather a conspiracy of silence in which actual physical entombment of objects is conjoined with the metaphorical hiding of a spiritual secret. The second passage reinforces this relationship. After the identification of the True Cross, and Judas’s confrontation with the Devil, the news of the invention of the Cross is spread throughout the

world; here the poet once again links the burial of the cross with the secrecy and sin of those who had hidden it:

Ða wæs gefrege      in þære folcsceare,  
 geond þa werþeode      wide læded,  
 mære morgenspel      manigum on andan  
 þara þe Dryhtnes æ      dyrnan woldon,  
 boden æfter burgum      swa brimo fæðmað,  
 in ceastra gehwæm,      þæt Cristes rod,  
 fyrn foldan begræfen,      funden wære...

(ll. 968-974)

[Then the morning-news was reported among the people and widely spread throughout the nation--in vexation to the many of those who would keep secret the Lord's law--[it was] announced through cities which the ocean encircles, in every town, that Christ's cross, long buried in the earth, had been found...]

Clearly those who "would have kept the Lord's law secret" were invested in the burial of the cross. *Begrafan*, literally denoting "to bury" an object, metaphorically connotes "to hide" a spiritual truth; similarly, *agrafan*, while literally "to carve" upon an object, metaphorically implies to make manifest just such truth. In this context it is clear that the Anglo-Saxon conception and language of inscription is in some ways analogous to our own. It remains to be seen how far we fairly may assert such a comparison.

Having described briefly the significance of the duality of the language of inscription in Old English contexts, I turn now to models of literary torture which employ similar dual structures; these examples are more abstract than those which I have just discussed, and the kind of



“writing the body” which I will describe has to do with a language of weapons and wounds, as it were, which provides legible tokens and signs rather than written words.<sup>33</sup> “Writing the body” is essential to “reading the soul” in the Old English *Andreas*; it is, after all, only through the destruction of his flesh that Andreas’s spiritual identity is transformed, and this transformation is recorded on the parchment of his flesh by the marks of his passion. Writing, in *Andreas*, is at once both a productive and a destructive activity. We first become aware of the dangerous power of the written word quite early in the poem, when we learn that the Mermedonians have subverted the normally productive activity of writing into a tool for calculating the execution dates of their prisoners. Later, the words uttered by the devil to incite the Mermedonians against Andreas illuminate the lexical relationship between the destructive nature of writing and the productive nature of torture in the semiotic context of the poem. Finally, in a sort of double-subversion, these same Mermedonians are the agents by which the destructive practice of torture is itself transformed, as they write upon Andreas’s body his identity as a type of Christ. It is only through the infliction of pain upon his body that Andreas’s spiritual identity as a type of Christ is inscribed within the text. Christ is, through his passion, unmade, so that he who was once fully divine could become fully human. Andreas’s identity is, in effect, erased through his torment, erased to be rewritten as a type of Christ.

Writing, as a means of reconstituting and transmitting the Divine Word, is a central and unifying activity in *Andreas*. It is of note that the central narrative of the poem is framed between two distinct and self-conscious references to the act of writing. At the very onset of the poem Matthew is described as that one among the Jews who first related the gospel through the miraculous craft of writing:

...wæs hira Matheus sum,  
 se mid Iudem ongan      godspell ærest  
 wordum writan      wundorcræfte.

(ll. 11b-13)

[...Matthew was a certain one of them who first among the Jews  
 began to write the gospel in words through miraculous craft.]

This is clearly productive writing, the purpose of which is to lead  
 mankind to the truth of the Word.

The poet's own writing is likewise productive in that it strives to  
 serve the same purpose; but this writing is also productive in the  
 creative sense, in that the poet has produced a work which is laudable on  
 its own artistic merits. Protestations of incompetence aside, the poet's  
 self-conscious reference to his own act of composition serves both to  
 draw attention to the analogy between his writing and that of Matthew,  
 and to underscore the unique nature of his own act of production:

Hwæt, ic hwile nu      haliges lare  
 leoðgiddinga,      lof þæs þe worhte,  
 wordum wemde,      wyrd undyrne.  
 Ofer min gemet      mycel is to secganne,  
 langsum leornung,      þæt he in life adreag,  
 eall æfter orde...

(ll. 1478-1489)

[Lo, I for a while now have announced in words of poetry the  
 story of the holy one, the glory of that which he did, a manifest  
 fact beyond my ability. A great feat is it, a challenging task, to  
 recount all that he did in his lifetime from the beginning.]



Such a framing device in fact validates the author's own writing through its analogy to that of Matthew.

That the poet frames the narrative with such references to writing is significant. Perhaps even more telling than the analogy between Matthew's "miraculous" craft and the literary efforts of the poet, however, is the distinction between such holy writing and its heathen counterpart. This contrast is underscored in the description of the Mermedonians' grisly death-calendar; in what seems to be a clear inversion of Matthew's writing of the Word of Life, the cannibals have devised "death-words", a system of writing and reckoning whereby they can determine exactly when a victim is scheduled to be put to death and eaten:

Hæfdon hie on rune      ond on rimcræfte  
 awriten, wælgrædige,      wera endestæf,  
 hwænne hie to mose      meteþearfendum  
 on þære werþeode      weorðan sceoldon.  
 (ll. 134-137)

[They had written, in rune and in reckoning,  
 the slaughter-greedy ones, the end-word<sup>34</sup> of men,  
 when they should become food to the hungry ones  
 in that tribe.]

Here the Mermedonians invert a normally productive activity, and writing becomes a means of death; later, in my discussion of the transformative nature of pain, I will demonstrate how torture is likewise inverted (albeit unwittingly) in Mermedonian hands, and becomes a productive activity akin to writing, which is a means to Life.

The perverse nature of the Mermedonian abuse of the act of writing is further emphasized by the poet's choice of words: while Matthew *wordum writan*<sup>35</sup> *wundorcræfte* (l. 13) [wrote in words, miraculously], the Mermedonians *awriten* in "runes" and "reckoning"; though both are engaged in what would seem to be analogous acts, they do so to opposite ends. Indeed, as the apposition of *wordum* with *on rune* would seem to imply, these acts spring from entirely different traditions: Matthew's "miraculous" Christian writing is in stark opposition to the pagan *rune* and *rimcræft* of the Mermedonians.<sup>36</sup> Here, clearly, we have an example of the inversion of the normally productive process of writing, an inversion which results in death instead of life.

Seth Lerer has examined acts of what he has termed "literacy" as they are manifested in various Old English texts; for Lerer such literacy comprises more than just reading and writing, and includes related issues of power, causality, and intent. Lerer discusses such literacy as he perceives it in *Andreas*, and also has determined that acts of writing are central to the poem.<sup>37</sup> Lerer finds the "subversive" literacy of the Mermedonians to be of particular note in the context of the poet's sense of the nature and the purpose of his own act of writing:

Unlike that of saints, or by implication of the *Andreas*-poet himself, Mermedonian writing attempts to bind and destroy rather than release and revive. Their inscriptions emblemize a pernicious kind of letter, one that literally kills...<sup>38</sup>

There are many kinds and levels of writing in *Andreas*, and that of the poet is inextricably bound up with the rest. He clearly seems to delineate the good from the bad, the Christian from the pagan, the productive from



the destructive; it is equally clear into which tradition he himself falls. Such a dichotomy is itself transformed, however, by the dynamic process of the poet's own literacy, through means as subtle as word choice and as blatant as emendation.

The relationship between torture and writing--between the infliction of bodily wounds and the inscription of spiritual identity--is underscored in this poem soon after Andreas has come to the city of the Mermedonians. The devil, in the guise of an old man, advises the Mermedonians that Andreas is their enemy and exhorts them to seek him out and subdue him through torment:

Nu ge magon eaðe oncyðdæda  
wrecan on gewyrhtum; lætað wæpnes spor  
iren ecgheard, ealdorgeard sceoran,  
fæges feorhhord. Gað fromlice  
þæt ge wiðerfeohrend wiges gehnægan!

(ll. 1179-1183)

[Now you may readily for their strange deeds  
wreak vengeance upon the doers. Let the mark  
of weapon, edge-hard iron, cut the life-dwelling,  
the body of the fated one. Go boldly so that you  
may subdue your adversary of strife.]

The Mermedonians do just that, and the *spor* of their weapons upon his body acts as a vivid record--a visible sign or symbol--of Andreas's spiritual nature. The very words uttered by the devil to incite the Mermedonians against Andreas illuminate the productive nature of torture and the concurrent destructive nature of Mermedonian writing in the semiotic context of the poem. In the context of this passage, the

meanings of *spor* and *sceoran* seem fairly straightforward: *spor* can best be read here as “mark”, or perhaps more poetically “wound” or “scar”; *sceoran* clearly means “cut” in this context, or in a more general sense “destroy”.<sup>39</sup> The sense of this passage, therefore, seems on the surface clearly to be destructive, both linguistically and thematically. But although *spor* can certainly mean the mark of a wound, it can also mean a mark, or a trace, of any kind;<sup>40</sup> further, *sceran* means to cut, shear, or shave, most often used in regards to the cutting or shaving of hair, but sometimes to the shearing of sheep.<sup>41</sup> We have then an interesting paradox in the application of these two particular terms to the meaning at hand; though the primary reading certainly seems destructive, it is noteworthy in the context of my larger argument that both of these terms resonate with more productive meanings: *spor* certainly could suggest the act of “marking” or “tracing” upon a page, and *sceran*, in its implicit sense of shearing sheep, could suggest the preparation of parchment.<sup>42</sup>

Thus both words, while explicitly referring to an act of torture, also might implicitly invoke an image of writing and of the preparation of parchment. This paradoxical image is of special significance in the context of my discussion of Andreas’s body as a page upon which a new spiritual identity is written through the acts of torture invoked by the devil through these very words.<sup>43</sup> Here, then, in a number of related linguistic and thematic ways the body of Andreas acts as a page upon which his identity is written through the torture inflicted upon him. It is, after all, only through undergoing a passion himself that Andreas begins spiritually to resemble Christ. The infliction of wounds upon Andreas’s body, therefore, parallels the inscription of his identity in the text. Tellingly--within the context of my discussion of the act of writing--Andreas’s identity is that of a type of Christ, who is “the Word”. The



torture inflicted upon Andreas is thereby written on his body, just as the poet's words are written on the page.

The Old English *Judith* offers us another example of "writing the body", but this time the writer is an agent of God; and a woman, a significant fact in the context of my discussion of the gendered nature of torture.<sup>44</sup> In the Vulgate version of the poem, the children of Israel could not possibly defeat the vast and mighty armies of the Assyrians without divine intervention. In contrast to the Vulgate heroine, the Old English Judith acts less as a wily general implementing a potentially risky plan, and more in the capacity of a prophetess or seer, one who provides tangible evidence of the future, thereby instilling in her warriors the will to fight for a victory which is destined to be theirs. In this version it is not her action which ensures the victory of the Bethulians, but rather the reaction inspired by it; their victory seems entirely possible long before the Assyrians discover the headless body, a discovery which is not made, in this version, until the outcome of the battle is already a foregone conclusion. In the Old English poem Judith's role is an active one, to be sure, but it is compositional and revelatory in nature. In this text Judith acts as an author of sorts, the agent by which the Divine Will is made manifest; she writes the text of the fate of the Assyrians with Holofernes's sword as her pen, his blood as her ink, and his flesh as her tablet. She publishes this meaning in the twin revelatory texts of the gory head and the headless body.

Just as Andreas's body serves as the page upon which his spiritual identity is inscribed, upon Holofernes's decapitated body is written the text of the destruction of the entire Assyrian host. After Judith has inscribed this text with the aid of Holofernes's own sword as her pen, she returns within the city gates to relate to her people what has passed. It is during her initial speech that we first suspect that the bloody head

with which she has returned betokens more than her personal victory over the Assyrian leader; before she has even displayed this gory token itself, Judith alludes to such a sign when she announces that the forthcoming victory of the Bethulians already "has been announced":

"...þæt gecyðed wearð  
geond woruld wide,      þæt eow ys wuldorblæd  
torhtlic toweard      7 tir gifeðe  
þara læðða      þe ge lange drugon."  
(ll. 155-158)

["...it has been announced throughout the wide world, that  
splendid and illustrious success is approaching for you, and glory  
granted of those injuries which you have long suffered."]

It is significant that Judith refers to this announcement in the past tense; no one but her handmaid and herself are yet aware of the demise of Holofernes, but Judith clearly refers to such a message, not as impending, but as an accomplished fact. This seeming confusion is resolved when Judith displays the severed head: the victory of the Hebrews has been signified through Holofernes's destruction, which is itself betokened through the bloody head. The agency through which this sign is made manifest is crucial:

"Fynd syndon eowere  
gedemed to deape      7 ge dom agon,  
tir æt tohton,      swa eow getacnod hafað  
mihtig Dryhten      þurh mine hand."  
(ll. 195-198)



["Your enemies are condemned to death, and you will have glory and honor in the conflict, as the mighty Lord has signified unto you through my hand."]

The Bethulians shall gain glory and the Assyrians are sentenced to death, as it has been signified by the will of God through Judith's hand. Here the text has been composed by the Almighty and written down by his servant, who then reveals its meaning to the principals involved. In this context the past tense of the announcement makes sense; the first revelation was by God to Judith, who then carved this truth into the page of Holofernes's flesh; this is a symbolic text, to be sure, but it is legible none the less. Through the visible token of Holofernes's broken body the truth is made manifest, first to the Bethulians through the symbol of the severed head, and next to the Assyrians through the sign of the headless body. This second message is not delivered, as it were, until battle is already upon the Assyrian host. When one of the generals finally dares to enter the leader's tent, he is able to assess quickly and accurately the nature of the message awaiting him:

"Her ys geswutelod ure sylfra forwyrð,  
toward getacnod, þæt þære tide ys  
mid niðum neah geðrunge, þe we sculon nu losian,  
somod æt sæcce forweorðan. Her lið sweorde geheawen,  
beheafðod healdend ure."

(ll. 285-289)

["Here is made manifest our own destruction; the approaching [destruction] is betokened, that the time is drawn near, along with afflictions, when we must perish, be destroyed together in the strife. Here lies our lord, hewn by the sword, beheaded."]

The language of his despairing reading of this text echoes that of Judith, and in fact, in its use of "betokened" and "made manifest", it underscores the role of Holofernes's body as text in this poem. The doom of the Assyrians is written so clearly in the mutilated flesh of Holofernes that there is no hesitation in its reception by either army, no need for confirmation, and no room for interpretation.

In the Old English *Elene* we have once more a woman who acts as agent, and a man whose body provides the medium, the text to be inscribed. In *Elene* the writing method of inscription is replaced by a material metaphor of goldsmithing; the destruction of the body to effect a reformulation of the spirit remains constant, however, as does the gendered relationship between agent and medium.<sup>45</sup> Judas's conversion, or his spiritual re-inscription, begins when he is cast into a "dry cistern" at the command of Elene:

Heht þa swa cwicne      corðre lædan,  
 scufan scyldigne--      scealcas ne gældon--  
 in drygne seað...

(ll. 691-693)

[Then she commanded him to be led away by a band, and cast into a dry cistern for his guilt--the servants did not delay...]

Judas's confinement in the pit in l. 693, and his subsequent metamorphosis and conversion, have often been perceived of as central to the poem; at this point I will focus upon the nature of this conversion, and the agency involved in its execution. The purgation in the pit is imposed upon Judas by Elene, and hence we may say that she inscribes his new spiritual identity upon the page of his body; in this



agency/medium relationship we see a direct parallel to Andreas's experience. The coercive, painful nature of Judas's transformative experience is itself also important, because it provides a direct parallel to the transformative process which the souls undergo in the fire of judgment described in the closing passage. Such a process of cleansing or purification through pain also is central to the concept of the fire of judgment. Just as Judas, after his cleansing, became *leof gode* (l. 1047), so do the souls on Doomsday emerge transformed by their pain; their sin has been burned away, and they are then angelic in aspect:

...forðan hie nu on wlite scinað  
 englum gelice...  
 (ll. 1319-1320)  
 [Henceforth their faces shine like unto angels].

Their spiritual identity has been reshaped, and the reality of this transformation is revealed in a parallel change in their outward appearance; as in the cases of Andreas and Holofernes, once again the external form acts as a token or symbol of some deeper truth.

I have extended the contemporary critical argument concerning inscription in what I see as a logical direction; just as there exists in *Andreas* a relationship between the body and the page, so does there exist a relationship between the act of writing and that of torture. Further, just as contemporary critics construe writing as a gendered activity, I would argue that torture and bodily destruction, in the literary contexts of *Andreas*, *Elene*, and *Judith*, have a similar gendered structure: the agency of writing is construed as masculine, and the medium upon which writing is performed is feminine; thus the agency of torture is masculine, and the body upon which it is carried out is

feminine. Again, in my view this assignation of gender refers metaphorically to social constructs. I would argue that ancient--and medieval--philosophers clearly understood conceptions of male/spirit and female/body as well as derivative constructions of agency and medium to be metaphorical models; further, I would argue that medieval constructions of agency have some resonance with modern gendered conceptions thereof.

The Providential universe conceived of by the Church Fathers is fundamentally determinist; that is, all acts, agents, and media move or are moved, consciously or unconsciously, according to the immutable will of God, and all such movement is, then, foreordained and predetermined according to that divine will.<sup>46</sup> God is the primary mover, and therefore all acts and actors--however much they may seem evil or unjust from the static perspective of temporal understanding--are necessarily aligned with the beautiful, the just, the perfect crystallization of the transcendent consciousness of God.<sup>47</sup> Although it seems to mortals that "history" is a series of actions and actors played out in a seeming succession of both good and evil events, this is in fact an illusion; all "time" unfolds simultaneously in the unchanging mind of God, who is outside of time, and all actions are in fact points on a continuum--a "wave", as it were--set in motion and controlled by that divine mind.<sup>48</sup> There is, then, no good or evil, as we commonly understand these terms, and no injustice, as God *is* justice.<sup>49</sup>

Since all creation unfolds according to and by the direction of the one primary mover, a modern argument regarding the gender of the agent of a particular act has limited relevance. Gender, in such a context, has to do with acts, actors, and those media which are acted upon, true, and we can construe that which acts as masculine, and that which is acted upon as feminine; ultimately, however, this line of



reasoning collapses upon itself, because all acts are dependent, in the end, upon the one primary actor. God, then, might be construed as masculine, and creation as feminine. This indeed, is not an uncommon construction, and I will return to it momentarily. In our attempt to extend our gender metaphor we might go further, however, and divide all action in a Providential universe into three roles: the primary mover, which is the divine will; all of those individual instruments which the divine will utilizes in its unfolding; and all of those media which are acted upon by the divine with its manifold instruments. According to this schema, we can recapitulate the writing metaphor we examined earlier and conceive of God as the scribe, his instruments as the pen, and his media as the parchment; further, we can project our gendered conception of agent/media upon this model, and feel that we have achieved some resolution of the conflict between medieval and modern understandings of gender and agency.

Unfortunately, I feel that this resolution is a little too facile and reductive. Within the confines of Patristic thought we may certainly conceive of God as agent, and absolutely conceive of God as masculine; further, we may clearly extend the analogy and conceive of agent as masculine. It is equally clear that creation may be conceived of as feminine, and that feminine=body=medium. God the creator as masculine and His creation--which He wrought from nothing and moves according to his pleasure--as feminine is a commonplace.<sup>50</sup> All of these conceptions are Patristically sound and well-attested. The breakdown between our modern and Patristic models occurs when we attempt to extend our gendered metaphor of agency onto the "middle" group, those agents which act upon the passive surface of the various media: the pens in the model which I offered above. The problem with this metaphor is that these pens, although apparently acting upon the parchment, are in

fact simultaneously being acted upon themselves, and might therefore be construed as feminine.<sup>51</sup> Although we may, in the end, reach some accommodation between the two models, I don't feel that it is fair to stretch either paradigm too far, nor indeed do I conceive of it as necessary. It is probably more just to acknowledge that Patristic philosophy is too rigid, too monolithic, and perhaps even (horrors!) too different to fit neatly together with a contemporary theory of gender.

My interest, however, is primarily literary rather than philosophical, and it frequently has been noted that good literature is often bad philosophy. In this particular case, although I want to illuminate just where Patristic thought diverges radically from modern and post-modern ideas, I also think it only fair to note that Anglo-Saxon literary conventions are somewhat less rigid in their construction than Patristic philosophical conceptions; I think that this is amply illustrated by the examples which I've cited thus far. I think it is appropriate, therefore, to argue that writing and torture are highly volatile metaphors of agency in the context of Anglo-Saxon poetry specifically, and even medieval literature in general. Further, I think that it is correct to assert that the male/spirit versus female/body dichotomy, and the male/agency versus female/medium dichotomy, were common medieval metaphorical models, and indeed have some resonance with the contemporary critical model of gender which I have described. Finally, I think that it is important to allow to a medieval audience some of the metaphorical sophistication with which we are sometimes too willing to see ourselves privileged. Gendered metaphors and metaphors of the body were medieval commonplaces, and clearly were often understood on more than just a literal level.

This is not to imply that literal distinctions in what we would term "gender roles" were not drawn from these metaphorical grounds.



Clearly, the roles, the social and cultural expectations, and the autonomy accorded to men and to women during the middle ages could be vastly different. My point is simply that gender metaphors were commonplace and not always taken literally. Andreas is, in a very real way, the page upon which God's Word is inscribed; Holofernes's gory head--and his headless body--are likewise texts upon which the Divine Will is written and made manifest; just so Judas, and the souls on Judgment Day, are recast, through their torment, to be *englum gelice* (ll. 1320). In each case visible tokens and signs provide a legible record of deeper spiritual truths; in this sense a gendered model of writing provides a framework for understanding the uses and the significance of literary torture.

Approaching such an understanding, in fact, is a primary driving force behind this study; torture scenes, passion sequences, and eschatological descriptions abound in Anglo-Saxon literature in general, and in Old English poetry specifically. Their presence is quite often brushed aside as a logical and expected outgrowth of a repressive and harsh "Dark Age" Germanic conception of Christianity, to which criticism it is usually added that the great bulk of Old English literature simply reflects a continental Latin literary tradition which it was attempting to emulate. Such assertions are not wholly without grounds. I am seeking to argue, however, that such a dismissive understanding of the Anglo-Saxon literature of suffering does not do justice to rather complex and interactive systems of thought which link such disparate elements as saints' lives, doomsday narratives, bestiaries, biblical redactions, and philosophical traditions into a coherent and unified attempt to understand such mysteries as the nature and evolution of the individual's self, identity, and soul. We tend to view medievals as community-oriented and not much interested in, or even aware of, the nature of the self, at least in the way that post-Enlightenment moderns

are. I do not argue that the Anglo-Saxon conception of the self mirrors that of present-day philosophers; rather the opposite. I do argue, however, that Anglo-Saxons concerned themselves with some of the same questions about the individual's soul--its relationship to the body, its origin, its development and its fate--that we do today, and that the questions they asked, the logic they followed, and the answers they found are of interest and value, not least because they provide intelligible models which are, in the end, not so very alien to our understanding.

My position seems to beg a number of questions at this point. To begin, how exactly do these texts which I have examined in the course of my study of inscription and torture diverge from their source texts? In other words, what makes this an Anglo-Saxon tradition, and not just an insular Latin one? Next, with precisely what sort of framework for understanding Anglo-Saxon literary torture does our gendered model of writing provide us? How may we understand torture to work in these texts? First, the Old English *Andreas* is particularly significant to this study--and is unique from its source texts--in that it utilizes a peculiarly Anglo-Saxon language of engraving which underscores the role of inscription in such torture sequences as these. I have spent some time in this chapter looking at such language, and studying its relevance to our understanding of the paradoxical nature of literary torture. Second, in the Old English *Judith* I have explored a fairly radical textual emendation by the Anglo-Saxon poet which both emphasizes the semiotic valence of Judith's own act, and simultaneously provides us with a template for reading similar messages in the broken and bloody bodies in other Old English texts. Finally, in the Old English *Elene*, we are presented with a text to which has been added a wholly original and very Anglo-Saxon homiletic passage, a passage which, examined in the light of a coherent language of pain and the coercive reformulation of



spiritual identity, provides us with a validation and an explication of acts of torture and inscription within the main body of the narrative. I will examine this Doomsday passage and others akin to it in more detail in my discussion of transmutation in Chapter Five. Viewing these texts in juxtaposition, then, it becomes clear that they have much to say about one another, and that they may inform and be informed by our understanding of inscription and a gendered model of writing: in all of these examples we have bodies which are acted upon, feminine pages, if you will, and we may read the text of these acts in their spiritual significance. This second phase, the act of inscription, is the point of the torture process. Rather than a haphazard application of pain for pain's sake, it is a process of altering reality, of expunging and reformulating identity.

## CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*. Madison, Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1989. Page 9. See also Susan Gubar, "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity." *Writing and Sexual Difference*. Elizabeth Abel, ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982. Pages 73-93. See especially page 77 for a discussion of the "pen-penis" versus the "virgin page":

This model of the pen-penis writing on the virgin page participates in a long tradition identifying the author as a male who is primary and the female as his passive creation--a secondary object lacking autonomy, endowed with often contradictory meaning but denied intentionality. Clearly this tradition excludes woman from the creation of culture, even as it reifies her as an artifact within culture.

<sup>2</sup> For a succinct introduction into the concept of gender as cultural construct, see Ann Rosalind Jones, "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l'Ecriture feminine." *The New Feminist Criticism*. Elaine Showalter, ed. New York: Pantheon, 1985. Pages 361-377. See pages 367-368, and note especially the following:

Feminists rereading Freud and Jaques Lacan and feminists doing new research on the construction of sexuality all agree that sexuality is not an innate quality in women or in men; it is developed through the individual's encounters with the nuclear family and with the symbolic systems set into motion by the mother-father pair as the parents themselves carry out socially imposed roles toward the child.

<sup>3</sup> For an intriguing exploration which suggests that such modern distinctions are neither radically illogical nor entirely new, see Thomas



Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1990. Laqueur argues that it was not until the Enlightenment that what he terms a "two-sex model" for understanding and defining "difference" between genders became preeminent. See page viii for a quick overview of his basic thesis:

It seems perfectly obvious that biology defines the sexes--what else could sex mean? Hence historians can have nothing much to say on the matter. To have a penis or not says it all in most circumstances, and one might for good measure add as many other differences as one chooses: women menstruate and lactate, men do not; women have a womb that bears children, and men lack both this organ and this capacity. I do not dispute these facts, although if pushed very hard they are not quite so conclusive as one might think. (A man is still presumably a man without a penis, and scientific efforts to fix sex definitively, as in the Olympic Committee's testing of the chromosomal configuration of buccal cavity cells, leads to ludicrous results.) More to the point, though, no particular understanding of sexual difference historically follows from undisputed facts about bodies. I discovered early on that the erasure of female pleasure from medical accounts of conception took place at roughly the same time as the female body came to be understood no longer as a lesser version of the male's (a one-sex model) but as its incommensurable opposite (a two-sex model). Orgasms that had been common property were now divided. Organs that had been seen as interior versions of what the male had outside--the vagina as penis, the uterus as scrotum--were by the eighteenth century construed as of an entirely different nature. Similarly,

physiological processes--menstruation or lactation--that had been seen as part of a common economy of fluids came to be understood as specific to women alone.

See also pages 25-26 for a specific example of a medieval understanding of the "one-sex" model.

<sup>4</sup> Sheila Delany, *Writing Woman: Women Writers and Women in Literature, Medieval to Modern*. New York: Schocken Books, 1983.

Delany offers a bibliography of work on the topic of the cultural construction of gender (see page 198), but it is rather dated; see also Laqueur's copious notes, pages 245-301.

<sup>5</sup> Delany, page 9.

<sup>6</sup> Laqueur, page 7.

<sup>7</sup> See Laqueur, page 8:

I want to propose instead that in these pre-Enlightenment texts, and even some later ones, sex, or the body, must be understood as the epiphenomenon, while *gender*, what we would take to be a cultural category, was primary or "real." Gender--man and woman--mattered a great deal and was part of the order of things; sex was conventional, though modern terminology makes such a reordering nonsensical. ...In the world of one sex, it was precisely when talk seemed to be most directly about the biology of two sexes that it was most imbedded in the politics of gender, in culture. To be a man or a woman was to hold a social rank, a place in society, to assume a cultural role, not to be organically one or the other of two incommensurable sexes. Sex...in other words, was still a sociological and not an ontological category.

See also pages 28-29 for a discussion of an Aristotelian manifestation of this seeming "inversion" of the "semiotic" for the "natural".



<sup>8</sup> See Laqueur, pages 61-62.

<sup>9</sup> See Laqueur, pages 22-23.

<sup>10</sup> See Delany, page 17.

<sup>11</sup> Delany, page 2.

<sup>12</sup> It seems to me that Delany's model is a bit reductive; while I would hardly argue that medieval authors did not structure their "characters" as exemplar (indeed, few literary practices are more medieval), and while I would agree that preconceptions as to what we would term "gender roles" played a major role in the construction of such exemplar (see my comment on medieval perceptions of these roles at the close of this chapter; see also my article, "*Judith* and the Rhetoric of Heroism in Anglo-Saxon England" in *English Studies*), Delany's twentieth-century fixation on politics may have caused her to overlook an early medieval passion for Providence. Her point is a valid one, but only to a limited extent: although sexual politics certainly play a role in some medieval portrayals of women, such a role is subservient, in the texts which I examine, to a gendered understanding of agency which largely discounts the gender of God's instrument. See my discussion of agency and determinism, below. Further, as I note in the text, she seems to disregard medieval conceptions of gender for modern models which she wishes to critique; this is unfortunate, because in some ways her own construction of gender seems to resonate with these medieval conceptions.

<sup>13</sup> Dinshaw, pages 15 and 17. For an interesting examination of this concept of woman as text from Chaucer through the twentieth century, see Gubar, especially pages 75-76.

<sup>14</sup> It might be more appropriate to utilize Dinshaw's phrase "literary activity", as reading and writing participate equally in this process of objectification. For a discussion of reading in the terms of masculine

objectification and desire, see Gubar, pages 76-77; one pertinent selection reads:

A "passage" of a text is a way of knowing a "corpus" or "body" of material that should lead us on, tease us--but not too obviously.

"Knowing" a book is not unlike sexual knowing, as Roland Barthes has demonstrated in *The Pleasure of the Text*, his erotics of reading. Not only do we experience gratification orally as we "devour" books voraciously, we also respond subliminally to the "rhythms" of the plot, looking forward to a "climax" ....

15 Jones, page 362.

16 Gubar, page 74.

17 See Page duBois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988. Pages 130-131.

18 D. W. Robertson, Jr. *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1962. Page 8. Robertson is of course dated, but still a seminal resource for Patristic background. He offers literally dozens of references applicable to this topic; some of the more pertinent include Augustine (*De Vera Religione*, 41.78; *De Musica*, 6; *De Trinitate*, 12.12), Scotus (*De Divisione Naturae*, PL 122, cols. 825-829), and Paul (Ephesians 5: 29; Galatians 5:17; Colossians 3: 18-19, Romans 7: 22). For more recent readings and bibliography, see Bynum (below).

19 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987. Page 262. For a number of up-to-date discussions concerning the role of woman in Patristic thought, see Bynum's note number 121 on page 394.



20 DuBois, pages 165-166. DuBois analyzes our concepts of “sexual difference” in juxtaposition with our conceptions of history and the philosophical roots of western civilization. Rejecting the unexamined phallogentricity of much psychoanalytic thought--and even that aspect of feminism which defines itself in opposition to such phallogentrism--duBois argues for a reexamination of the pre-Socratic notions of sexual difference, an admission of Plato’s role in reinventing these notions, and an acknowledgment of the cultural bias with which our own conceptions are imbued. See page 1:

In our time, the psychoanalyzed female body is represented as a symbolically castrated male body: Ancient Greek culture is here unseasonable, in Nietzsche’s sense, in that it offers us an alternative figuration: the female body as a fertile field, as the earth ready for furrowing. The study of ancient history allows us to see the particularity of our own culture, to be critical of its categories, to imagine otherwise.

21 For good synopses of these processes, see duBois, especially pages 39 ff., 64, and 65 ff.

22 For discussion of Plato’s thought on this subject, see duBois, especially pages 169-170 & 177-178; for additional material on Aristotle, see also pages 172-173.

23 DuBois, page 184. It is important to acknowledge that much of duBois’s argument has to do with reexamining our own sense of historicity, with distinguishing historical incidence from cultural constant, and with questioning the value of projecting our own cultural systems back upon our forebears (an important caveat in the context of this study). See also page 187:

...the erection of the phallus as a privileged symbol, as the transcendental signifier--the establishment of the male subject as the figure for wholeness to which the female and her body are compared--is not a universal fact of culture. It rather occurs in the philosophical tradition at the moment when women's humanity is conceded, when they are named as defective, partial men. The "symbolic pre-eminence of the male organ" is a historical fact, not a universal description of culture. To historicize it is to see differently.

24 Bosworth-Toller, page 487. Despite appearances and similarities of meaning, however, the Modern English form "engrave" is of Latinate (*graphicus*), rather than Germanic, derivation.

25 Bosworth-Toller, page 30.

26 Bosworth-Toller, page 1; see note B. 7 under "a". A- need not act as an intensifier, and indeed can act as a negating particle, but in this case it is clear that it acts as a slight intensifier.

27 Bosworth-Toller, page 79.

28 Bosworth-Toller, page 69; see note I. 2.

29 See, for example, Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature; with a Survey of the Anglo-Latin Background* by Michael Lapidge. New York: New York UP, 1986. Pages 294-295.

30 Citation from *The Husband's Message* is from R. F. Leslie, ed. *Three Old English Elegies: The Wife's Lament, The Husband's Message, The Ruin*. Old and Middle English Texts, G. L. Brook, gen. ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1961. Translation is the author's.



31 For a series of related puns on *grafan* in an elegiac context, see the word-play of *græfep*, *grofe*, *græf*, and *græft* in the Old English *Riming Poem*, ll. 66-71.

32 Bosworth-Toller, page 30.

33 See my discussion of the language of weapons and wounds in *The Dream of the Rood* in my discussion of literary attempts to express the inexpressible nature of pain in Chapter Two.

34 Allen J. Frantzen, "Writing the Unreadable *Beowulf*: 'Writan' and 'Forwritan,' The Pen and the Sword." *Exemplaria* 3.2 (1991): 327-57. I am indebted to Frantzen for this apropos reading of *endestæf*, page 346.

35 Though I certainly find it significant that the poet utilizes *writan* and *awriten* in a parallel manner in order to emphasize the diametrically opposed ends of these two writing practices, it may also be significant in the context of my discussion of *sceoran* that a primary meaning of both forms is to inscribe, carve, or cut. See Frantzen's discussion of the sylleptical nature of *writan* and *forwritan* in "Writing the Unreadable *Beowulf*," page 333. See also the discussion of the implication of incision (specifically runic) of *writan* in Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature*. Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1991. Pages 142, 167, 232, and 234.

36 See Lerer, page 17: "...runes stand for all forms of an alien or ancient form of communication." See also page 54: "Whether it be through rune and rimcræft or through drycræftum and scingelacum, magic practice or the credence in its spells are associated with the antitypes of Christian heroism."

37 Lerer, page 53: "From its initial presentation of Matthew as the writer of the Gospel, *Andreas* shapes its heroes and its villains through the kinds of literacy they practice."

38 Lerer, page 53.

39 See Bosworth-Toller for complete definitions of these terms: for *spor*, see the entry thereof on page 903; for *sceoran*, see the entry for *sceran*, *sciran*, *sceoran* on page 830.

40 All statistical and textual references to appearances of terms in the Old English corpus are from Antonette DiPaolo Healy and Richard L. Venezky, eds. *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1985.

41 The form *sceoran* is attested to only in this single instance, so we must look to other forms of the verb for information. *Sceran* is attested three times, always in reference to the cutting or shaving of one's hair; *scere*, however, is used at least once in regards to sheep: "ic scere scep oððe hors" (*ÆGram.*, 157.9). Further, there are several examples under *scyran*. In any case, it is clear that the primary meaning has to do with the shaving or cutting of hair, and a secondary meaning evokes an image of the shearing of sheep. *Sceoran* in a destructive sense seems something of an anomaly, therefore, and I do not think it is too radical to assert that its use here might simultaneously conjure a sense of its more common meanings.

42 Shearing sheep, of course, is not the same as skinning them; in its primary sense, however, *sceran* implies a shaving of hair from the skin, and I would argue that here it evokes a sense of the shaving and scraping clean of the flesh of an animal being rendered into parchment. Such an animal need not be a sheep, of course, but knowing that the term could be used in reference to sheep and to shearing serves, in this context, to reinforce the image of Andreas as the page upon which his passion will be written. Also note that *sciran* (Bosworth and Toller, pages 836-837), a different but equally punny form, means "to make clear" (especially



metaphorically, as in “to make clear what is hidden or obscure”, which is the primary meaning); this is interesting both in the sense of clearing the hair from skin, and in that of making clear the spiritual identity of Andreas. But, without further corroborating evidence, this is simply an interesting and suggestive association.

<sup>43</sup> It might be best to pause for a moment to discuss why such a paradox is significant. In short, am I just projecting my own arbitrary “pun” into the meaning of this passage? After all, nearly any word has a variety of possible meanings which may seem paradoxical or inappropriate in any number of contexts. The answer to this question is twofold, having to do with the suppression of a secondary text by the primary meaning, a text which is represented through a secondary sense of the term which is diametrically opposed to that primary meaning. In the simplest terms, a pun is more than a pun when it indicates the presence of a syllepsis (as defined by Michael Riffaterre; see Frantzen, pages 332-335). Frantzen explains that “...the pun contained in the syllepsis expresses the relationship of a suppressed text or subtext to the main text”, but this pun must be absolute, in the sense that the conflicting meanings must be “polar opposites”: “Syllepsis is created when a word is understood two ways at once and when those interpretations are opposite” (Frantzen, page 333). Frantzen’s discussion of the sylleptical nature of *writan* and *forwritan*, dealing especially with how they are used in *Beowulf*, is most significant: “...their meanings--to write, to kill--are incompatible” (Frantzen, page 333). Here I am defining just such incompatible meanings, that of production and that of destruction, both in my discussion of *spor* and *sceoran*, and in my larger investigation. In the larger case I identify the language of torture, or destruction, as the literal meaning, and the production of Andreas into a type of Christ as the

figural meaning embedded within that primary one. See Frantzen, page 332; see also Frantzen's extensive notes and references concerning intertextuality and the role played by syllepsis, pages 330-335. For further evidence of syllepsis in Old English literature, see parallels to this multivalent use of *spor* in *Juliana* (l. 623) and in *Exodus* (l. 239). See also the use of *slean* (*slog*: l. 108, etc.) in *Judith*; *slean* can mean to strike or to slay, but also to mint a coin, to strike in the forge, etc., which in this context, where the head (and headless body) of Holofernes signifies the downfall of the Assyrians, is an important sylleptical example of the language describing a productive text wrought through a destructive act.

44 The Old English *Judith* differs from the *Liber Iudith* of the Vulgate at several crucial points, and in one particularly important way. In the Vulgate version of the story, Judith is a heroine in every sense of the word: she is a tropological symbol of Chastity at battle with Licentiousness, an allegorical symbol of the Church in its constant and eventually triumphant battle with Satan, and an inspirational figure who infuses her warriors with much needed courage and confidence; but the Vulgate Judith is also, in a very real sense, the agent by which God's will is executed and the Hebrews are saved. Judith is central to the victory of the Jews, not only in a symbolic sense, but also in a practical one: she devises a plan, she implements it, and she, displaying the severed head of Holofernes to her people, explains just how they might achieve the impossible. It is according to her plan that the Assyrian generals discover the headless body of their leader before the battle, and the pandemonium and disarray which ensue as a result of this discovery are central to that plan, and to the Hebrew victory. In the Old English *Judith*, however, this central role is, in effect, marginalized to the



detriment of Judith's personal importance to the Hebrew victory, but to the benefit of the valor and ability of her warriors. This is a distinct alteration of the Vulgate.

45 Such "smithing" metaphors, in which the changing nature of the spirit is made visible through a transformation of the body through fire, are common in Old English literature. For a further treatment of such reinscription through fire, see my discussion of "transmutation" in Chapter Five; there I examine Judas's experience more closely in the context of spiritual purgation, and I illustrate more fully, in the context of other purgational scenes from Old English eschatological works, how his experience serves to explicate and to validate that of the souls in the fire on Doomsday.

46 Concerning the conflict between predestination and freewill, see Augustine, *The City of God*, Book V, Chapter 9; see also Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book V, Prose IV. For an explanation of how true "freewill" is only possible without the shackles of sin, see *The City of God*, Book XIV, Chapter 11. Concerning the nature of God's universal providence, see *The City of God*, Book V, Chapter 11, and Book XXII, Chapter 2; see also *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book IV, Prose VI.

47 For a discussion of the illusory nature of "fate", which is, in reality, simply a name for individual acts of providence as they are made manifest in time, see *The City of God*, Book V, Chapter 8; see also *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book IV, Prose VI. For an exposition on how all acts, good and evil, serve as instruments of the divine will, see *The City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 22, and Book XIV, Chapter 27; see also *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book IV, Prose I, VI, & VII. For

an explanation of how the Fall of Man fits into this schema, see *The City of God*, Book XIV, Chapters 11-15.

48 For an exposition of Providence as a single, continuously unfolding act of the divine mind, see *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book V, Prose VI. God created time, and exists outside of it; for an explanation of God's perception of time, see *The City of God*, Book 11, Chapter 21.

49 One of the principle stumbling blocks between many modern readers and the Patristic vision of justice is the concept that God *is* justice; in much the same way that God, as creator and motive force, exists outside of creation and time, God also stands outside of mortal conceptions of the just. Providence is just precisely because it is God's will, and a good working Patristic definition of justice is "according to the will of God." Man often interprets individual acts or circumstances as unjust simply because he cannot perceive the complex ways in which all actions and events serve as instruments of divine Providence, which is the unfolding of the will of God, and therefore necessarily good. Therefore, although God's ways and means may be inscrutable, they are by definition just. For discussions relating to the inscrutable nature of God's judgment, see *The City of God*, Book V, Chapter 21, Book XII, Chapter 28, and Book XX, Chapters 1&2; see also *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book V, Prose IV.

50 See my discussion of the Patristic vision of gender roles, above; see especially the Pauline conception of Christ as husband and Church as bride, etc.

51 Actually, this seems to me to be a problem with the feminist metaphor of the pen in general; other than its phallic resonances, how is it, in effect, all that different from the paper upon which it is utilized to write? I believe that the answer may be that the pen is conceived of as a



substitute phallus, and therefore as an extension of the male agent. While this is an ancient construction (as I illustrated above--see my discussion of duBois), and I am willing to accept it in a modern conception, it clearly does not work in a Patristic setting. We are all instruments of the divine will, to be sure, but to suggest that we are in any way to be perceived of as extensions of God is clearly blasphemous. God the Trinity is one, indivisible, and without peer. Therefore, if we are to construct a gendered model for understanding the Patristic universe, God is masculine and creation is feminine; there can be no middle ground, and instrument and medium alike must be lumped into the latter group.

## CHAPTER FIVE: *Swa Smæte Gold*: Material Purgation and Spiritual Refashioning in Old English Visions of Judgment

Purification by fire is a familiar Christian allegory, and manifestations of this concept appear in very many Old English texts; what is of particular relevance to this discussion is the link between physical purification by fire and the coercive, painful process of spiritual transformation. Eschatological scenes such as the Doomsday fire provide a spiritual parallel to the physical torture which I have thus far examined; the philosophical notions underlying the process involved echo the transformative model of torture which I described in Chapter Three, while the process itself provides an eschatological parallel to the temporal examples of inscriptive torture discussed in Chapter Four. Indeed, within an Anglo-Saxon poetic context which overtly relates physical pain with spiritual issues, and which, moreover, finds both to be inextricably related to the nature of identity and the twin processes of destruction and reformulation, such spiritual metaphors as the fire of judgment resonate thematically with accounts of physical torment which concern themselves with similar issues of transformation.

In this chapter I will examine models of spiritual purgation which employ the language and the symbolism of metallurgic purification. Such manifestations are part of a long pre-Christian and Christian tradition which mystically equates the physical with the spiritual, and which finds, in the practice of metallurgy, a metaphorical representation of the purging of sin from the soul. I will begin this chapter with an examination of the root concepts of the spiritual, intellectual, and philosophical tradition which such a metaphor represents; it may be useful for me to describe, for example, how some facets of the alchemical traditions spring from the same roots as some Christian

eschatological models. Having explored the well-spring of such paradigms, I will move on to eschatology itself, focusing on the fire of judgment model. After an initial examination of the roots of this tradition, I will discuss in general terms the Old English appropriation of this concept. Drawing upon several such instances of Old English eschatology for context, I then will concern myself with three manifestations of "spiritual metallurgy" which appear in religious poems which are concerned with purgation, purity, and related issues of spiritual identity and transformation.

It is impossible to read far into the literature concerning ancient metallurgical practices and the spiritual significance attributed to them without encountering discussions of alchemy. My interest, however, does not lie with alchemy *per se*, although an examination of it and its roots may help to illuminate the related traditions in which I am interested. In any case, I don't wish to become bogged down by semantic divisions, and so it is probably best to begin by clearly delineating my object of study. "Alchemy" is simply one model for understanding the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, between the literal and the metaphorical, which I wish to explore. For purposes of convenience and technical accuracy, I consistently will refer to this relationship--insofar as it is concerned with issues of destruction and reformulation--as "transmutation". Specifically, I will examine the significance of the intellectual and the philosophical traditions of transmutation as these traditions are manifested in the language and the literature of Old English eschatology.

The most common misconception about alchemy--and, indeed, about the transmutative traditions in general--is that the end purpose thereof is the physical transformation of a base metal into gold. There is a germ of truth buried within this misconception, but it must be stressed



from the onset that transmutation is, first and foremost, a spiritual practice; that is, it has to do with the nature of the soul. Transmutation, as a philosophy, is inextricably bound up with the actual practice of metallurgy, to be sure; but to acknowledge this relationship is not at all the same as to admit that physical transmutation was the primary end of these practices. Indeed, the very fact that many of the ancient cultures which adhered to tenets of transmutation practiced sophisticated metallurgical techniques is weighty evidence to the contrary. As Mircea Eliade has astutely pointed out, it is an injustice to pre-modern metallurgists to assert that their knowledge of their craft was so slight that they would not understand this distinction between literal and metaphorical metallurgy:

To what historical causes are we to attribute the birth of practical alchemy? We shall probably never know. But it is doubtful whether prescriptions for counterfeiting or imitating gold were the starting point for alchemy as an autonomous discipline...To attempt to link up a discipline, which dominated the Western world for 2000 years, with attempts to counterfeit gold is to forget the extraordinary knowledge of metals and alloys possessed by the Ancients. It is also to underestimate their intellectual and spiritual capacity.<sup>1</sup>

Eliade's is an interesting and significant point; transmutation, as a philosophical construct, is clearly an outgrowth of metal-working cultures, as well as the mysticism and the magic which surround metallurgy in primitive societies. We go too far, however, when we assume that the development of this philosophy implies a lack of practical knowledge.<sup>2</sup> The practical and the philosophical facets are

bound together, true, but it does not follow that they are indistinguishable. Titus Burckhardt provides a practitioner's perspective on the philosophical basis of transmutation:

Alchemy...with its image of the transmutation of base metals into gold and silver, serves as a highly evocative symbol of the inward process referred to. In fact alchemy may be called the art of the transmutations of the soul. In saying this I am not seeking to deny that the alchemists also knew and practiced metallurgical procedures such as the purification and alloying of metals; their real work, however, for which all these procedures were merely the outward supports or "operational symbols", was the transmutation of the soul.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, although the physical transmutation of metals was thought to occur sometimes, as a sort of mirror of inward change,<sup>4</sup> the metallurgic metaphor of transmutation is, for the most part, just that: a symbol representing a process which, on a spiritual level, may transform man more completely than metal may be transformed in the forge. There is a transcendence, a "leap", as Burckhardt fashions it, which can occur, in practical terms, only spiritually; metallurgic practices serve as only a pale reminder of this potentiality:

The miraculousness of this process, effecting a "leap" which, according to the alchemists, nature by herself can only accomplish in an unforeseeably long time highlights the difference between corporeal possibilities and those of the soul. While a mineral substance, whose solutions, crystallizations, smeltings, and burnings can reflect up to a point the changes within the soul,



must remain confined within definite limits, the soul, for its part, can overcome the corresponding "psychic" limits, thanks to its meeting with the Spirit, which is bound by no form.<sup>5</sup>

Metallurgic transmutation, then, is a metaphor for spiritual transcendence; it represents man's potential to achieve (or regain) a state of spiritual purity.<sup>6</sup> More important to my discussion of spiritual transformation in Old English eschatology, this transcendence was dependent upon suffering and destruction; only that which was reduced and consumed could be remade in the image of the divine, only that which was delivered from the mortal could be made immortal.<sup>7</sup> It is, to Eliade, crucial that reduction and suffering are linked anthropologically to the transmutative process; this, indeed, is the facet of metallurgic philosophy that makes transmutation so central to my own study. The links among suffering, redemption, and spiritual transcendence are mirrored by those among reduction, destruction, and material transmutation. This philosophical relationship clarifies and explicates the place of metallurgic imagery in Christian eschatology:

*They [the alchemists] projected onto matter the initiatory function of suffering.* Thanks to the alchemical operations, corresponding to the tortures, death and resurrection of the initiate, the substance is transmuted, that is, attains a transcendental mode of being: it becomes gold. Gold, we repeat, is the symbol of immortality...Alchemical transmutation is therefore equivalent to the perfecting of matter or, in the Christian terminology, to its redemption.<sup>8</sup>

Whether material or spiritual, literal or metaphorical,<sup>9</sup> this relationship between reduction and reformulation is the characteristic of transmutation vital to understanding Christian metallurgic imagery: transmutation is possible only through destruction; redemption can be gained only through suffering.<sup>10</sup>

The roots of this tradition of transmutation lie hidden in the mists of time; it might be even more accurate to say "these traditions", as there is no reason to believe that all of the various manifestations represent one long and unbroken chain of knowledge and ritual. Still, as Burckhardt has pointed out in his study of the evolution of alchemy, where we can detect in a wide variety of divergent traditions patterns which converge, it is worth our while to examine more closely how and why those patterns are so similar:

In its essentials, Indian alchemy is the same as Western, and Chinese alchemy, though set in a completely different spiritual climate, can throw light on both. If alchemy were nothing but a sham, its form of expression would betray arbitrariness and folly at every turn; but in fact it can be seen to possess all the signs of a genuine "tradition", that is to say, an organic and consistent--though not necessarily systematic--doctrine, and a clear-cut corpus of rules, laid down and persistently expounded by its adepts. Thus alchemy is neither a hybrid nor a haphazard product of human history, but on the contrary represents a profound possibility of the spirit and the soul.<sup>11</sup>

That these many traditions do have points of convergence seems certain, and my discussion of the exact nature of transmutation should illustrate this fact amply; less certain, however, is why so many cultures in so



many epochs should draw such similar conclusions about the natures of physical and spiritual transformation, and about the relationship of each with the other. There have been many attempts to explain this “universality” of transmutation; the two most significant schools of thought are the anthropological, most notably developed by Mircea Eliade, and the psychological, which was explored by C. G. Jung.

Eliade’s view is that this mystical relationship between the physical and the spiritual common to all metal-working cultures is the result of the unique physical properties of the metals themselves, and the apparently magical spiritual (“living”) qualities which these materials seem to possess. Various cultures develop more or less analogous philosophical positions around metallurgy, therefore, both because the metals exhibit the same properties universally, and because these properties, as well as the technology built around them, lend themselves to mystification:

To collaborate in the work of Nature, to help her to produce at an ever-increasing tempo, to change the modalities of matter--here, in our view, lies one of the key sources of alchemical ideology...what the smelter, smith and alchemist have in common is that all three lay claim to a particular magico-religious experience in their relations with matter; this experience is their monopoly and its secret is transmitted through the initiatory rites of their trades. All three work on a matter which they hold to be at once alive and sacred, and in their labours they pursue the transformation of matter, its perfection and transmutation.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, metals are perceived of as magical and holy because they seem to belong to the world of material substances at the same time that

they exhibit qualities which are thought to indicate a living spiritual nature; further, those who are able to master these special elements are, themselves, thought to possess a mystical connection with them.<sup>13</sup>

From an anthropological point of view, then, these "magico-religious" metallurgic traditions of transmutation common to so many different cultures spring from a common perception of the nature of these forms of matter, as well as a common desire to participate in and to some extent control the process by which matter may be "made" and "remade"; the projection of this material model into spiritual space is, for Eliade, the logical consummation of this concept.<sup>14</sup>

Jung, on the other hand, describes transmutation in rather contrasting terms; he sees the transformation of the soul as a universal psychological imperative which, in the practice of transmutation, is projected outward into the material world.<sup>15</sup> Transmutation, then, symbolizes a universal human experience, an experience common even to those who are unfamiliar with metallurgy:

Jung has shown that the symbolism of alchemical processes is re-enacted in the dreams and talk of patients completely ignorant of alchemy. Jung's observations are of interest not only to depth psychology; they also indirectly confirm the soteriological function which is one of the main constituents of alchemy.<sup>16</sup>

Material transmutation is, for Jung, a metaphor for a process of spiritual transformation through which most adult humans must struggle; hence the universal nature of the metaphor. This process Jung termed "individuation", and it concerns an actualization of "a drive for wholeness and maturity inherent in the human psyche."<sup>17</sup> According to Jung, in order to become fully whole, the outward face of the individual



(called the "persona"<sup>18</sup>) must be reconciled with the secondary, suppressed facets of the personality (called the "shadow"<sup>19</sup>); the "psychic opposites"--the dark traits hidden in the shadow and their mirror images manifested outwardly in the persona--must strike a balance in the mature being, known as the "self":

For a personality to become more whole, more individuated, it must somehow accommodate both conscious and unconscious areas to each other and form a new center which Jung calls the "self". In the "self" many pairs of psychic opposites strike a new balance. For Jung it was precisely this process of individuation which was being unconsciously acted out by the practitioners of alchemy.<sup>20</sup>

Jung postulated that the first step of this process was the destruction of the "light" persona through its merging with the "dark" of the shadow; this he saw as a metaphor for death, since the persona must, in a sense, die in order to be reborn as the purer, more complete self.<sup>21</sup> This "rebirth" marked the second step of the process, and Jung saw in this process of destruction and reformulation an analogy to material transmutation, which he conceived of as an external metaphor for an internal process not totally comprehended by the subject thereof.<sup>22</sup>

We have, then, in these two interpretations, two opposing views as to the reasons for this "universal" accident of transmutative philosophy. In brief, the anthropological school posits a common experience of the material world which is projected inwards onto issues of spiritual transformation, while the psychological school theorizes a universal drive for spiritual transformation which is projected outwards onto a convenient material metaphor. Whatever the reasons for the

consistent nature of these patterns of transmutative philosophy, it is certain that these traditions are both widespread and durable; their durability, at least in part, might be attributable to the ease with which transmutation has been assimilated into various systems of religious thought. Before I turn to eschatology itself, I would like to examine briefly those elements of transmutation which lent themselves most readily to Christian use.

Burckhardt argues that there are practical reasons for the assimilation into Christianity of philosophical elements of transmutation; though a philosophy evolved from pagan roots might seem anathema to Christian thought, such a process is hardly without precedent. Be that as it may, these philosophical elements, bound up as they were with technical information, entered the Christian tradition as part of a natural science, and sought their own level from there:

It will no doubt be asked how it was possible for alchemy, together with its mythological ground, to be incorporated into the monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The explanation of this is that the cosmological perspectives proper to alchemy, relating as they do both to the outward realm of metals (and of minerals in general) and to the inward realm of the soul, were organically bound up with ancient metallurgy, so that the cosmological background was taken over, along with the craft, simply as a science of nature (*physis*) in the broadest sense of the term, rather as Christianity and Islam appropriated the Pythagorean tradition in music and architecture, and assimilated the corresponding spiritual perspective.<sup>23</sup>



It may be, then, that the philosophical tradition was assimilated into Christianity over time from the body of ancient literature dealing with metallurgy. Such concepts which fit most easily with Christian paradigms would therefore be most readily absorbed into the new tradition. Dobbs has pointed out that there are "religious qualities inherent" in transmutation, and credits Jung with providing ample evidence of the affinity between these qualities and related concepts in major world religions.<sup>24</sup> Such qualities which are especially relevant to Christianity include the concepts of mystical revelation through divine grace and spiritual "rebirth", or redemption, through death (both the figurative death of ritual and the literal sacrificial death of Christ). Burckhardt claims that transmutation, while not a religion on its own, exists in a sort of symbiotic relationship with Christianity; the revelatory nature of Christian redemption is particularly well-suited to understanding the mysteries and the miracles of metallurgy.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the material metaphor of transmutation serves to underscore and explicate the Christian model of redemption through death. This latter relationship, on both literal and figurative levels, is worthy of special note. As I discussed above, one basic tenet of transmutation is that physical transformation (or spiritual redemption) always must be preceded by a process of destruction; it does not take much imagination to see the link to the Christian metaphor of redemption. Christ's death and resurrection, which both promises and explicates the transformation of every Christian soul, also echoes and validates--to a Christian mind--the spiritual nature of transmutation:

Western Alchemists integrated their symbolism into Christian theology. The "death" of matter was sanctified by the death of Christ who assured its redemption.<sup>26</sup>

Further, the transformation of material through the fire of the forge serves as a metaphor to underscore the spiritual transformation of the individual soul; just as Christ died and was born again, and as base metal is transformed into gold, so the soul of the sinner may be “burned” clean and holy:

...the physical transmutation of metals was a sign which manifested outwardly the inward holiness both of gold and of man--of the man, that is, who had completed the inward work.<sup>27</sup>

This fire metaphor, which springs from the fount of transmutative philosophy, is one that becomes deeply imbedded in Christian imagery; I will now turn to eschatology itself, and chart the evolution of this concept.<sup>28</sup>

Purification by fire, as we have seen, becomes a central Christian spiritual metaphor early on, and remains one throughout the middle ages; however, it is not enshrined in actual Church doctrine until very late indeed, by which time it has become part and parcel of the doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory is a concept related to and descended from simpler Christian manifestations of cleansing fire, so it is worth our while to essay briefly this relationship.<sup>29</sup> “Purgatory”, as we understand it, did not appear as a concept until the late twelfth century, and was not acknowledged as doctrinally sound until the council of Florence in 1439.<sup>30</sup> Prior to the development of purgatory as a specific “third place” for the purification of souls, two main models prevailed: the binary idea of appendages to heaven and hell, in which the condition of one’s soul would determine the station at which one would await judgment;<sup>31</sup> and the concept of the fire of judgment, according to which



all mankind would walk through the fire on judgment day, and the condition of one's soul would determine the effect of the flames upon one.<sup>32</sup> While the wholly wicked would be entirely consumed by the flames, those who were not destroyed would have the sin burned out of them; it is significant that Origen utilizes a metallurgical metaphor to describe this process: "For the righteous, however, the trial by fire is a kind of baptism, which, by melting the lead that weighs down the soul, transforms it into pure gold."<sup>33</sup> It is this latter concept--the fire of judgment--with which we are interested, as it is a common image in Anglo-Saxon eschatology. Further, the fire of judgment often is explicitly linked with the philosophy of transmutation, frequently with language and images which resonate with metallurgic processes of purgation.

The purification by fire represented by the fire of judgment does, indeed, seem to be related to the philosophical tradition of transmutation; at the same time, it is important to note that there are Old Testament references to destruction by fire which also are influences.<sup>34</sup> Jacques Le Goff suggests, however, that it was not these passages themselves, but rather the exegesis of them by various Church Fathers (most notably Origen), who drew upon Classical Greek influences, that transformed the destructive fire of a wrathful Hebrew god into the cleansing flames of a stern but caring one:

Origen, in his *Commentary on Leviticus*, sees these passages as exemplifying God's concern to punish man for his own good. Similarly, he interprets those passages in which God describes himself as a fire not as expressions of a God of wrath but rather of a God who, by consuming and devouring, acts as an instrument of purification.<sup>35</sup>

Origen felt that all mankind was in need of some level of purification due to unavoidable contact with the impure world.<sup>36</sup> Clement of Alexandria established a duality of souls and of transmutative fires, distinguishing between those who can be purified and those who must be consumed;<sup>37</sup> what is more, he drew an analogy between spiritual and material transmutation:

In the other life there will be two fires, a "devouring and consuming" one for the incorrigible, and for the rest, a fire that "sanctifies" and "does not consume, like the fire of the forge".<sup>38</sup>

Origen more carefully delineated the souls into the three groups with which we are already familiar--the unredeemable, the redeemable, and the righteous--and extended a Pauline metaphor in a metallurgic direction.<sup>39</sup> The medieval world refined and expanded this tradition, and also explicated various facets thereof; Aquinas, for example, went to lengths to explain how the corporeal and incorporeal can be equated in this metaphor.<sup>40</sup> If this tradition owes nothing to classical notions of transmutation, it certainly provides an interesting parallel; further, in those texts which draw upon the metallurgical tradition it is difficult not to glimpse residual facets of the philosophical tradition, as we shall see in my discussion of Anglo-Saxon forge metaphors.

The Old English verse *Elene* on one level seems merely another retelling of the invention of the cross, and, for the most part, it follows the source texts rather closely.<sup>41</sup> The closing passage, however, which describes the purgation of all souls on judgment day, is not from the sources, and indeed, at first glance, does not seem much related to the body of the text.<sup>42</sup> It is, however, unquestionably *meant* to be seen as a



part of the poem.<sup>43</sup> The relationship between this final section and the body of the poem never has been adequately explained, and it is with just such a relationship that this chapter is concerned. I find there to be a direct correlation between the experience of the souls in the fire of judgment--described in the final scene--and that of Judas, the duplicitous leader of the Jews, who--in the body of the narrative--is purged from sin and recast into a new, purer form through his own temporal "furnace".<sup>44</sup> The burning away of sin achieved through the heat of the fire of judgment, the purification of the soul which parallels the purification of metal in the furnace--through which both emerge likewise untainted and transmuted into new, purer forms--is meant both to echo and to explicate the "purification" of Judas in the pit. Just as gold and silver are melted, purified, and cast into the desired mold, Judas, like the souls in the fire of judgment, is "refashioned", or transmuted, after he has been purged of his impurities through his torment in the pit.

Drawing upon eschatological material from *Christ III*, *Phoenix*, and the *Judgment Day* poems, I will examine how spiritual refashioning, or transmutation, on Doomsday is a process of production, if you will, with linguistic and thematic resonances with actual metallurgical processes of purification. In order to accomplish this, I will begin with an examination of key terms of spiritual transformation. I then will develop this context by referring to the large number of analogous scenes in the homilies and other sources which use these and related terms, and I will discuss briefly the scriptural bases for some of these references. Further, utilizing some specific examples from this context, I will examine how this analogy between the literal purification of metal in the forge and the allegorical purgation of the soul in the fire of judgment serves to clarify the parallel between Judas's spiritual transformation and the experience of the souls in the fire of judgment

scene. Finally, I will illustrate how the experience of Judas in the pit is that of an “every-sinner” whose purgation and rehabilitation both explicate the relationship of the homiletic fragment to the body of the narrative and reiterate the personal and ongoing nature of such spiritual refashioning in the life of every Christian reader.

Central both to Judas’s experience and to the fire of judgment episode is a concept of purgation, or a sort of spiritual “cleansing”, which is represented metaphorically by an image of an actual physical process of purification. In the case of Judas, his spiritual transformation is marked as complete when he is “cleansed” through the “bath” of baptism:

Swylce Iudas onfeng

æfter fyrstmearce      fulwihtes bæð,  
 ond geclænsod wearð      Criste getrywe,  
 lifwearde leof.

(ll. 1032-1035)

[Likewise Judas after due time received baptism and was  
 cleansed, faithful to Christ, dear to the lord of life.]

*Geclænsod* (the past participle of *geclænsian*<sup>45</sup>), here meaning “cleansed” or “purified”, is a key term in this context, because though Judas’s conversion seems an obvious echo of that of Constantine, the means by which they are converted differ radically, as does the language the poet uses to describe each case. Though the poet just mentions that Constantine was true to the will of the lord after his baptism--“ond þæt forð geheold on his dagana tid, dryhtne to willan” (ll. 192-193)--Cynewulf specifically mentions that Judas was *geclænsod*, or “purified”. While Constantine’s baptism is cleansing in only the most symbolic



sense, Judas has literally had the sin expunged from his soul through his purgation in the pit.

Though it has been argued that Judas's cleansing in the pit is a figural representation of the Catechumen's preparation for baptism,<sup>46</sup> we must not be too quick to equate a forced period of confinement and deprivation with the self-imposed mortification of the faithful.<sup>47</sup> Although Judas becomes *geclænsod* through a form of baptism, it is a baptism by fire, if you will, prefigured by Constantine's baptism by water and prefiguring the baptism by fire described in the closing passage.<sup>48</sup>

As if it weren't plain enough in the highly symbolically charged environment of baptism, the verb *geclænsian* is marked as a spiritually loaded term in Elene's last speech to Judas before she has him cast into the pit; she needs to find the cross in order to "cleanse" it, so that it may be of use to mankind:

...þæt ic hie syððan mæge  
geclænsian Criste to willan,  
hæleðum to helpe...

(ll. 677-679)

[So that then I may cleanse it according to the will of Christ, as an aid to men...]

In this context *geclænsian*, while certainly invoking a literal reference to "cleaning" on one level, more importantly evokes a spiritual "cleansing" (or transmutation), as well. Though the cross is undoubtedly dirty after centuries in the ground, it, like any holy relic or place, must be cleansed and blessed after defilement.

This same sense of “cleansing” or “purification” is also central to the episode of the fire of judgment. *Geclænsod*, the term with which the poet explains the nature of Judas’s spiritual transformation, is also the exact term used to describe the souls of the dead after they have emerged from the fire of judgment:

Hie asodene beoð,  
asundrod fram synnum,    swa smæte gold  
þæt in wylme bið    womma gehwylces  
þurh ofnes fyr    eall geclænsod,  
amerod ond gemylded.

(ll. 1308-1312)

[They shall be purified, set apart from sins, like pure gold, which is all purged of every foulness by the fire of the furnace, purified and melted.]

This language, to be sure, seems to invoke an image of transmutation, and recalls--or at the very least parallels--that tradition. Further, the use of *geclænsod* by the *Elene* poet in this eschatological context seems to suggest that the purgation undergone by the souls in the fire of judgment is a form of transmutation closely related to Judas’s own spiritual cleansing. I can say this with some assurance because, of the literally hundreds of occurrences of *geclænsian* and its various forms (there are nearly fifty occurrences of *geclænsod* alone), all but a relative handful refer to a kind of spiritual cleansing akin to those which I’ve described from *Elene*, including several references both to baptismal and to allegorical metallurgic purification; I have included some typical examples:



Se man bið geclænsod fram his unclænum synnum þurh þæt  
halige fulluht...

(ÆHom 4 242)

[The man is cleansed from his unclean sins through the holy  
baptism...]

...beo geclænsod from þæm mæstum scyldum...

(Ps 18.12)

[...be cleansed of the greatest sins...]

Gyf we nu wilnieð, þæt ure sawlen syn geclænsode fram synne  
fulnysse...

(Alc (Warn 35) 138)

[If we now desire, that our souls should be cleansed from foulness  
of sin...]

Se fullwuht ðone mon geclænsað fram his synnum...

(CP 54.427.6)

[The baptism cleanses the man from his sins...]

Ðurh swylcne smið ond þurh swylce tol, geclænsað ure Drihten  
þare haleгна sawlen...

(Eluc 1(Warn 45) 45)

[Through such a smith and through such a tool, our Lord cleanses  
the souls of the saints...]

...he mæg...ðone synfullan fram his synnum geclænsian.

(ÆcHom I. 17(App) 187.3)

[...he may cleanse the sinfulness from his sins.]

The use of *geclænsod*, then, to describe this sort of metaphorical purification in both the case of Judas and that of the souls on judgment day, serves to underscore the relationship between the two episodes in the context of the poem: in the case of Judas, the purgative nature of his

spiritual transmutation is explicated; in the case of the fire of judgment scene, its relationship to the body of the narrative is made manifest.

Thus, through this relationship, the nature of Judas's transformation is illuminated further by the poet's explanation of the process through which the souls on judgment day *become geclænsod*: the souls of men will be purified through the flames, "melted", as it were, in order to be "recast" or "re-fashioned"--transmuted--into new and more beautiful forms. Here the poet refers to an actual process of production, in terms that, unlike *geclænsian*, are sometimes used literally: *asodene* and *amered*, particularly, help to develop further this spiritual analogy to actual metallurgic processes of purification and production.

*Asodene*, from the verb *aseoðan*, means "purified" or "refined", but the implication is a purification by seething or boiling.<sup>49</sup> There are only a handful (5-10) of occurrences of the various forms of this verb throughout the corpus, and several of them, like those of *geclænsian*, refer to a spiritual or metaphorical "seething". A parallel can be found in the related form *seoþeð*, which occurs in the description of the ravaging earth-destroying flame described in *Christ III*; here this term is ambivalent, referring as it does both to an act of actual physical destruction on the last day--as opposed to in the fire of judgment on Doomsday--and one of spiritual purification. The meaning in this context is usually taken as "seethe" or "smelt":<sup>50</sup>

Seoþeð swearta leg      synne on fordonum,  
 ond goldfrætwe      gleda forswelgað,  
 eall ærgestreon      eþelcyninga.<sup>51</sup>  
 (ll. 994-996)



[The dark flame will smelt the sin in the corrupt ones, and glowing coals consume gold ornaments, all the ancient treasure of kings.]

*Aseoðan*, however, can also refer to a literal process of material production, specifically in the context of the refinement of metal, as in this example from the laws of Alfred and Guthrum:

...ealle we lætað...to VIII healfmearcum asodenes goldes...

(LawAGu 2)

[...all we allow at eight half-marks of refined gold...]

*Amered*, which is the past participle of *amerian*--a relatively well-attested verb (30-50 occurrences in various forms)--also translates “purified” or “refined”, and is a term generally used in regards to molten metal.<sup>52</sup> *Amerian* is of key importance to this examination for two reasons: first, because it most often (quite possibly more than 25 times) appears in scenes of spiritual metallurgy clearly analogous to the fire of judgment scene in *Elene*; second, because the majority of these scenes are renderings of one of several scriptural passages which resonate with the metaphorical analogy between spiritual transformation and metallurgic refinement. Two of the most common scriptural references containing forms of *amerian* are *Psalms* 12:6 and 66:10;<sup>53</sup> I have included an example of each reference:

Gesprec drihtnys gesprec clæne sylfur fyr ameryd eorðan  
geclænsud sufunfealdlice...

(PsGLC (Wildhagen) 11.7)

[The speech of the lord [is] clean, [as] silver purified by fire in the earth, cleansed seven times...]

Forþon þu acunnudyst us god mid fyre us amerarydyst swa swa  
mid fyre bið ameryd sylfur...

(PsGLC (Wildhagen) 65.10)

[Therefore you test us with fire, god, you purify us just as silver is purified with fire...]

It is significant that the words of God, like God himself, are in and of themselves “clean”; they are *compared* to that which has been “cleansed”, but they are inherently pure and do not require any process of purification. The souls of men, however, like raw silver or gold, must be purged in the heat of the furnace to approach this divine level of purity.

It would be profitable to discuss briefly two passages from the *Phoenix* at this point. The *Phoenix* would merit mention in any discussion of spiritual transmutation in Anglo-Saxon literature, both because it is commonly accepted that the self-immolation and rebirth of the bird in the poem is meant to represent just that, and because the fire imagery cannot but suggest some metaphorical connection with the fire of judgment. Moreover, the *Phoenix* is particularly relevant to this discussion as it contains two instances of *amerede*, both of which are exactly analogous to those which I have just discussed, within the space of a hundred lines; further, the first instance of *amerede* occurs in a passage which interprets the metaphor of the phoenix in the eschatological terms of the fire of judgment:

Ðær þa lichoman      leahtra clæne  
gongað glædmode,      gæstas hweorfað



in banfatu þonne bryne stigeð  
 heah to heofonum. Hat bið monegum  
 egeslic æled þonne anra gehwylc  
 soðfæst ge synnig, sawel mid lice  
 from moldgrafum seceð Meotudes dom  
 forhtafæred. Fyr bið on tihte,  
 æleð uncyste. þær þa eadgan beoð  
 æfter wræchwile weorcum bifongen,  
 agnum dædum. þæt þa æþelan sind  
 wyrta wynsume mid þam se wilda fugel  
 his selfes nest biseteð utan.  
 þæt hit færinga fyre byrneð,  
 forsweleð under sunnan ond he sylfa mid,  
 ond þonne æfter lige lif eft onfehð  
 edniwinga. Swa bið anra gehwylc  
 flæsc bifongen fira cynnes  
 ænlic ond edgeong, se þe his agnum her  
 willum gewyrceð þæt him Wuldorcyning  
 meahtig æt þam mæþle milde geweorpeð.  
 þonne hleopriað halge gæstas,  
 sawla soðfæste song ahebbað  
 clæne ond gecorene, hergað Cyninges þrym  
 stefn æfter stefne, stigað to wuldre  
 wlitige gewyrtað mid hyra weldædum.  
 Beoð þonne amerede<sup>54</sup> monna gæstas,  
 beorhte abywde<sup>55</sup> þurh bryne fyres.

(ll. 518-545)

[There the bodies clean of sins shall go glad-hearted, the souls  
 enter into the bodies when the conflagration rises high to the

heavens. The dreadful fire will be hot for many, when each of those, righteous and sinful, soul with body from the earthen-grave seeks the judgment of the Creator, terrified. Fire will be in motion, consuming sin. There the blessed ones, after exile, will be attired with their works, by their own deeds. These are those noble and delightful herbs with which the wild bird encompasses his own nest so that it suddenly bursts into fire and burns up beneath the sun and him with it. And then after the flame he begins life anew. Just so will each one of the race of men be attired in flesh, noble and rejuvenated, who by his own choice works it here that the mighty King of Glory is mild unto him at the judgment. Then holy spirits will sing, righteous souls will lift up song, clean and chosen ones will praise the glory of the King, voice upon voice, and ascend into glory delightfully perfumed with their good deeds. The souls of men will be purified then, brightly cleansed, through the conflagration of fire.]

Wickedness will be consumed by the flames, as the old bird's aged flesh was; but the righteous, clothed in their good deeds as the bird was balméd by its herbs, will be born again to new and spotless flesh, just as the phoenix was reborn. The metaphor is succinctly explicated by the penultimate and ultimate lines of this passage--by the fire of judgment the souls of men shall be purified--*amerede*--as silver is purified in the furnace, or as the phoenix is born anew from the ashes of its pyre. In his discussion of the eternal joys of heaven the poet once again harkens back to the purgative process through which the righteous became worthy of paradise:

Ðus reordiað      ryhtfremmende



manes amerede in þære mæran byrig,  
 cyneþrym cypað, Caseres lof  
 singad on swegle, soðfæstra gedryht,  
 þam anum is ece weorðmynd  
 forð butan ende.

(ll. 632-637a)

[Thus the righteous, purged of evil, discourse in that glorious city.  
 The company of those steadfast in truth proclaim his royal  
 majesty; they sing in heaven the praise of the emperor, to whom  
 alone is eternal honor henceforth without end.]

The saved have been purged of sin, purified through the heat of the fire,  
 and so, like the phoenix, enjoy rebirth.<sup>56</sup>

It is clear from such references to spiritual smithing, as it were,  
 that the purgation and transmutation of the soul--especially a soul  
 weighed down with sin, or "lead"--is an arduous and painful process. In  
 this sense the experience of Judas in the pit is certainly parallel to that of  
 the souls in the fire of judgment. Just as gold must be cast upon the fire  
 to purge it of impurities, so also must souls be on doomsday. This  
 tradition of equating the material labor of the smith with the spiritual  
 exertion of the individual soul is an ancient one, as we have seen; it is  
 important to stress, however, that here the smith is Christ the judge,  
 unless we perceive of the fire of judgment as a continuous enactment of  
 an eschatological present, as Graham Caie has suggested (see my  
 discussion in the conclusion to this chapter).<sup>57</sup> In any case, after gold is  
 purified and melted, it is indeed recast into whatever form the goldsmith  
 chooses; this is likewise true of the souls which emerge from the fire.  
 Just as Judas, after his cleansing, became "leof gode" (l. 1047), so do the  
 souls emerge transmuted through the heat of God's spiritual forge; their

sin has been burned away, and they have been reshaped into new forms which are angelic in aspect: “Forðan hie nu on wlite scinað englum gelice” (ll. 1319-1320) [Henceforth their faces shine like unto angels].

We have then in this two-step process of purification and refashioning a definite parallel between the spiritual experience of Judas in the pit and the experience of the souls of all mankind in the fire of judgment. It is only through the spiritual forge of the pit that Judas is, first, *geclænsod*--“cleansed”--of sin, and then refashioned into the form of the Christian bishop Cyriacus;<sup>58</sup> likewise, it is through the oven of the fire of judgment that the souls on judgment day first *asodene beoð*--“shall be purified”--and then are recast to be *englum gelice*--“like unto angels”. These two transformative processes are analogous, and it is clear that this analogy is founded upon an allegorical image of metallurgic purification and production.

The relationship between Judas’s spiritual transformation and that of the souls in the fire of judgment clarifies the textual significance of both experiences by analogy. The fire of judgment scene is prefigured by Judas’s experience, and the philological and metaphorical relationship between these two transmutations brings this final episode from the periphery into the center of the narrative. Further, the purgative and transmutative nature of the fire of judgment serves to explicate the means of allegorical metallurgy by which Judas’s spiritual identity is first “cleansed” and then “recast”.

Judas’s transmutation serves as an example of the temporal purgation and transformation through which every soul should persevere. Judas serves in the capacity of an “every-sinner”, as it were, and the relationship between his experience and that of the souls in the fire of judgment serves to underscore the urgency and the immediacy of transmutation: it is meant to be a regular and an ongoing process, and



not one to be put off until judgment; in fact, it is those very souls which have labored most diligently in this life which will feel least the heat of the flames on Doomsday.<sup>59</sup>

Graham Caie has discussed extensively this concept of the “eschatological present”, in which the spiritual drama of Judgment Day is played out in the present in the souls of the faithful. According to this schema, *nu* is the time to purify one’s soul in the searing flames of the spiritual forge; after death it will be too late to mend one’s ways, and it is therefore the duty of all Christians to perform this laborious and sometimes painful task during every hour of every day. In his treatment of the *Judgment Day* and *Christ III* poems, Caie argues that the poets purposefully focus on the present moment and conflate the flames of punishment and those of purification in order to underscore the fact that it is *now*--in this life and at this and every other point in time *before* death--that the reader must turn his mind to the task of personal purification from sin. In his discussion of *Judgment Day I*, for instance, Caie asserts that the poet deliberately avoids reference to a specific purgatorial period:

As in all the Old English eschatological poetry, there is no specific reference to a purgatorial period. Evil is punished and good is purified by flames which are ambivalently apocalyptic and from hell. Similarly, there is no distinction made between the *endedæg* of the individual and *domesdæg*; the poet concentrates only on the present moment, for after death nothing can be changed.<sup>60</sup>

Caie’s is an interesting point from a theological point of view, as one of the major criticisms of “purgational” theology has always been that, if purgation is possible in the next life, there is no real reason to be overly

concerned with righteousness in this one. Caie argues that the conflation of the *endedæg* of the individual and the *domesdæg* of all mankind in such poetry as this serves to reinforce the fact that the final judgment will be based on how one lives here, now, today. Therefore the point of eschatological visions of judgment is twofold: first, to frighten the audience into repentance with a vision of the torments to come for all sinners in the hellfire after judgment; second, to give those frightened into repentance a blueprint for purgation. For Caie this means that those who wish to be saved, those who wish to avoid the pain of the fire of judgment, must seek out such purgational heat now in this life.

Eschatological verse, according to this model, offers not a literal vision of the future (except for the purposes of providing the impetus of fear), but rather a metaphor for the individual act of penitence in the soul of the individual repentant sinner; the final judgment, then, is not painful to the saved because they already have purged themselves of the "lead" of sin through temporal acts of purgation. Meanwhile, for the sinful, the fire of judgment is indiscernible (for all practical purposes) from the hellfire awaiting them:

The flames of Doom and hell were, of course, intended to frighten man into repentance, but the explicit use of this Sign of Doom to act as both purifier of the good and destroyer of all evil suggests the anagogical meaning as well. In *Elene* the *duguð domgeorne* "the host eager for glory" (1291a) will be uppermost in the "purgatorial" fires of Doom, and will be cleansed of venial sins there, while the flames, viewed in most eschatological literature as militant thanes of Christ searching out evil, act as the beginning of the punishment of hell. The *duguð domgeorn* must seek out the fire which will purge them of evil...at the actual moment of



Apocalypse, of Revelation, man will once more judge clearly and will recognize the state of perfection which he has gained on earth.<sup>61</sup>

This model clearly resonates with that of transmutation, according to which the practitioner is attempting a very similar process of spiritual reformulation which is expressed in a metaphor of metallurgic purification. In both models the present moment is the time for action, and the fire of judgment is a metaphor for the process to be undergone by each individual soul. The actual day of judgment is one of affirmation to the righteous, who have acted to purge themselves of sin throughout the course of their lives.

Caie's view is that eschatological scenes in these poems were meant to be didactic and thematic, and not in any way historical; that is, that the poets did not foresee a doomsday such as they described awaiting mankind at the end of time, but rather the opposite. They in fact saw the *present* as the moment of truth, and the day of judgment as the moment when all such personal truths would be revealed and forever fixed:

...the poets were not at all concerned about the occurrences surrounding the final Assize; indeed they appear not to have believed that there would be such an event. The end of the world will be literally the *domeadigra dæg*, the Day or time of those blessed by glory already, the Day of Man, when the perfected existence which the righteous sought on earth will be consummated and eternal day and light attained.<sup>62</sup>

For Caie, the end result of this analysis of the eschatological present is that *dom* is not a fearful judgment at the end of time, but rather a laborious act of volition in the present moment. Caie sees such a definition of *dom* as central to the doomsday verse, and therefore argues that this verse is to be seen as metaphorical, and is not to be taken literally.<sup>63</sup>

I will conclude this chapter with two fire of judgment scenes, both of which combine metallurgical images of transmutation with references to an eschatological present such as Caie suggests. In each case the terminology used invokes the transmutative metaphor of metallurgy, while simultaneously each poet admonishes the reader to act now to smelt the lead of sin from the gold of the soul, or risk an eternity of flames which, despite their agonizing heat, will never be able to affect the same spiritual transformation. In *Judgment Day II* the poet warns that the doomsday flame will consume all, excepting only those who have purged themselves here today:

Ufenan eall þis      eac byð gefylled  
eal uplic lyft      ættrenum lige.  
Færð fyr ofer eall,      ne byð þær nan foresteal,  
ne him man na ne mæg      miht forwyrnan;  
eal þæt us þincð æmtig      eahgemearces  
under roderes ryne,      readum lige  
bið emnes mid þy      eal gefylled.  
Ðonne fyren lig      blaweð and braslað,  
read and reaðe,      ræsct and efesteð,  
hu he synfullum      susle gefremme;  
ne se wrecenda byrne      wile forbugan  
oððe ænigum þær      are gefremman,



buton he horum sy      her afeormad,  
and þonne þider cume,      þearle aclænsad.

(ll. 145-158)

[Upon the top of all this, all the upper atmosphere likewise will be filled by poisonous fire. Fire will proceed over all: there will be no hindrance, none ever will be able to oppose its might; all of that horizon which seems empty to us under the sky's extent will be all fully filled thereupon with red flame. Then the fiery flame will blow and roar, red and harsh, crackle and hasten, thus will it do misery unto the sinful. The avenging conflagration will not pass by any nor unto any there have mercy, unless he be purged from defilement here, and then come thither vigorously cleansed.]<sup>64</sup>

Those who repent and purify themselves now will be spared by the fire, but those who do not will suffer for all eternity after the judgment. Only those who have "cleansed" themselves "vigorously", those who have "purged" themselves of "defilement"--those who have melted away the dross of sin through the heat of their penance--in the present life, here and now, will be spared by the flames of the apocalyptic fire in the next life. The poet's terminology is significant. *Aclænsad* is of particular note in the context of my larger discussion concerning the language of metallurgical purification; there are three instances of this past participle appearing in *Psalms* 12:6 referring to the purification of silver in the forge (see my discussion of *amerian*, above). Further, the poet's insistence that the soul be purged "here", before one journey's "thither" to the judgment, underscores the immediacy of the need. We have then an example of an eschatological scene which both utilizes the metaphor of transmutation and invokes the theme of the eschatological present.

In *Christ III* we find another such example. Here the poet warns that he who does not presently care for the state of his soul will not have the option to do so after the judgment; after that point the heat of the hottest flames can no longer purify, but only consume:

Bið him synwracu  
ondweard undyrne;      þæt is ece cwealm.  
Ne mæg þæt hate dæl      of heoloðcynne  
in sinnehte      synne forbærnan  
to widan feore,      wom of þære sawle,  
ac þær se deopa seað      dreorge fedeð,  
grundleas giemeð      gæsta on þeostre,  
æleð hy mid þy ealdan lige,      ond mid þy egsan forste,  
wrapum wrymum      ond mid wita fela,  
frecnum feorhgomum,      folcum scendeð.  
þæt we magon eahtan      ond on an cweþan,  
soðe secgan,      þæt se sawle weard,  
lifes wisdom,      forloren hæbbe,  
se þe nu ne giemeð      hwæþer his gæst sie  
earm þe eadig,      þær he ece sceal  
æfter hingonge      hamfæst wesan.

(ll. 1539b-1554)

[The wages of sin will be manifestly present unto them; that is eternal torment. That hot abyss may never, not in a perpetuity of nights nor in all eternity, smelt the sins from the damned, the iniquities from their souls, but there the deep pit will feed upon the sorrowful, the bottomless place will care for spirits in darkness, it will kindle them with the ancient flame and with the fearful frost; by wrathful serpents and with many torments, with



savage jaws it will injure the people. That may we appreciate and ever declare, that may we say in truth, that he has lost the protection of the soul, the wisdom of life, he who does not now take care whether his soul is wretched or blessed, there he shall be resident eternally after death.]

The flames of hell are *punishing*, not purifying, and in all of eternity they never will serve to burn out the sins of the wicked. Again, the language here is significant, as the poet both uses language suggestive of material purification and highlights the urgent need to get on with that process.<sup>65</sup> In the dark and seething pit of hell it will be too late for redemption, and that inferno cannot help to purge the souls of the sinful, but can only torment them; "he who does not now take care" to look to his soul's cleansing will without a doubt spend eternity amongst that miserable throng.

As we can see, this understanding of the eschatological present resonates well with our conception of the nature of transmutation; while transmutation relies heavily on metallurgical imagery, and Caie's model of the idiosyncratic "fire" of personal eschatology does not necessarily do so, this is the only real distinction to be drawn, and it is a difference of form rather than one of substance. In both cases we are dealing with models for understanding the nature of penance, spiritual change, and redemption, and in both cases the change involved--and its agency--are construed to be the responsibility of each individual soul. One is ultimately responsible for one's own salvation, in the sense that each soul is expected to determine and to follow that course of action and mode of life which God has willed.<sup>66</sup>

In Old English eschatological verse we are confronted with texts which conflate and extend various models for understanding the nature

of spiritual change. In the fire of judgment scenes generally, and more specifically in the metallurgic metaphors of the transmutation model and in the personal and immediate nature of the eschatological present model, we catch glimpses of Anglo-Saxon conceptions of the painful and laborious process by which the spirit may be cleansed, by which identity may be expunged and reformulated. An understanding of these models and these conceptions is integral to our larger discussion of the transformative nature of pain and torture in Old English poetic culture. Although all of the texts and traditions involved have analogues or sources in Latin or continental vernaculars, the particular manifestations in Old English versions--the specific terminology utilized and the stylistic and compositional choices involved--have much to tell us about peculiarly Anglo-Saxon ideas concerning the nature of spiritual transformation.

*Elene* is a noteworthy case in point. Judas's spiritual transformation, the language of transmutation used to describe his cleansing, and, most significantly, the relationship between his experience and that of the souls in the fire of judgment scene (a scene which does not appear in the sources, and which therefore speaks eloquently as to Anglo-Saxon perceptions of spiritual change), all combine to offer a profound statement on the nature of spiritual identity and spiritual change. An understanding of the transmutative model helps us to comprehend how the Anglo-Saxons perceived the substance of the soul. Spiritual identity is, according to this model, neither fixed nor fluid, but a hard and brittle substance which, although malleable, can be altered only through a slow and painful process of reduction and reformulation. The inscription model of torture, discussed in Chapter Four, provides one way of understanding this painful process of positive transformation; the transmutation model offers another, more overtly



spiritual way of perceiving this necessary spiritual process. Moreover, a close examination of this model helps to inform further our understanding of the relationship between physical torture in general and issues of spiritual identity. Identity can be changed, and indeed, such change as Judas's is desirable; but it is not easy. An understanding of an eschatological present, as suggested by Caie, helps to explicate the *Elene* poet's addition of the fire of judgment scene at the end of the poem, and also helps to clarify the relationship between that episode and the experience of Judas in the body of the text. More important still, an understanding of the Anglo-Saxon conception of the relationship between soul and body, in conjunction with the moral imperative of personal transmutation with which we are confronted in such a text as *Elene*, illustrates a perception of the function and the nature of torture which is quite at odds with modern sensibilities; pain, in these texts, is good, as is the coercive nature of many of these transformations.

As I mentioned above, Judas serves as a model of an "every-sinner", and this role is made manifest through its relationship to the eschatological passage at the end of *Elene*. Such a relationship underscores the immediacy and personal nature of transmutation, which is the purging of sin from the soul and the reconstitution of the spirit as "gold". The metallurgic metaphors of transmutation serve as a reminder of the painful, laborious process that is transmutation, and the fact that Judas's experience serves as a contextual counterpoint to that of the souls in the fire of judgment reinforces the message that *nu* is the time for this process to take place. Through this relationship, each reader of *Elene* was meant to understand that the fire of judgment is a metaphor for their own personal task of spiritual smithing; those who labor over their craft now, in the present moment, will find the judgment of the last day to be an affirmation and a revelation of the spiritual purity for which

they worked constantly and steadfastly. Those who do not look to their craft now will find, in that same day of judgment, an altogether more dolorous revelation; purification will not come for them, as that season will be past, and their experience of fire will be one of everlasting torment and tortuous self-reproach in the punishing, not purifying, flames of hell.

Transmutation is a process whereby the sinner may be saved, and the pain suffered in this life is to be embraced if by it the soul may forego eternal pain in the next. This understanding of the role of spiritual pain, moreover, may be extended to our interpretation of Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards physical torture, as well; the function of transformative torture is to exploit the link between the physical and the spiritual, to the short-term detriment of the former, to be sure, but to the long-term benefit of the latter. The transmutative model of spiritual reformulation, therefore, helps to illuminate for us this fundamental axiom of Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards torture. And lest we be too quick to assume that this is merely a metaphorical model, meant to be understood spiritually, but with no real relationship to literal, physical torture, it is vital that we remember the laws of Cnut, and those of William, discussed in Chapter One. Both codes substituted physical torment for execution, so that "one can punish and at the same time preserve the soul."<sup>67</sup> To the Anglo-Saxon mind, this sentiment illustrates the primary function of torture.



## CHAPTER FIVE NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*. Stephen Corrin, trans. 2nd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978. Page 147. Eliade's is largely an anthropological approach, and his interest lies with the development of transmutative philosophies as these evolve concurrent to the rise of metallurgic technologies. He studies a broad range of cultures across several millennia, and explores the philosophical "points of contact" common to all. For a succinct introduction, see pages 7-8:

My aim has been to attempt to gain an understanding of the behavior of primitive societies in relation to Matter and to follow the spiritual adventures in which they became involved when they found themselves aware of their power to change the mode of being of substances...Wherever possible, the historico-cultural context of the various metallurgical complexes has been taken into account; but my main concern has been to pierce through to the mental world which lies behind them.

Eliade's is an attempt to understand both why these varied cultures should share these points of contact (that is, what is it about metallurgy which seems to evoke more or less universal intellectual reactions), and how these common roots evolve into specific practices within the various alchemical traditions. The book is, therefore, split into two main sections; I include a selection from pages 7-9 which gives an overview of these two parts:

The first section of this small volume presents (through the eyes of a historian of religions) a group of myths, rites and symbols peculiar to the craft of the miner, smith and metal-worker...The ideology and techniques of alchemy constitute the main theme of the second part of this work.

<sup>2</sup> Though Eliade has argued that the technical knowledge of the ancients was such that their metallurgic practices must have been somewhat “scientific” in character, he recognizes that “empirical” knowledge did not stand in the way of mystical revelation. See page 145:

There is an abundance of testimony in the works on metallurgy and the craft of the goldsmith in the ancient Orient to show that men of primitive cultures were able to gain knowledge of, and mastery over, matter. A number of technical prescriptions have come down to us...Historians of science have rightly emphasized that the authors of these prescriptions make use of *quantities* and *numbers* which would prove, in their view, the scientific character of these operations. It is certain that the smelters, smiths and master-goldsmiths of oriental antiquity could calculate quantities and control physico-chemical processes of smelting and alloyage. For all that, we must recognize that for them it was not solely a metallurgical or chemical operation, a technique or science in the strict sense of the word...the operations...also had a ritual aspect.

Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, on the other hand, argues from rather the opposite position; for Dobbs a technical ignorance of the subject is crucial, although she grants that a certain amount of technical competence is necessary during actual metal-working. See Dobbs's discussion of the roots of alchemy in chapter two of *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy: or, "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon"*.

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975. See especially pages 28-29:

A rational and too-detailed knowledge of matter has its own structure, so to speak, and cannot have one shaped for it by the alchemist. Nevertheless, the use of matter as the external medium



for projection, as well as the acts actually performed in the laboratory, were absolutely essential for the functioning of alchemy. It was only that the knowledge of matter had to be kept vague...Thus the older alchemy comprised a delicate balance of ignorance, and an overemphasis on either its material or its psychological side would seriously impair its vitality.

Dobbs's point that technical competence could not have overshadowed ritualistic significance in order for transmutation to be an effective metaphor is doubtless sound; still, I find her absolute insistence on technical ignorance to be somewhat extreme, and I think that Dobbs--in Eliade's words--underestimates the intellectual and spiritual capacity of the practitioners of transmutation.

<sup>3</sup> Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*. William Stoddart, trans. London: Stuart & Watkins, 1967. Page 23. Burckhardt's is an interesting and useful, if not entirely objective, study. His exploration of the roots and the history of alchemy is particularly illuminating, although his critique of other possible ways of understanding the evolution of philosophies of transmutation can border on the rabid (e.g., see his discussion of "depth psychology" (pages 8-9) which I discuss below). Much of his discussion of the philosophical nature of transmutation is particularly of interest, as he seems (as I mentioned in the text) to provide "a practitioner's perspective". Burckhardt's historical perspective is questionable, however, and he himself acknowledges that his is not an unalloyed "history". See, for example, page 202:

It is my hope that the foregoing exposition may serve to rescue the spiritual horizon proper to alchemy--the "royal art"--from the

misleading simplifications inevidently attendant upon a purely historical approach.

It must be admitted that Burckhardt's critique of reductionist and patronizing attitudes towards pre-modern societies, presented on pages 7-8, is sound:

It never seemed to strike anyone as in the least improbable that an "art" of the kind alleged should, despite all of its folly and deceptions, have implanted itself for centuries on end in the most diverse cultures of East and West. On the contrary, people were much more inclined to take the view that until a century or so ago all humanity had been dreaming a stupid dream, the awakening from which came only with our own times, as if the spiritual-intellectual faculty of man--his power to distinguish real from unreal--were itself subject to some sort of biological evolution.

Unfortunately, his attitude towards modern concepts of matter, spirit, and reality is, at best, equally reductionist, and, at worst, positively "New Age". Page 203 offers a particularly dogmatic example:

Modern science has an inexorable eye for the "childish" errors which exist "on the margin" of traditional cosmology--but which have no serious consequences. What it will not see however (but what the eyes of a spiritual art such as alchemy see as overwhelmingly significant) are its own infringements--quite unforeseeable in their consequences--against the equilibrium of man and nature, not to speak of the wholly unjustifiable claim to totality, and the far-reaching and indeed almost absolute repudiation of the suprasensible and the incorporeal, which characterize modern science...In epochs and cultures where ego-consciousness is less "coagulated" and the relation to the natural



environment is not dominated by the prejudices of a purely rationalistic outlook, it can happen more easily that the powers of the soul exert an influence directly and without mechanical intervention on the external world.

All in all, Burckhardt's study is valuable insofar as he collates and articulates various aspects of transmutative philosophies; this information, taken with the knowledge that the source is openly biased, is useful and at times enlightening.

<sup>4</sup> See Burckhardt's claim of this, below (note also, however, my criticism of Burckhardt's objectivity, above). Still, his claim serves to illustrate my point that although alchemy was (and, evidently, is) thought to be primarily metaphorical, literal transmutation is not ruled out as a physical manifestation of a spiritual transformation.

<sup>5</sup> Burckhardt, page 24.

<sup>6</sup> See Burckhardt, page 26: "Spiritually understood, the transmutation of lead into gold is nothing other than the regaining of the original nobility of human nature."

<sup>7</sup> See Eliade, pages 149-150. He discusses the representational significance of passion, death, and resurrection in the initiation rites of mystery cults, and describes an analogy drawn between the transmutative experiences of the initiate and the God/sufferer which the alchemist then extends from the spiritual into the material world:

It is known that the essence of initiation into the Mysteries consisted of participation in the passion, death and resurrection of a God...one can conjecture that the sufferings, death and resurrection of the God, already known to the neophyte as a myth or as authentic history, were communicated to him during initiations, in an "experimental" manner. The meaning and

finality of the Mysteries were the transmutation of man. By experience of initiatory death and resurrection, the initiate changed his mode of being (he became "immortal")...

Furthermore, it is the mystical drama of the God--his passion, death and resurrection--which is projected onto matter in order to transmute it. All in all, the alchemist treats his Matter as the God was treated in the Mysteries; the mineral substances "suffer", "die" or "are reborn" to another mode of being, that is, are transmuted.

8 Eliade, page 151.

9 See Eliade, page 152:

There was no hope of "resuscitating" to a transcendent mode of being (that is, no hope of attaining to transmutation), without prior "death". The alchemical symbolism of torture and death is sometimes equivocal; the operation can be taken to refer to either a man or to a mineral substance.

10 See Eliade, page 154:

According to certain writers, dissolution is the first operation; according to others it is calcination, the reduction to the amorphous by Fire. However that may be, the result is the same: "death".

Eliade is discussing the reduction of materials (in alchemy) to the *materia prima*; it is pertinent to my later discussion that he mentions "dissolution" and "calcination".

11 Burckhardt, page 8.

12 Eliade, pages 8-9.

13 See Burckhardt, pages 12-13:



In "archaic" cultures, unacquainted as yet with the dichotomy of "spiritual" and "practical", and seeing everything in relation to the inner unity of man and the cosmos, the preparation of ores is always carried out as a sacred procedure. As a rule it is the prerogative of a priestly caste, called to this activity by divine command. Where this is not so, as in the case of certain African tribes which have no metallurgic tradition of their own, the smelter or smith, as an unauthorized interloper into the sacred order of nature, falls under suspicion of engaging in black magic.

14 See Eliade, page 169:

If our analysis and interpretation are well founded, alchemy prolongs and consummates a very old dream of *homo faber*: collaboration in the perfecting of matter while at the same time securing perfection for himself.

15 For criticism of Jung's "ahistorical" approach, see Dobbs, page 40; see also Walter Pagel, "Jung's Views on Alchemy." *Isis* 39 (1948): 44-48. In a different vein, Burckhardt accuses Jung of basing his view "on the assumption that the alchemist's prime intention was to make gold" (page 9), and haughtily dismisses "depth psychology" on this basis; his attack seems unwarranted to me, and is an example of Burckhardt's subjectivity and consequent sensitivity.

16 Eliade, page 11. See also Dobbs, page 26:

Jung came to his study of alchemical literature through the realization that the dreams of his patients were often rich in the archaic symbolism of alchemy even though the patients were totally unacquainted with alchemical subject matter.

17 Dobbs, page 29.

18 See Dobbs, page 30:

The "persona" includes those traits of character and behavior which the individual has emphasized and developed and become conscious of in the course of making his social adjustments--traits which help him hold a job, find a marriage partner, act as a parent, etc. The development of the "persona", however, necessarily left other potential characteristics repressed or underdeveloped, according to Jung, and these potentialities are all still present in the individual's unconscious. In general a repressed or underdeveloped trait will be the inverse of one which is flourishing openly in the "persona". For example, a person who presents a benign and gentle aspect to the world will yet have buried aggressive tendencies in his unconscious, whereas the converse might be true in another person.

19 See Dobbs, page 30:

Before the maturation process begins in the psyche, the conscious "persona" or mask-like part of the personality is able to accept only the "light" or socially desirable member of each pair of opposites as belonging to the personality, the "dark" or unwanted members having been repressed into the personal unconscious at an earlier stage of psychic development. Here they constitute what Jung calls the "shadow".

20 Dobbs, page 30.

21 See Dobbs, page 30:

The first step in individuation is facing the "shadow" and incorporating it together with the "persona" in the burgeoning new center. The first step in alchemy is similarly an evocation of a "blackness", followed by its transformation into something new...Numerous symbolic expressions for the step occur in



alchemy: ideas of putrefaction, death and blackness; processes of reducing the matter to the state of *nigredo*. Since in a sense the "persona" must kill its own bright image of itself, must die and sink into the blackness of the "shadow" in order to be born again, these are peculiarly and dramatically appropriate symbols.

22 See Dobbs, page 27:

...the secret knowledge about transformation was in reality an unconscious or semi-conscious understanding of certain psychological changes *internal* to the adept. Since he was unaware of their true nature, however, the alchemist projected the process of change upon matter, projected, that is, in the psychological sense, which meant that he "saw" the processes taking place *externally*.

23 Burckhardt, page 18.

24 See Dobbs, page 29:

[Jung] has amply demonstrated the affinity of alchemical concepts with the major religions of the world as well as with his own psychological theories, so that even though one may not agree with every detail of his analyses, there hardly seems room to doubt the general correctness of his stance.

25 See Burckhardt, page 21:

In reality alchemy, which is not a religion by itself, requires to be confirmed by the revelation--with its means of grace--which is addressed to all men. This confirmation consists in the alchemical way and work being recognized by the alchemist himself as one particular means of access to the full meaning of the eternal and saving message of revelation.

26 Eliade, page 157.

27 Burckhardt, page 204. Burckhardt is here defending the concept of material transmutation as an outward manifestation of inward transformation; he seems to be a believer:

The transmutation of base metals into gold is certainly not the true goal of alchemy, nor can it ever be achieved when it is sought after entirely for its own sake. Nevertheless there is evidence in favour of the visible achievement of the magisterium, which cannot simply be brushed aside with a wave of the hand. The metallurgical symbolism is so organically linked with the inward work of alchemy, that in rare cases that which was realized inwardly also occurred on the outward plane--not as the result of any chemical operation, but as a spontaneous outward concomitant of an extra-ordinary spiritual state. The occurrence of spiritual transmutation is already a miracle, and is certainly no smaller a miracle than the sudden production of gold from a base metal.

Though it is clear that Burckhardt is not an uninterested observer, his lack of objectivity is, once allowed for, actually his strength as a resource--his work illuminates the philosophical position of a practitioner of transmutation in ways that a more empirical work could not.

28 See Eliade, page 170:

It is through fire that "Nature is changed", and it is significant that the mastery of fire asserts itself both in the cultural progress which is an offshoot of metallurgy, and in the psycho-physiological techniques which are the basis of the most ancient magics and known shamanic mystiques. From the time of this very primitive phase of culture, fire is used as the transmuting agent.



29 See Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1977. See page 125:

The idea of purgatory appears to have originated as an extension of the Doomsday fire, partly as a means of justifying intercessory prayer and, rather later, in connection with the concept that sins must be expiated.

30 See Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*. Arthur Goldhammer, trans. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984. Le Goff discusses the evolution of this concept from pre-Christian "Ancient Imaginings" (he cites sources from Hindu, Egyptian, and Persian texts, for example) until its final solidification into the form which we recognize today: a place where the "sinful saved" go to "work off" their spiritual debt to society, as it were. For a discussion arguing that this solidified form does not emerge until late in the middle ages, see page 357:

Purgatory was ultimately enshrined in the doctrine of the Catholic Church between the middle of the fifteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, first being affirmed against the Greeks at the Council of Florence (1439) and later against the Protestants at the Council of Trent (1562).

31 See Le Goff, pages 112-166. The "waiting room" model of the afterlife is illustrated in English ecclesiastical writing in Bede's eighth-century account of *The Vision of Drythelm*, in which the narrator visits the dual waiting rooms in a dream; he at first mistakes these antechambers for heaven and hell themselves, but his guide soon sets him straight. Le Goff includes a version of the pertinent passages on pages 114-115:

The valley that you saw, with its horrible burning flames and icy cold; is the place where souls are tried and punished who have delayed to confess and amend their wicked ways, and who at last had recourse to penitence at the hour of death, and so depart life. Because they confessed and were penitent, although only at death, they will be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven on the Day of Judgment. The fiery noisome pit that you saw is the mouth of Hell, and whosoever falls into it will never be delivered throughout eternity. This flowery place, where you see these fair young people so happy and resplendent, is where the souls are received who die having done good, but are not so perfect as to merit immediate entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. But at the Day of Judgment they shall all see Christ and enter upon the joys of His heavenly Kingdom. And whoever are perfect in word, deed, and thought, enter the Kingdom of Heaven as soon as they leave the body.

It is notable that, in this binary waiting room afterlife, only the antechamber of hell seems to correspond to what we think of as purgatory: a place where sin is slowly, painfully expunged from the soul, and the duration of one's stay is determined by the severity of one's sinfulness.

32 See Gatch, page 81:

On Doomsday at the sound of the trumpet, all will die in the purging fire; the dead will be raised and the fire will purge those who have not yet atoned for all their sins; but the conflagration will leave the pure unharmed.

Commonly, the fire of judgment is preceded (and, I would argue, prefigured) by the doomsday fire which ravages and purges the world.



The examples of this fire are numerous, but see Gatch's discussion thereof on page 90. It is significant that the earth is cleansed by fire in a way analogous to that whereby souls are purged; this earthly parallel to purgation on Doomsday underscores the relationship between the physical and the spiritual described by the philosophy of transmutation.

33 Le Goff, page 54.

34 See, for example, *Leviticus* 10:1-2; *Deuteronomy* 32:22; *Jeremiah* 15:14.

35 Le Goff, page 53.

36 See Le Goff, page 54: "Origen thought that all men, even the righteous, must be tried by fire, since no one is absolutely pure. Every soul is tainted by the mere fact of its union with the flesh."

37 See also Gatch, page 98:

Although serious sins cannot be atoned for by the soul, lesser ones can be. The purgatorial fire, inflicting worse torture than any human king could devise, punishes remediable sins for as long as necessary, given the gravity of the misdeeds and the interposition of intercessory prayers.

38 Le Goff, page 54.

39 See Le Goff, page 57:

Nevertheless, it was Origen who clearly stated for the first time the idea that the soul can be purified in the other world after death. For the first time a distinction was drawn between mortal and lesser sins. We even see three categories beginning to take shape: the righteous, who pass through the fire of judgment and go directly to heaven; those guilty of lesser sins only, whose sojourn in the "fire of combustion" is brief; and "mortal sinners," who remain in the flames for an extended period. Origen actually

develops the metaphor introduced by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. He divides the substances mentioned by Paul into two categories. Gold, silver, and the precious gems are associated with the righteous; wood, hay, and straw indicate the "lesser" sinners. And Origen adds a third category: iron, lead, and bronze are associated with those guilty of worse sins.

It is significant that Origen adds the base metals to the metaphor; over time the non-metallurgic symbols are completely supplanted by them.

<sup>40</sup> See Gatch, pages 126-127:

On the subject of the suffering of incorporeal substances in corporeal fire (ch. xc), he held that it is suitable to punish a spiritual substance with a bodily thing, for in human life this is exactly the punishment of the soul in the body.

<sup>41</sup> Michael J. B. Allen & Daniel G. Calder, *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: The Major Latin Texts in Translation*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1976. In their introduction to the sources for the OE *Elene*, the authors state on page 59:

A large number of Latin texts containing the various narrative details still survive and, for a number of reasons, Cynewulf's source was undoubtedly based on the stem of that tradition...the source of *Elene* must have closely resembled three Latin versions...(but) scholars usually hold that the *Elene* is most similar to the *Acta Quiriaci*.

With the exception of the homiletic addition with which Cynewulf ends his version, *Elene* follows closely the text of *The Acts of Saint Cyriacus* which Allen and Calder include in their work.

<sup>42</sup> The poem opens in the sixth year of the reign of the emperor Constantine. His army meets with a much greater host of Huns and



Goths on the banks of the river Danube, and Constantine is nearly overcome by despair. On the eve of battle he falls into a slumber, and he dreams that an angel appears unto him and bids him to look to the skies for the sign by which he will conquer--what he sees, of course, is the sign of the cross. At daybreak he orders a cross made and carried before his troops, and the Romans are, in fact, victorious.

Needless to say, Constantine is quickly converted and baptized, and he sends his mother Elene to Palestine to recover the true cross. She goes eagerly, and upon her arrival she meets with a delegation of Jews, whom she charges to lead her to the cross; the wise men of the Jews, led by a man named Judas, claim ignorance, though they know very well where it is. Finally, Elene casts Judas into a "dry pit" for seven days and seven nights, without food or water. At the end of this period Judas readily converts, confesses his sin, and leads Elene to the cross, which he himself unearths twenty feet under the ground. Judas is baptized and becomes a bishop; he later brings the nails from the cross to Elene, who promptly has them made into a bit for the bridle of her son. The poem ends with a seemingly unrelated homiletic passage, and it is at this point that the author markedly diverges from his sources; this passage describes doomsday and the fire of judgment, and contains the runic signature of Cynewulf.

43 When the narrative ends on l. 21 of folio 132b with the word "finit", a new section numbered XV begins (the narrative of the invention of the cross itself makes up sections I-XIV). This final section contains the aforementioned closing passage, which describes doomsday and the fire of judgment, and which contains the runic signature of Cynewulf. When this section XV ends on l. 6 of folio 133b with the word "amen", it is immediately followed by a part of the prose life of St. Guthlac, *without*

*section numbering* (See Krapp XL). Both the numbering and poetic nature of this passage earmark it as a part of the larger narrative work.

<sup>44</sup> Judas's "cleansing" seems to me to be a figural linchpin of sorts, in that it binds together and helps to clarify several different levels of transformation which recur throughout the poem, including conversion, baptism, salvation, purgation, and damnation. The central role, however, of Judas's experience is as an explication and prefiguration of Cynewulf's description of the day of judgment: such prefiguration draws this description into the narrative; in turn, the fire of judgment episode both explicates and validates the means of spiritual "refashioning" by which the tainted material which was Judas is recast in the spiritual mold of Christianity. See Daniel G. Calder, "Strife, Revelation, and Conversion: The Thematic Structure of *Elene*." *English Studies* 53 (1972): 201-210. Calder discusses the poem in terms of recurring thematic cycles. Each succeeding episode in the poem is one of a series of "concentric" rings, and each echoes and refines the spiritual message. Calder sees Judas's experience in the pit as twofold: literal and figural. Literally, it is "the final and most effective device which Elene has at her disposal"; figurally, this "entombment" is "a symbolic parallel to Christ's burial" (pages 205-206). John P. Hermann points out that the flaw in Calder's analogy is that Christ and the cross are both "entombed" through the agency of God's enemies, while Judas is cast in the pit at the command of Elene, who is an agent, presumably, of God's will. See *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1989. Pages 114-115.

<sup>45</sup> Bosworth-Toller, page 380.

<sup>46</sup> Catherine A. Regan, "Evangelicalism as the Informing Principle of Cynewulf's *Elene*." *Traditio* 29 (1973): 27-52. Regan argues that



Judas's experience in the pit is a figural representation of the Catechumen's preparation for baptism. She describes Judas's ordeal in the terms of the early Church liturgy concerning baptism; Elene's figural leading of Judas to "see the light" is, to Regan, representative of the liturgical process which led to the sacrament of baptism (page 35).

To Regan, Elene's discipline of Judas takes the form of an "inverted passion" (page 35). Regan likens Judas's privation to the pre-baptismal fast of the Catechumen (page 43). Regan's reading of Judas is literal in the sense that a new convert to the early Church would, indeed, undergo a process of purgation prior to baptism, but it is figural in that it represents "the conversion of a soul to the Christian faith" (page 45).

47 As Hermann points out, "torture in the name of a Higher Truth is not the same as fasting voluntarily chosen." Page 108. Hermann takes issue with Regan on two points which are of primary importance: the first has to do with the physical nature of what Hermann terms "torture" (page 105); the second concerns the involuntary nature of Judas's conversion (page 108). Regan states that the relationship between Elene and Judas "is emblematic of the relationship of the Church with its members. There is mutual need" (page 31). According to this model, Elene, the Church, needs the faith and obedience of Judas, the unconverted; in return Judas needs the "prodding" of Elene to see the light and seek salvation (page 31). On page 105 Hermann questions Regan's reading of Elene's role as the Church, and of Judas's "need" for physical torture:

...is "prodding" the right word for seven days in a pit without food or drink? If the literal treatment of Judas and the Jews is seen as primarily symbolic, perhaps such diction is acceptable. But it proves dangerous to move so quickly to a symbolic level that justifies torture as a service to the victim.

48 See Graham D. Caie, *The Judgment Day Theme in Old English Poetry*. Publications of the Department of English, University of Copenhagen. Michael Chesnutt, Graham D. Caie, Lis Christensen and Niels Davidsen-Nielsen, eds. Copenhagen: Nova, 1976. See Caie for a discussion of the relationship between baptism by water and baptism by fire, and more specifically the relationship between flood and fire imagery in the context of spiritual purification. See page 171 for several references to Old English poetry:

*Fyrbaðe* "bath of fire" appears in *Christ III* 985b to describe the parallel between the flood and the purgatorial flames of doom, while in *The Phoenix* 437 the *fyrbaðe* has definite, baptismal connotations in an explicitly didactic and explanatory passage...what is definite...is the figurative "baptismal" function of the fire and water, the cleansing of the soul in *this* world (e.g., *Phx* 518ff., *Ele* 1286ff., *Dan* 346-9, etc.) The stress is once more seen to be placed on man in his present abode and not on theological points.

For further references to the analogy between cleansing by water and cleansing by fire in Old English eschatology, see also Caie pages 96, 101, and 166-168. For patristic influences on this concept, see especially Caie's reference to Origen, page 101: fire burns away that which corrupts/detracts from the essence of purity; water washes clean but fire not only cleans but transforms base into pure.

49 Bosworth-Toller, page 53.

50 For a discussion of this term as a spiritual metaphor, see Caie's description of the doomsday flame in *Christ III*, page 196:

The dark flame *seopeð* "boils", "seethes" (994a), but, significantly, *seoþan* can also mean "purify", and this line could



also be interpreted as “the dark flame will purify those [already] led astray by sin”. This, then, is the poet’s conception of a purgatory, which, like all the other events, is occurring simultaneously (cf. *Ele* 1295-8 and *Phx* 520-6).

51 George Phillip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, eds. *The Exeter Book*. Vol. III of *ASPR*. NY: Columbia UP, 1936. All citations from *Christ III* are from Krapp & Dobbie; all translations are the author’s.

52 Bosworth-Toller, page 37.

53 Others include *Malachi* 3:3, *Numbers* 31:22 and *Zechariah* 13:9.

54 See Blake’s note on *amerian*, page 83.

55 See Blake’s note on *abywan*, page 83.

56 For a related treatment of *The Phoenix* and eschatological fire scenes, see Caie, pages 148-149.

57 See Caie. In this case, the responsibility for the act of transmutation falls to the individual, who is smith of his own soul, as it were; see page 112:

[Man] has no power over *wyrd* “fate”, the destiny of the world, but he has freewill concerning his own destiny. The burden is placed firmly on the shoulders of the individual, for the apocalyptic fire can either purify or consume...at a time in the future, ordained by fate, the holocaust will come, but the destiny of the individual is not ruled by that point in time, but by every moment in the present.

In this life, then, the individual acts as the agent of his own transmutation; at the time of the apocalyptic fire, however, it is too late for “self-fashioning”, and Christ will test the product of each soul’s spiritual labor in the heat of the fire of judgment. See my discussion in the conclusion to this chapter.

58 The renaming of Judas in ll. 1058-1062 seems especially significant in this context.

59 For an interesting manifestation of a related idea, see my treatment of "exhaltation" versus "pain" in regards to the youths in the furnace in *Daniel* in Chapter Two; I cite two instances from the poem in which we are informed of how pleasant the righteous youths find the flames of the furnace, but there are others (e.g.: ll. 335b-344). See also *Riddle Six*, in which the sun is a weapon of terror to some and a comforter to others.

60 Caie, page 103. For related discussions of the imperative of purification *nu* in *Judgment Day II* and *Christ III*, see (respectively) Caie page 158 and page 164.

61 Caie, page 234.

62 Caie, page 226.

63 See Caie, page 227:

In every moment slumbers the eschatological moment, the time when one's eternal "fate" (*dom*) is determined, and the responsibility is placed strongly on the shoulders of the individual to *choose* to do well, to be *domgeorn*, or else to forfeit immortality and become *domleas* ("damned" in the Christian sense). For this reason *dom* has only the *positive* and moral sense of immortality, and never means everlasting "infamy"; it embodies the state of perfection which everyone must strive to reach, and which must be upheld if society is to function, especially when the society is based on hierarchical principles which assume a state of perfection. And also, because of this definition of *dom* which is at the centre of the Doomsday verse, there is no middle state, no Purgatory, for man is either *domgeorn* or *domleas*. In the eschatological present man decides to act well,



thus invoking a personal "parousia", the descent of Christ and the perfected state of regeneration for the individual; otherwise he separates himself from his God, from Perfection.

While I agree with Caie's assessment of the theology involved in this understanding of the doomsday verse, I wonder if such a metaphor for the labor involved in personal salvation was not often interpreted out of context. The popular understanding of the doomsday motif surely was (and certainly *is*) that the fire (of purgatory and/or of hell) at the end of time will serve to purify and to consume sin and sinners. The more metaphorical meaning (i.e. the "eschatological present") certainly resonates very well with our understanding of other transmutative traditions, and is certainly more theologically sound; still, I believe that these spiritual issues are largely overlooked by the popular imagination, which, for instance, has ever linked alchemy with the desire to produce gold from base metal, and likewise has ever linked the fire at the end of time with a historical event (actual or imagined) which will occur at some fixed point in the future. In any case, this is a relatively minor point; my own study is not interested in the popular conception of these ideas, except in passing, and I raise these specters simply in order to address them. Caie's conclusions are theologically sound and meticulously argued, and tend to support my own vision of the uses of metallurgical metaphors in Old English eschatological verse.

64 Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*. Vol. VI of *ASPR*. New York: Columbia UP, 1942. All citations from *Judgment Day II* are from Dobbie; all translations are the author's.

65 *Forbærnan*, while literally denoting "to burn" or "to consume with fire", here clearly carries the connotation "to purify through fire", and, in the context of this fire of judgment scene, might be thought to carry an

implication of "smelting", or some other such metallurgical metaphor. Indeed, in more than one translation of this passage, this term is taken as "smelt". See, for example, S.A.J. Bradley.

<sup>66</sup> Salvation, is of course, ultimately an act of grace extended to believers through Christ's sacrifice on the cross; it is hardly doctrinally sound to imply that salvation may be "earned", any more than it is to imply that all actions are not foreseen and not preordained in the first place. But the models in which we are interested, although drawn from some doctrinal sources, as we have seen, are more interested in the nature of personal morality than in finer points of theology. These models stress the personal responsibility of each individual Christian, and although they offer a template of proper action, they do not deal in depth with the nuances of the nature of salvation.

<sup>67</sup> Whitelock, page 423; from the laws of Cnut, 30.5.



## CONCLUSION: Findings, Significance, and the Role of the "Other"

The aim of this study has been to analyze the disparate elements, within an Old English poetic context, which contribute to the process defined as "torture". I have achieved this objective by assembling a variety of different kinds of sources and evidence from across Anglo-Saxon literature and contemporary disciplines, and by utilizing these to translate the "great uniform text" of Anglo-Saxon poetic torture into an intelligible idiom. This "text" is cumulative, and so I approached the task from a number of perspectives, each of which added to the sum of our knowledge concerning torture, pain, the relationship between the body and the spirit, and the specifically Anglo-Saxon manifestations of these phenomena. Throughout the course of this project, as this uniform text unfolded, I established the following points:

- 1) "Torture" is any deliberate and systematic application of pain or destruction of any kind which is used to achieve some specific end. Although torture is unfolded in individual acts, it must be perceived as a coherent process within a culture. This process may best be identified and described through a composite method, through the component parts of which a profile of torture may be compiled. Anglo-Saxon literary torture usually is concerned with issues of identity and of power.

- 2) Pain is a necessary component of torture, and thus a study of pain must be at the heart of any study of torture. Pain is a complex and shifting phenomenon with internal spiritual, psychological, and emotional components in addition to any external physical stimuli. The Anglo-Saxons understood pain as

an affective and largely spiritual state, and Anglo-Saxon literary torture consistently was formulated in terms betraying a knowledge of the bridge which pain provides between body and spirit.

3) Individual torture acts may be perceived as language acts within the larger cultural discourse of the uniform text. Such acts necessitate a public nature in order to signify; hence witnessing plays a vital role in the nature of torture. Anglo-Saxon descriptions of torture consistently contain references to such acts of witnessing.

4) Such contemporary critical models as "the body as text" and "inscription" are valuable in efforts to organize and to explicate the functions of torture in Anglo-Saxon literary contexts. Further, such post-structuralist models have analogues in Old English literary conventions which link literal acts of physical engraving with metaphorical acts of the inscription of spiritual identity; these conventions also associate literal acts of physical burying with metaphorical acts of obscuring such identity.

5) In order to appreciate the function of torture in Anglo-Saxon literature it is necessary to understand the link between the physical and the spiritual within the context of that literary culture. This link is based upon various philosophical and theological traditions which are not specifically Anglo-Saxon, but this conception is particularly popular in Old English literature, and Anglo-Saxon poetic torture very often utilizes these links. For example, torture might be applied upon the body in order to affect a spiritual change, or conversely, spiritual nature might



manifest itself in physical terms upon the body. This relationship is developed most fully in Old English eschatological models in which acts of spiritual purgation are articulated through the metaphor of material purification. These models, however, were understood to be literal as well as metaphorical, and therefore Old English eschatological poetry helps to illuminate the larger context within which, for example, legal codes codify torture and historical annals record acts of torture. The converse is likewise true.

Torture is a highly ordered and complex cultural process which often seems, paradoxically, chaotic and utterly unintelligible. I have therefore constructed an interdisciplinary methodological model which helps to organize and to clarify the many facets and the shadowy nature of torture, and I have applied this critical model to the specific context of Anglo-Saxon literature. Modern medicine, anthropology, psychology, political science, and linguistics have much to tell us about the nature of pain, and about the political, psychological, and semiotic significance of torture. Further, the contemporary understanding which is informed by such disciplines sometimes approaches and intersects with that which may be reconstructed from the Anglo-Saxon literary milieu (e.g. pain is a linguistically inexpressible experience, torture acts may function as language, the body may be utilized as a document, torture may function as a force which expunges and reformulates identity, etc.).

It would be inaccurate to draw the conclusion from such findings, however, that the Anglo-Saxons perceived pain and torture in roughly the same way that we do. Pain, in our culture, often is perceived of as the enemy which we will spare no expense to eradicate; torture likewise is universally condemned as a barbaric throwback to earlier, more brutal,

less enlightened times. I have no wish to confront these assumptions. One of the most interesting discoveries of my study, however, has been that, although we share certain understandings regarding pain and torture with Anglo-Saxon literary culture, we go too far when we assume that the Anglo-Saxons shared our most basic assumptions. Pain and torture need not be evil in an Anglo-Saxon context--indeed, they are quite the opposite--and they represent, in fact, both necessary and desirable physical and spiritual exercises. These findings concerning both the nature of torture in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the perceptions of that culture concerning pain and torture, serve to inform, not only our understanding of Anglo-Saxon literature, but also our understanding of torture more generally. Indeed, such findings may provide a starting point for a deeper understanding of our own culture's attitudes towards violence, pain, and torture. It is my hope, therefore, that both my methodological model and the study based upon it will be of use to Anglo-Saxonists and to scholars of torture alike. In that spirit, I conclude this study with a brief overview of points of convergence and divergence between contemporary and Anglo-Saxon models of torture, placing special emphasis on the role of the perception of "otherness" as a pre-condition of all torture, a role which is illustrated amply in Anglo-Saxon models.

Contemporary torture and Anglo-Saxon poetic models of torture share, of course, a number of common characteristics; most fundamentally these comprise their relationships to pain, but they also include a number of functions and preconditions. In practice, however, contemporary torture has undergone a revolutionary change in the last century; added to such age-old torments as beating on the soles of the feet (called *falanga* or *falaka*, and attested to for millennia), general beatings, sleep and light deprivation, starvation and dehydration, solitary



confinement, burning, branding, and mutilation, are such recent innovations as pointed electrodes (*picara electrica*), cattle prods, acids, caustic chemicals, and pain- and psychosis-causing pharmaceuticals, to name but a few.<sup>1</sup> Some of this shift in methodology is due to technological “advances”, of course, but other (especially electrical and pharmacological) examples are characteristic of the primary philosophical difference between ancient and modern torture, which has to do with concerns regarding external perceptions of the practice. While contemporary practitioners of torture by necessity construct elaborate rationalizations to validate such practices (as we shall shortly see), they also engage in a double-speak through which they publicly denounce and deny the very practices which they privately embrace and justify. Hence, while the medieval practice of torture presupposes witnessing and a public nature as a primary facet and precondition for torture, contemporary practices are by their very nature hidden.<sup>2</sup>

A fundamental common denominator between Anglo-Saxon and contemporary torture, however, is grounded in the very rationalizations validating torture to which I just alluded. A fundamental precondition of any act of torture is a sense of “otherness” on the part of the torturer which allows him to distinguish himself from his victim. Such alienation concurrently removes both the victim’s humanity from the conception of the torturer and the barrier against inhuman action from the conscience of the torturer. We tend to attribute monstrous qualities to our conception of a torturer, assuming that only a bestial and subhuman sadist could possibly be involved in such a horrific practice. By so doing we seek comfort in our own subconscious act of dehumanization and alienation, assuring ourselves that such individuals are aberrations, and therefore quantifiable and identifiable. Most research suggests that the truth is far less comforting; although sadistic

monsters can and do exist and practice torture, the real horror of torture is that most torturers are not drawn from the ranks of the inhuman.<sup>3</sup> Participation in the process of torture is generally the result of learned behavior, not natural predisposition, and torturers are indoctrinated into the process through conditioning, the aim of which is to establish a sense of superior humanity and purpose (relative to the victim) in the mind of the torturer. Torturers learn to consider their victims to be guilty, evil, subhuman, alien; it is this very quality of otherness which makes the torture practice possible. "Every ideology presupposes an anthropology", that is, a conception of what it is to be human, and what is appropriate in the treatment of human beings.<sup>4</sup> The anthropology of torture presupposes humanity and moral superiority on the part of the torturer, and subhumanity and moral turpitude on the part of the victim:

Man is capable of torturing fellow human beings, but he also feels the need to justify what he is doing. It seems to be a pre-condition for torture that the torturer have a world view, no matter how crude, that divides man into the torturable and the non-torturable. This distinction can be based on any of the manifold ways of distinguishing one man from another: it can be race, colour, nationality, class, or differing beliefs, usually political or religious. The torturer represents, and by the act of torture is defending, the 'good' values. The victim is not 'chosen', he is not human.<sup>5</sup>

This bipolarity is a precondition for all torture, medieval and modern; I turn now to an example of such bipolarity as it manifested itself in the process of torture in late twentieth-century Argentina. This context is of particular relevance to my discussion, because the military *junta* which it concerns viewed itself in an explicitly medieval and allegorical way.



After briefly considering the ramifications of this particular articulation of the bipolar anthropology of torture in the context of Anglo-Saxon torture, I will conclude this study by noting the centrality of the concept of the other in the Anglo-Saxon examples which we have studied.

In *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality, & Radical Christianity in the Argentine "Dirty War"*, Frank Graziano explores the anthropology of torture subscribed to by the Argentine military *junta* of the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> Graziano's examination of this anthropology does much to inform our understanding of medieval anthropologies of torture, as Graziano ascribes to the *junta* a self-consciously medieval world view which includes a vision of the other closely related to that with which we are interested. The fundamental philosophy of the Argentine "dirty war", according to Graziano, was constructed in mythological terms which were based upon medieval theological concepts and folklore motifs; the primary theological model informing that mythology was that of the struggle between the Messiah and the Antichrist:

"The disappeared"--that euphemism in itself conjures up the magical possibilities that distance myths and folktales from positive empiricism. ... As a complement to these poetics of fantastic vanishing, one finds in the "dirty war" other motifs also prevalent in folklore and, notably, in the religious tales of the Middle Ages: an enemy-as-monster; a diabolical, invisible force of evil; an Antichrist; a society cast into chaos by its own sins; a legend-laden Hero--courageous, self-sacrificing, divinely guided and empowered--assuming the immense messianic task and struggling, prevailing, restoring happy order for the People.<sup>7</sup>

Graziano describes a "Myth of the Metaphysical Enemy" in which the abstract concept of evil takes on physical form and literal reality in the persons of those construed as the other; in a self-fulfilling act of interpretation, the acts of torture performed by the *junta* then articulated a doctrine of orthodoxy which clearly divided the sheep from the goats: "*I am sacred and anyone who contests me is a blasphemer*".<sup>8</sup> In other words, the program of torture pursued by the *junta* was self-referential in that this torture was validated and explicated through its relationship to the other, while the other itself was defined through acts of torture. Those who must be tortured were the enemy, and those who were the enemy must be tortured. Either statement, in this context, may serve as the first principle of the other statement. The *junta*, in a like manner, then defined itself through its opposition to the other; the other is the Antichrist, and therefore the self is the Messiah who must battle and subdue the Beast.<sup>9</sup>

In this context, the body of the victim of torture acts as a microcosm of the larger spiritual struggle between Good and Evil, and between Savior and Satan.<sup>10</sup> In the terms of this cosmic struggle, then, the violence of the torture represents the attack of the forces of light upon those of darkness, and the eventual triumph of the former. In the terms of the body of the victim itself, the function of the torture is to destroy the evil localized in the spirit through an attack upon the body:

When torture rituals in the Argentine detention centers exorcised the "unclean spirit" from each infiltrated "subversive" with the touch of the *picana*, the many-in-one poetics obtained. Cleansing of not only the specific victim (antichrist) at hand but beyond him two corporate entities to which he was integral was suggested: the Antichrist with the capital letter was assaulted through each



embodiment representing him on the torture table, and in the process the *corpus mysticum* of Argentina, the social body to which the victim belonged and which he defiled with his demonic possession, was ritually purified via the casting out of the "unclean spirit".<sup>11</sup>

This conception of the function of torture is clearly related to that informed by Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual upon which we have lavished so much attention. Further, both the eschatological models to which Graziano refers, and the transmutative function of torture implicit in his description of the "exorcising" of "unclean spirits" from the body of the victim, recall and refine our understanding of the relationship between Anglo-Saxon eschatological models of the fire of judgment and the methods and functions of temporal torture. We have in this example of contemporary political torture, then, a lens with which we may magnify and examine some of the most fundamental aspects of Anglo-Saxon torture. Conversely, it is clear that these medieval models of torture, and most especially the explicit theological, philosophical, and semiotic facets thereof, reflect and reveal many components of contemporary political torture.

The function of the other is an interesting and significant point of convergence between medieval and modern anthropologies of torture. Here is an example of a much-cited critical conceit which, in the context of torture, becomes a horrific and necessary precondition of physical violence and destruction, and not just another clever intellectual construct. This is indicative of many theoretical concepts which we have utilized in our exploration of the nature and function of torture; that which is intellectual and abstract in the realm of literary criticism

becomes crushingly real and present upon the bodies of victims of torture. It seems the nature of humankind to divide itself by any number of criteria: kin groups, social and economic classes, race, religion, ethnicity, nationality. This predilection to seek the community of like persons is often defended as a search for "identity", but any such identity by necessity is exclusive. As we have seen, torture is one result of such exclusivity.

Torture presupposes the presence of the other, and the definition of self in opposition to that other. In torture generally, that which is alien is hated, feared, threatening, and therefore must be silenced, transformed, destroyed. More to the point, in the Anglo-Saxon contexts which we have studied, the other must be silenced, destroyed, reformulated, re-voiced with the language of the dominant discourse; Anglo-Saxon torture, and especially literary torture, ultimately attempts to replace unacceptable discourse and identity with their acceptable counterparts: Elene reduces and reformulates the person, spirit, and voice of Judas; the Mermedonians attempt to destroy the holy Andreas, but unwittingly transform him into a type of Christ; Judith reduces the sinful body of Holofernes into a text upon which is written the glory and majesty of God.

It is vital to recognize, however, that this paradigm of identity ultimately rests upon opposition to the other, and therefore the other must never be wholly eradicated; otherwise, the self is indefinable. Thus Satan, the souls in hell, and those who are irredeemable in the fire of judgment, are not utterly reduced, which would seem most reasonable, but instead undergo a process of eternal destruction. Such eternal destruction acts not simply as a punishment for the sinful, but concurrently as a necessity for the righteous, for the sinful serve a vital function; the acceptable is defined by its opposition to the other. This is



the paradox of the other, and the house of cards which is torture rests upon such a paradox. We may torture only that which we define as alien, other, inhuman, but as we define ourselves in direct opposition to the other, we must never wholly destroy that other, or else we must constantly reevaluate our sense of otherness in order to maintain our sense of self. Further, each such act of alienation and dehumanization serves to erode our humanity in proportion to that of the other; such is the slippery slope of torture.

In *The Dream of the Rood*, the Savior brings together the Christian community through his experience of the common denominator of pain at the hands of, and in opposition to, those who are overtly described as the "enemy": the evil, the minions of Satan, the alien, the other. In all of the poetic cases which I have described, a clear distinction is made, in the terms of the manifestation of each torture act, between the community of the cross and the powers of darkness. In the historical and legal sources such a distinction is not always explicit, but is present nonetheless, and often in overtly moral terms. All pain, all suffering, is part of God's Providence, part of the Divine plan, and it is all therefore good; but not all agents, nor all victims, are good. A clear bipolar opposition always is drawn, however, in this dualistic world: the other is alien, and thus the enemy, black as night, necessarily evil. In the Anglo-Saxon paradigm of torture, the victim must be good if the torturer is evil, or the victim must be evil if the torturer is good. There is no ambiguity, there is no room for shades of gray. In this manner, our contemporary model of torture, and its imperative relationship to the other, helps to illuminate the fundamental bipolarity of Anglo-Saxon spirituality as this was manifested in the literary construct of torture, which comprises historical, legal, theological, spiritual, physical, literary, and linguistic elements. Likewise, our understanding of the

function of such cross-cultural bipolarity in the terms of Anglo-Saxon literary torture has much to teach us about the nature of literal torture, its function as an aspect of culture, and the basic chauvinistic cultural mechanism which ultimately allows torture, medieval or modern, to exist.<sup>12</sup>



## CONCLUSION NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For discussions of types of contemporary torture, see Amnesty International, *Eighties*, pages 8 and 22-24, and Peters, pages 169-171. Concerning "preconditions" for contemporary torture, see Amnesty International, *Eighties*, pages 10-11. A composite portrait of patterns of contemporary torture is offered in Amnesty International, *Eighties*, pages 18-19. Two discussions of reasons for contemporary torture include Amnesty International, *Eighties*, pages 20-22, and *Report*, pages 21-22. For long-term consequences to victims of torture, see Amnesty International, *Eighties*, pages 24-26, *Report*, pages 58-62, and Peters, pages 173-176. Of particular interest are the examinations of slang for types of torture and the semantic significance of such slang in Amnesty International, *Eighties*, page 24, and Scarry, pages 38-45. Peters suggests a "geography" and a "calendar" of torture since the Second World War, pages 155-161.

<sup>2</sup> See Amnesty International, page 33, for a discussion of this phenomenon, and a comparison between this and earlier practices of torture. The obvious exceptions to this rule would be contemporary practices of punitive mutilation and capital punishment, which serve a semiotic function which necessitates an element of witnessing. In such cases the practitioners do not deny the practices themselves, but rather they deny the relationship of such punitive measures to torture.

<sup>3</sup> This is a complex and disturbing issue, dealt with briefly in Amnesty International, *Eighties*, pages 9-10, and at more length in Peters, pages 179-187. Peters draws upon both trial records and psychological profiles, and in summation his position seems to be that the institutionalization which produces the torturer destroys the humanity of that torturer in correspondence to the destruction of the victim's

humanity in the mind of that torturer. This argument is of particular interest to this study in that the reformulation of the torturer parallels that which we have discussed in the terms of the victim. For a discussion of long-term psychological affects upon torturers, see Amnesty International, *Report*, pages 63-68. For an account of ordinary men cast into the roles of torturer and victim, and forced to come to terms with their relationship to each other outside of the torture room, see Eric Lomax, *The Railway Man*. London: Vintage, 1995. See especially pages 238-276.

<sup>4</sup> Peters, page 163.

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International, *Report*, page 31.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Graziano, *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality, & Radical Christianity in the Argentine "Dirty War."* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Graziano, page 107. Throughout his work, Graziano consistently invokes and explains medieval models of the other and of the battle between good and evil as these manifest themselves in the anthropology and practice of torture by the *junta*; see discussion below. See especially pages 108-109 and 144 for a full analysis of the medieval metaphor of the other in this context. Graziano's theoretical model is sophisticated, and draws upon the work of Barthes, Lévi-Strauss, Hegel, Kojève, and Lacan, to name but a few who are cited in this section of his study.

<sup>8</sup> Graziano, page 127; the citation is from Barthes, and the italics are original. Graziano discusses at length the role of Marxism as the doctrine of the Antichrist in this context; further, my allusion to the eschatological role of the Savior is deliberate, as here Graziano utilizes the medieval model of eschatology as it pertains to the other. See



especially pages 126-129. See also Graziano's discussion of the other as a representation of the presence of an absence which "arouses" the action of the "hero", pages 138-146.

<sup>9</sup> See Graziano, pages 120-125, for a discussion of the torturer as Messiah; once again, Graziano consistently interprets the *junta* through a medieval gloss.

<sup>10</sup> See Graziano, page 13:

When the naked Argentine victim was bound to the torture table and subjected to electrical discharge on his or her gums, genitals, and nipples, the magnitude of the offense was symbolically avenged. Here the medieval view of the body as a microcosm where cosmic struggles between Good and Evil, between Christ and Antichrist, are battled out is apparent: Each victim's body tortured in the Argentine detention center localized, rehearsed, and ritually mirrored the grand eschatological battle that the just war, the "dirty war", represented in the grand view of the military perpetrators.

See also page 129.

<sup>11</sup> Graziano, page 129.

<sup>12</sup> The necessity of a bipolar relationship between torturer and victim, between self and other, is also the basis for another consistent facet of torture, medieval and modern: the rationalization of this process as a "necessary evil", as the bitter tonic which will heal the body politic. See Amnesty International, *Eighties*, pages 6-7, for "the moral argument" consistently offered in support of torture practices; see also Amnesty International, *Report*, pages 22-24. See Peters, pages 177-179, for a similar discussion concerning French rationalizations for torture practices in Algeria. The basic argument is that "we" do not really wish

to torture “them” but “must” in order to affect a “greater good of the greater number” (i.e. the greater good is whatever we want it to be).



## AFTERWORD

In this thesis I have aspired to a number of goals, some of which have been more fully realized than others. In the broadest possible terms, I think that it would be fair to say that I have begun a serious enquiry into the relationship between the ideas of pain and torture (as these are developed and revealed through Old English religious poetry) and the language utilized to express and interrogate these ideas. I have attempted to examine this relationship by marrying close textual and linguistic analysis with larger theoretic constructs. As successful as I feel this beginning has been, it is, as yet, only a beginning. It is the purpose of this Afterword and the succeeding Appendices to give the reader a sense of the larger, on-going project which I envision, as well as an idea of its direction and utility.

As I stated in the body of my thesis, my primary interest is literary and poetic, and thus, while I take an interest in history, the law, medicine, and the like, my project is and will remain primarily a study of Old English poetry. Therefore, although I plan to look at non-poetic and non-literary texts where these inform and clarify my examination--and especially in the context of linguistic studies utilizing such works as *A Thesaurus of Old English* and *The Microfiche Concordance to Old English*--this is first and foremost a study of poetic language and ideas. As I develop this project more fully, however, I hope to extend my investigation of torture into a wider survey of the language involved, focusing on a number of non-poetic genres which were only tangentially touched upon in this preliminary study; notable genres would include homiletic and medical texts, both of which offer rich possibilities for the student of the language of pain and torture (both literary and non-literary). Moreover, I plan to ground my discussion of larger

philosophical ideas concerning pain and torture in an Old English poetic lexicon of these concepts, look at the semantic flexibility of this lexicon, and examine how individual terms in specific instances serve to develop such ideas by employing such flexibility.

The tools which I will use to develop this lexicon include *A Thesaurus of Old English* and *The Microfiche Concordance to Old English*. *The Historical Thesaurus of English* is a project which aspires to the systematic classification of the entire English lexicon through a notational and historical survey of each term; such a tool will allow scholars to systematically chart structural shifts in the organization of the English lexicon. The first volume of *A Thesaurus of Old English*, the preliminary component of *The Historical Thesaurus*, arranges the Old English lexicon conceptually under the rubrics of semantic fields; the second volume lists each term alphabetically, cross-referencing it with the semantic fields outlined in the first volume. This tool is particularly well-suited to a compilation of a lexicon of pain and torture (or indeed, of any other conceptual lexicon); the category from the Thesaurus most relevant to my study is 02.08.03 (Pain, bodily discomfort) and its subcategory 02.08.03.01 (Extreme pain, torture, torment). *The Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, on the other hand, is a compendium of each occurrence of every form of every term in the entire Old English lexicon; used in conjunction with *A Thesaurus of Old English*, this tool allows a comprehensive survey of the terms under scrutiny. In the context of my project, the combination of these two resources will allow me to develop a sense of the semantic flexibility of the terms in the Old English poetic lexicon of pain and torture.

I have, of course, already made forays in the direction of a lexicon of pain and torture, but I intend to formalize and to codify my methodology in the following manner. By systematically examining



every poetic instance of pain and torture in the poetic corpus, I plan to cull a sizeable lexicon of terms which are used consistently in the description of pain and torture. This lexicon will be context-based; that is, the terms will appear in their poetic contexts in order to illustrate the meaning of each term in that context, the applicability of that term to my larger study, and the relationship of each term to the other terms in the lexicon. Next I plan to develop a database which includes each instance of each term, and which collates each term with *A Thesaurus of Old English*, in order to assess the semantic range of each term outside of the particular poetic context in which it was found. In a sense, therefore, this database will be context-free. Finally, utilizing *The Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, I will re-contextualize a number of important terms in a wide range of texts--poetic and non-poetic, literary and non-literary--in order to examine the functions of the complex and sometimes paradoxical natures of the concepts which are expressed through this lexicon. Each of the following three Appendices exemplifies one of the steps which I have described. Although each of these Appendices serves as a pilot project of an aspect of my on-going study, and not as a completed research tool, I hope that each is of some immediate use to scholars of the poems in question, as well as to those interested in pain, torture, or related concepts. It is my purpose that the finished research tools, as well as informing my own studies of literary pain and torture, will be of use to scholars of other subjects as well, most notably to those interested Anglo-Saxon medicine, law, and history, but also to some who study semantics, linguistics, and torture itself.

## APPENDIX A:

### Preliminary Lexicon of Torture and Pain in Old English Poetry:

In this appendix I have compiled a preliminary poetic lexicon of Old English torture and pain by examining two pilot texts according to the systematic criteria discussed below. *Juliana* and *The Dream of the Rood* were selected as the pilot texts both because of their importance to the present study, and because of the relatively high incidence of terms related to pain and torture within these texts. This lexicon is context-based; that is, each term is presented within the poetic context in which it appears in order to illustrate that term's meaning within that context, and to make clear the relationship of each term to the lexicon as a whole. All terms and/or phrases used in the pilot texts to describe abuse, distress, and/or pain of any kind were identified and included in this preliminary lexicon of pain. The criteria by which samples were chosen were based upon my definition of torture as the deliberate and systematic application of pain in order to achieve a specific objective. Drawing upon that general definition, I identified samples for this survey by following these specific principles:

- 1) Torture in these texts includes physical abuse of any kind, including execution & physical death, and the means of torture or place of execution: beheading, crucifixion, gallows, cross, fire related to burning, destruction.
- 2) Torture in these texts also includes mental or spiritual abuse, including terror/ horror/ fear/ humiliation/ damnation/ persecution/ oppression/ threat of judgment, vengeance or requital.



- 3) Torture in these texts also includes imprisonment, confinement, and binding--physical, mental or spiritual--including the means of binding or place of confinement: fetters, chains, descriptions of prison & hell as prison, and related fire imagery: oven, furnace, firepit.

**Pilot Text 1: *Dream of the Rood* Torture Vocabulary**

Ne wæs ðær huru **fracodes**<sup>1</sup> **gealga**<sup>2</sup>, ac hine þær beheoldon halige  
gastas(10b-11)

ond ic synnum **fah**<sup>3</sup>, **forwunded**<sup>4</sup> mid wommum(13b-14a)

Hwæðre ic þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte **earmra**<sup>5</sup> **ærgewin**<sup>6</sup>, þæt hit  
ærest ongan **swætan**<sup>7</sup> on þa swiðran healfe. Eall ic wæs mid  
**sorgum**<sup>8</sup> **gedrefed**<sup>9</sup>, **forht**<sup>10</sup> ic wæs for þære fægran gesyhðe(18-  
21a)

hwilum hit wæs mid wætan bestemed, **beswyled**<sup>11</sup> mid **swates**<sup>12</sup>  
**gang**<sup>13</sup>, hwilum mid since gegyrwed(22b-23)

beheold **hreowcearig**<sup>14</sup> hælendes treow(25)

þæt ic wæs **aheawen**<sup>15</sup> holtes on ende, **astyred**<sup>16</sup> of stefne minum(29-  
30a)

---

<sup>1</sup>fracod, adj. bad, wicked; subst. evil man, criminal

<sup>2</sup>gealga, m. n-stem, gallows, cross

<sup>3</sup>fah, adj. guilty, outlawed, hostile

<sup>4</sup>forwundian, w.v. (2), badly wound

<sup>5</sup>earm, adj. wretched, miserable, poor

<sup>6</sup>ærgewin, n. a-stem, ancient struggle, former agony

<sup>7</sup>swætan, w.v.(1), bleed

<sup>8</sup>sorg, f. o-stem, sorrow, care, anxiety

<sup>9</sup>drefan, w.v.(1), trouble, disturb; stir up, make turbid

<sup>10</sup>forht, adj. afraid, frightened, terrified; fearful, apprehensive

<sup>11</sup>beswyllan, w.v.(1), drench

<sup>12</sup>swat, m. a-stem, blood

<sup>13</sup>gang, m. a-stem, path; flow

<sup>14</sup>hreowcearig, adj. sorrowful, troubled

<sup>15</sup>aheawan, v.(7), cut down

<sup>16</sup>astyrian, w.v.(1), move, remove



geworhton him þær to **wæfersyne**<sup>17</sup>; heton me heora **wergas**<sup>18</sup>

**hebban**<sup>19</sup>(31)

Ealle ic mihte feondas **gefiellan**<sup>20</sup>, hwæðre ic fæste stod(37b-38)

Gestah he on **gealgan**<sup>21</sup> heanne, modig on manigra gesyhðe(40b-41a)

**purhdrifan**<sup>22</sup> hi me mid deorcan næglum. On me syndon þa **dolg**<sup>23</sup>

gesiene, opene **inwidhlemmas**<sup>24</sup>. Ne dorste ic hira nænigum

**sceððan**<sup>25</sup>. **Bysmeredon**<sup>26</sup> hie unc butu ætgædere. Eall ic wæs

mid **blode**<sup>27</sup> **bestemed**<sup>28</sup>(46-48)

Geseah ic weruda god **pearle**<sup>29</sup> **penian**<sup>30</sup>(51b-52a)

Weop eal gesceaft, cwiðdon cyninges **fyll**<sup>31</sup>(55b-56a)

**Sare**<sup>32</sup> ic wæs mid **sorgum**<sup>33</sup> **gedrefed**<sup>34</sup>(59a)

Genamon hie þær ælmihtigne god, ahofon hine of ðam **hefian**<sup>35</sup>

**wite**<sup>36</sup>(60b-61a)

---

17wæfersyn, f. i-stem, something to be gazed at, a spectacle, exhibition, show

18wearg, wearh, m. a-stem, criminal, felon

19hebban, v.(6), raise, lift up

20gefiellan, w.v.(1), fell, strike down, slay; cut down

21gealga

22purhdrifan, v.(1), pierce

23dolg, n. a-stem, wound

24inwidhlemm, m. a-stem, malicious wound

25sceððan, v.(6), with dative object, injure

26bismerian, w.v.(2), mock

27blod, n. a-stem, blood

28besteman, w.v.(1), make wet, suffuse

29pearle, adv. very, extremely; fiercely; sorely, grievously

30penian, w.v.(1), stretch out, rack

31fyll, m. i-stem, fall, death

32sare, adv. sorely, grievously

33sorg

34drefan

35hefig, adj. heavy, grievous, bitter

36wite, n. ja-stem, punishment, torment, pain

Forleton me þa hilderincas standan **steame**<sup>37</sup> **bedrifenne**<sup>38</sup>; eall ic wæs  
mid **strælum**<sup>39</sup> **forwundod**<sup>40</sup>. Aledon hie þær **limwerigne**<sup>41</sup> (61b-  
63a)

Ongunnon him þa **moldern**<sup>42</sup> wyrcan beornas on **banan**<sup>43</sup> gesyhðe (65b-  
66a)

Hræw **colode**<sup>44</sup>, fæger feorgbold. þa us man **fyllan**<sup>45</sup> ongan ealle to  
eorðan. þæt wæs **egeslic**<sup>46</sup> wyrd! **Bedealf**<sup>47</sup> us man on **deopan**<sup>48</sup>  
**seape**<sup>49</sup> (72b-75a) Idiom

þæt ic bealuwara weorc gebiden hæbbe, **sarra**<sup>50</sup> **sorga**<sup>51</sup> (79-80a)

On me bearn godes **prowode**<sup>52</sup> hwile (83b-84a)

æghwylcne anra, þara þe him bið **egesa**<sup>53</sup> to me (86)

Iu ic wæs geworden **wita**<sup>54</sup> **heardost**<sup>55</sup>, leodum **laðost**<sup>56</sup> (87-88a)

se ðe ælmihtig god on **prowode**<sup>57</sup> (98)

---

<sup>37</sup>steam, m. a-stem, moisture, blood

<sup>38</sup>bedrifan, v.(1), drive, compel, force; sprinkle

<sup>39</sup>stræl, m. a-stem, arrow; goad, provocation

<sup>40</sup>forwundian, w.v.(2), badly wound

<sup>41</sup>limwerig, adj. weary of limb

<sup>42</sup>moldern, n. a-stem, "earth-house", sepulcher

<sup>43</sup>bana, m. n-stem, slayer

<sup>44</sup>colian, w.v.(2), cool, grow cold

<sup>45</sup>gefiellan

<sup>46</sup>egeslic, adj. terrible, frightful

<sup>47</sup>bedelfan, v.(3), bury

<sup>48</sup>deop, adj. deep; profound

<sup>49</sup>seað, m. u-stem, pit; cistern

Idiom "deep pit" could be literal and/or metaphorical = hell, prison

<sup>50</sup>sar, adj. sore, grievous, painful

<sup>51</sup>sorg

<sup>52</sup>prowian, w.v.(2), suffer

<sup>53</sup>egesa, m. n-stem, fear, terror, awe; awful power; menace

<sup>54</sup>wite

<sup>55</sup>heard, adj. hard, fierce, bitter

<sup>56</sup>lað, adj. hateful, hated; with dative hateful to, hated by; used as subst.  
foe

<sup>57</sup>prowian



**Deað<sup>58</sup>** he þær **byrigde<sup>59</sup>**, hwæðere eft dryhten aras(101)

**deaðes<sup>60</sup>** wolde biteres<sup>61</sup> **onbyrigan<sup>62</sup>**(113b-114a)

se ðe her on eorþan ær þrowode<sup>63</sup> on þam **gealgtreowe<sup>64</sup>**(145-146a)

mid bledum ond mid blisse þam þe þær **bryne<sup>65</sup>** **þolodan<sup>66</sup>**(149)

---

<sup>58</sup>deað, m. a-stem, death

<sup>59</sup>byrigan, w.v.(1), taste

<sup>60</sup>deað

<sup>61</sup>biter, adj. bitter, fierce, sharp, painful

<sup>62</sup>onbyrigan, w.v.(1), with genitive object taste

<sup>63</sup>þrowian

<sup>64</sup>gealgtreow, n. wa-stem, gallows-tree, cross

<sup>65</sup>bryne, m. i-stem, burning, fire, conflagration

<sup>66</sup>þolian, w.v.(2), suffer, endure

## Pilot Text 2: *Juliana* Torture Vocabulary

**eahtnysse**<sup>67</sup> **ahof**,<sup>68</sup> **cwealde**<sup>69</sup> Cristne men, circan fylde<sup>70</sup>, geat  
<sup>71</sup>on græswong...haligra blod(4b-6a & 7b)  
 oft hi **þræce**<sup>72</sup> **rærdon**<sup>73</sup>...hofon hæþengield, halge **cwelmdon**<sup>74</sup>,  
**breotun**<sup>75</sup> boccræftge, **bærndon**<sup>76</sup> gecorene, **gæston**<sup>77</sup> Godes  
 cempan(12b & 15-17a)  
 næfre þu þæs **swiðlic**<sup>78</sup> **sar**<sup>79</sup> gegearwast, þurh **hæstne**<sup>80</sup> **nið**<sup>81</sup>,  
**heardra**<sup>82</sup> **wita**<sup>83</sup>(55-56)  
 þurh deora **gripe**<sup>84</sup> deaþ **sweltest**<sup>85</sup> (125)  
**domas**<sup>86</sup> þine, ne me weorce sind **witebrogan**<sup>87</sup>, **hildewoman**<sup>88</sup> (134b-  
 136a)

- 
- <sup>67</sup>eahtnys, f. jo-stem, persecution  
<sup>68</sup>ahebban, v.(6), [AHEAVE]; raise; wage  
<sup>69</sup>cwellan, w.v. (1c), QUELL; slay  
<sup>70</sup>fyllan, w.v. (1b), FELL, destroy  
<sup>71</sup>geotan, v. (2), [YET]; shed  
<sup>72</sup>þracu, f. o-stem, violence  
<sup>73</sup>ræran, w.v. (1b), REAR; wage; exalt  
<sup>74</sup>cwelman, w.v. (1b), [QUELM]; slay  
<sup>75</sup>breotan, v. (2), [BRET]; destroy  
<sup>76</sup>bærnan, w.v. (1b), BURN  
<sup>77</sup>gæstan, w.v. (1b), persecute  
<sup>78</sup>swiðlic, adj. [SWITHLY adv.]; severe  
<sup>79</sup>sar, n. a-stem, SORE; suffering, torment  
<sup>80</sup>hæste, adj. violent  
<sup>81</sup>niþ, m. a-stem, [NITH]; hatred, enmity  
<sup>82</sup>heard, adj. HARD, severe; stern (sometimes subst.)  
<sup>83</sup>wite, n. ja-stem, [WITE]; punishment, torment  
<sup>84</sup>gripe, m.i-stem, GRIP, grasp  
<sup>85</sup>sweltan, v.(3), [swelt]; die  
<sup>86</sup>dom, m.a-stem, DOOM; judgment, opinion; decree; will, discretion  
<sup>87</sup>witebroga, m.n-stem, fearful torment  
<sup>88</sup>hildewoma, m.n-stem, hostile violence



Het hi þa **swingan**<sup>89</sup>, **susle**<sup>90</sup> þreagan<sup>91</sup>, **witum**<sup>92</sup> wægan<sup>93</sup> (142-143a)  
 þam wyrrestum<sup>94</sup> wites<sup>95</sup> þegnum (152)  
 wraþe<sup>96</sup> geworhtra wita<sup>97</sup> unrim, grimra<sup>98</sup> gyrna<sup>99</sup> (172-173a)  
 ne wita<sup>100</sup> þæs fela wraðra<sup>101</sup> gegearwast (177)  
 þurh niðwræce<sup>102</sup> nacode þennan,<sup>103</sup> ond mid sweopum<sup>104</sup>  
     **swingan**<sup>105</sup> synna lease (187-188)  
 þe þa lean<sup>106</sup> sceolan wiþerhycgendre, witebrogan<sup>107</sup> (195b-196)  
 Ne ondræde ic me domas<sup>108</sup> þine, awyrged womsceaða, ne þinra  
     **wita**<sup>109</sup> bealo<sup>110</sup> (210-211)

---

<sup>89</sup>swingan, v.(3), SWING, SWINGE; scourge, beat; afflict

<sup>90</sup>susl, n.a-stem, or f.o-stem, torment

<sup>91</sup>þreagan, w.v.(2), orig. w.v.(3), [THREA]; torture, afflict; chastise

<sup>92</sup>wite

<sup>93</sup>wægan, w.v.(1b), afflict

<sup>94</sup>wyrrest, adj. sup. WORST

<sup>95</sup>wite

<sup>96</sup>wraþe, adv. [WROTHE]; cruelly

<sup>97</sup>wite

<sup>98</sup>grim, adj. GRIM, fierce, horrible

<sup>99</sup>gyrn, f. or n. i-stem, evil, trouble

<sup>100</sup>wite

<sup>101</sup>wrað, adj. WROTH; cruel, fierce; evil

<sup>102</sup>niþwracu, f.o-stem, [NITHWRAKE]; severe punishment

<sup>103</sup>þennan, w.v.(1a), [THIN]; stretch out

<sup>104</sup>swipu, f. n-stem, [SWEPE]; scourge, rod

<sup>105</sup>swingan

<sup>106</sup>lean, n. a-stem, [LEAN]; retibution, requital

<sup>107</sup>witebroga

<sup>108</sup>dom

<sup>109</sup>wite

<sup>110</sup>bealo, n. wa-stem, BALE; evil

He bi feaxe het **ahon**<sup>111</sup> ond **ahebban**<sup>112</sup> on heanne **beam**<sup>113</sup>, þær seo  
 sunsciene **slege**<sup>114</sup> **prowade**<sup>115</sup>, **sace**<sup>116</sup> **singrimme**<sup>117</sup>, siex tida  
 dæges(227b-230)  
 ond gelædan bibeod to **carcerne**<sup>118</sup>(232b-233a)  
 Ða wæs mid **clustre**<sup>119</sup> **carcernes**<sup>120</sup> duru **behliden**<sup>121</sup>, homra  
 geweorc(236-237b)  
 in þam **nydcleafan**<sup>122</sup>...**heolstre**<sup>123</sup> bihelmad(240a & 241a)  
 Ða cwom semninga in þæt **hlinræced**<sup>124</sup>(242b-243a)  
 gleaw **gyrnstafa**<sup>125</sup>, gæstgeniðla, helle **hæftling**<sup>126</sup>(245-246a)  
 Ðe þes dema hafað þa **wyrrestan**<sup>127</sup> **witu**<sup>128</sup> gegearwad, **sar**<sup>129</sup>  
 endeleas(249b-251a)  
 ær þec **swylt**<sup>130</sup> nime, **deað**<sup>131</sup> fore duguðe(255b-256a)

---

111 **ahon**, v.(7), [AHANG]; hang

112 **ahebban**

113 **beam**, m. a-stem, BEAM; cross

114 **slege**, m. i-stem, [SLAY]; stroke, blow

115 (ge)**prowian**, w.v.(2), [THROW]; suffer

116 **sacu**, f. o-stem, [SAKE]; strife, dispute

117 **singrim**, adj. [SEN (as in SENGREEN) + GRIM]; unceasingly fierce

118 **carcern**, n. a-stem, [CARCER(AL) + EARN]; prison

119 **clustor**, n. a-stem, [CLAUSTER]; bolt

120 **carcern**

121 **behlidan**, v.(1), [BE + LID]; close

122 **nydcleafa**, m. n-stem, prison

123 **heolstor**, m. a-stem, darkness

124 **hlinræced**, n. a-stem, prison

125 **gyrnstæf**, m. a-stem, [-STAFF]; affliction

126 **hæftling**, m. a-stem, captive

127 **wyrrest**

128 **wite**

129 **sar**

130 **swylt**, m. i-stem, death

131 **deað**, m. a-stem, orig. u-stem, DEATH



þe sind **heardlicu**<sup>132</sup>, wundrum **welgrim**<sup>133</sup>, **witu**<sup>134</sup> geteohhad to  
**gringwræce**<sup>135</sup>(263b-265a)  
 ealra cyninga Cyning to **cwale**<sup>136</sup> syllan(289)  
 Waldend **wundian**<sup>137</sup> (weorud to segon)(291)  
 þæt he Iohannes bibead heafde **biheawan**<sup>138</sup>(294b-295a)  
 Simon searoþoncum þæt he **sacan**<sup>139</sup> ongon(298)  
 þæt he **acwellan**<sup>140</sup> het Cristes þegnas(303)  
 on **rode**<sup>141</sup> **aheng**<sup>142</sup> rodera Waldend(305)  
**ahon**<sup>143</sup> haligne on heanne **beam**<sup>144</sup>, þæt he of **galgan**<sup>145</sup> his gæst  
 onsende(309-310)  
**forht**<sup>146</sup> **afongen**<sup>147</sup>, friþes orwena(320)  
 hider onsende of þam **engan**<sup>148</sup> **ham**<sup>149</sup>, se is yfla gehwæs in þam  
**grornhofe**<sup>150</sup>(322b-324a)Idiom

---

132heardlic, adj. [HARD + LY]; severe

133welgrim, adj. [WAL + GRIM]; cruel

134wite

135gringwracu, f. o-stem, [-WRACK]; deadly punishment

136cwalu, f. o-stem, [QUALE]; violent death, slaughter

137wundian, w.v.(2), WOUND

138biheawan, v.(7), [BEHEW]; *heafde biheawan*, behead

139sacan, v.(6), [SAKE n.]; strive, contend

140acwellan, w.v.(1c), [AQUELL]; kill

141rod, f. o-stem, ROOD; cross

142ahon

143ahon

144beam

145galga, m. n-stem, GALLOWS, cross

146forht, adj. [cf FRIGHT n.]; fearful, afraid

147afon, v.(7), [AFONG]; seize

148enge, adj. narrow

149ham, m. a-stem, HOME, dwelling

150grornhof, n. a-stem, house of sorrow

Idiom "narrow dwelling" & "house of sorrow" = hell as prison

þæt hi usic **binden**<sup>151</sup> ond in **bælwylme**<sup>152</sup> **suslum**<sup>153</sup> **swingen**<sup>154</sup>(336-337a)

we þa **heardestan**<sup>155</sup> ond þa **wyrrestan**<sup>156</sup> **witu**<sup>157</sup> **geþoliað**<sup>158</sup> þurh **sarslege**<sup>159</sup>(339b-341a)

nalæs feam siðum, synna **wundum**<sup>160</sup>(354b-355a)

geornor gyme ymb þæs gæstes **forwyrd**<sup>161</sup>(414)

þe wearð helle **seað**<sup>162</sup> niþer gedolfen, þær þu **nydbysig**<sup>163</sup>(422b-423)

þæt þu mec þus fæste **fetrum**<sup>164</sup> **gebunde**<sup>165</sup>(433)

swa me her gelamp **sorg**<sup>166</sup> on siþe(442b-443a)

se þe on **rode**<sup>167</sup> **treeo**<sup>168</sup> **geþrowade**<sup>169</sup>(447b-448a)

---

151(ge)bindan, v.(3), BIND

152bælwylm, m. i-stem, [BALE + WALM]; surging fire

153susl

154swingan

155heardest, adj. sup.

156wyrrest

157wite

158(ge)þolian, w.v.(2), [THOLE]; suffer, endure, undergo

159sarslege, m. i-stem, [SORE + SLAY]; painful blow

160wund, f. o-stem, WOUND

161forwyrd, n. a-stem, orig. f. i-stem, [FOR + WEIRD]; destruction

162seað, m. a-stem, orig. u-stem, [SEATH]; pit

163nydbysig, adj. [NEED + BUSY]; harassed by misery

164feter, f. o-stem, FETTER

165(ge)bindan

166sorg, f. o-stem, SORROW, affliction

167rod

168treeo, n. wa-stem, TREE

169(ge)þrowian



**preaned**<sup>170</sup> **polian**<sup>171</sup>; is **þeos þrag**<sup>172</sup> ful strong, **þreat**<sup>173</sup> ormæte. Ic  
 sceal þinga gehwylc **polian**<sup>174</sup> ond **þafian**<sup>175</sup> on þinne  
**dom**<sup>176</sup>(464-466)

ond ic sumra fet **forbræc**<sup>177</sup> **bealosearwum**<sup>178</sup>, sume in **bryne**<sup>179</sup> sende,  
 in **liges**<sup>180</sup> **locan**<sup>181</sup>(472b-474a)

eac ic sume gedyde þæt him banlocan blode **spiowedan**<sup>182</sup>, þæt hi  
 færinga feorh aleton þurh ædre **wylm**<sup>183</sup>(475b-478a)

sume ic **rode**<sup>184</sup> **bifealh**<sup>185</sup>, þæt hi **heorodreorge**<sup>186</sup> on hean  
**galgan**<sup>187</sup>(481b-482)

**fæge**<sup>188</sup> scyndan, **sarum**<sup>189</sup> gesohte(489b-490a)

**bendum**<sup>190</sup> bilegde, **þream**<sup>191</sup> **forþrycte**<sup>192</sup>(519b-520a)

þær mec **sorg**<sup>193</sup> bicwom(525b)

---

170 **preaned**, f. i-stem, [-NEED]; punishing affliction

171 (ge)**polian**, w.v.(2), [THOLE]; suffer, endure, undergo

172 **þrag**, f. o-stem, [THROW]; time (of distress)

173 **þreat**, m. a-stem, THREAT; punishment

174 **polian**

175 **þafian**, w.v.(2), [THAVE]; endure; submit to

176 **dom**

177 **forbreccan**, v.(4), [FORBREAK]; crush

178 **bealosearo**, n. wa-stem, wicked snare

179 **bryne**, m. i-stem, [BRUNE]; fire, furnace

180 **lig**, m. i-stem, [LEYE]; fire, flame

181 **loca**, m. n-stem, LOKE; embrace

182 **spiowian**, w.v.(2) orig. (1b), SPEW; w.dat. spurt

183 **wylm**, m. i-stem, [WALM]; surge, gushing

184 **rod**

185 **bifeolan**, v.(3), commit

186 **heorodreorig**, adj. [-DREARY]; covered with blood

187 **galga**

188 **fæge**, adj. [FEY]; doomed to die

189 **sar**

190 **bend**, m. i- or f. jo-stem, [BEND], BOND

191 **þrea**, f. wo-stem or m. n-stem, punishment, misery

192 **forþryccan**, w.v.(1c), [FOR + THRUTCH]; overwhelm, torment

193 **sorg**

Ic bihlyhhan ne þearf æfter **sarwræce**<sup>194</sup>(526b-527a)  
 agiefan, **gnorncearig**<sup>195</sup>, gafulrædenne in þam **reongan**<sup>196</sup> **ham**<sup>197</sup>(529-  
 530a)Idiom  
 of þam **engan**<sup>198</sup> **hofe**<sup>199</sup> ut gelædan(532)Idiom  
**bendum**<sup>200</sup> **fæstne**<sup>201</sup> halig, hæþenne(535b-536a)  
 þone snotrestan under **hlinscuan**<sup>202</sup>(544)  
 Hwæt, þu mec **þreades**<sup>203</sup> þurh **sarslege**<sup>204</sup>(546b-547a)  
 ða hine seo fæmne forlet æfter **þræchwile**<sup>205</sup> þystra neosan in  
**sweartne**<sup>206</sup> **grund**<sup>207</sup>, sawla gewinnan, on **wita**<sup>208</sup>  
**forwyrd**<sup>209</sup>(553b-556a)Idiom  
 magum to secgan, **susles**<sup>210</sup> þegnum(557b-558a)  
 ond þone **lig**<sup>211</sup> towearp, **heorogiferne**<sup>212</sup>(566b-567a)

---

<sup>194</sup>sarwracu, f. o-stem, [SORE + WRACK]; grievous suffering or punishment

<sup>195</sup>gnorncearig, adj. [-CHARY]; sorrowful

<sup>196</sup>reonig, adj. dark, gloomy

<sup>197</sup>ham

Idiom "gloomy home" = hell as prison

<sup>198</sup>enge

<sup>199</sup>hof, n. a-stem, dwelling

Idiom "narrow dwelling" = prison cell

<sup>200</sup>bend

<sup>201</sup>fæst, adj. FAST, firmly bound

<sup>202</sup>hlinscua, m. n-stem, [-SCU(?)]; darkness of prison

<sup>203</sup>þreagan

<sup>204</sup>sarslege, m. i-stem, [SORE + SLAY]; painful blow

<sup>205</sup>þræchwil, f. o-stem, time of suffering

<sup>206</sup>sweart, adj. SWART; dark, black

<sup>207</sup>grund, m. a- orig. u-stem, GROUND; earth; abyss

<sup>208</sup>wite

<sup>209</sup>forwyrd

Idiom "dark abyss" = hell as prison

<sup>210</sup>susl

<sup>211</sup>lig

<sup>212</sup>heorogifre, adj. [-YEVEER]; fiercely ravenous



þæt þam weligan wæs **weorc**<sup>213</sup> to þolianne<sup>214</sup>(569)  
 hu he **sarlicast**<sup>215</sup> þurh þa **wyrrestan**<sup>216</sup> **witu**<sup>217</sup> meahte **feorhcwale**<sup>218</sup>  
 findan(571b-573a)  
 þæt he læmen **fæt**<sup>219</sup> biwyrcean het(574b-575a)  
 þæt mon þæt **lamfæt**<sup>220</sup> leades gefylde, ond þa onbærnan het **bælfira**<sup>221</sup>  
 mæst, **ad**<sup>222</sup> onælan(578-580a)  
 leahtra lease in þæs leades **wylm**<sup>223</sup>(583)  
 lead wide **sprong**<sup>224</sup>, hat, **heorogifre**<sup>225</sup>(585b-586a)  
 þær on rime **forborn**<sup>226</sup> þurh þæs **fires**<sup>227</sup> **fnæst**<sup>228</sup>(587b-588a)  
 Ða gen sio halge stod **ungewemde**<sup>229</sup> wlite; næs hyre wloh ne hrægl, ne  
 feax ne fel **fyre**<sup>230</sup> **gemæled**<sup>231</sup>, ne lic ne leopu. Heo in **lige**<sup>232</sup>  
 stod æghwæs **onsund**<sup>233</sup>(589b-593a)

---

213weorc, n. a-stem, WORK; distress; dat. w. beon, to be painful to

214(ge)þolian

215sarlice, adv. SORELY, painfully (sup.)

216wyrrest

217wite

218feorhcwalu, f. o-stem, [-QUALE]; violent death

219fæt, n. a-stem, [FAT], VAT; vessel

220lamfæt, n. a-stem, [LOAM + FAT, VAT]; earthen vessel

221bælfir, n. a-stem, [BALEFIRE]; funeral fire

222ad, m. a-stem, [AD]; funeral pyre

223wylm

224springan, v.(3), SPRING, burst out

225heorogifre

226forbyrnan, v.(3), [FORBURN]; destroy by fire

227fyr, n. a-stem, FIRE

228fnæst, m. a-stem, [FNAST]; blast

229ungewemmed, adj. [UNWEMMED]; uninjured

230fyr

231mælan, w.v.(1b), [MEAL]; damage

232lig

233onsund, adj. [ON + SOUND]; uninjured

**aswebban**<sup>234</sup>, sorcearig, þurh **sweordbite**<sup>235</sup>, on hyge halge, heafde  
**bineotan**<sup>236</sup>(603-604)  
 clæne ond gecorene to **cwale**<sup>237</sup> læden(613)  
 þone heo ær **gebond**<sup>238</sup>, awyrgedne, ond mid **witum**<sup>239</sup>  
**swong**<sup>240</sup>(616b-617)  
 þurh **wæpnes**<sup>241</sup> **spor**<sup>242</sup>, **wrecað**<sup>243</sup> ealdne **nið**<sup>244</sup>(623)  
 Ic þa **sorge**<sup>245</sup> gemon, hu ic **bendum**<sup>246</sup> **fæst**<sup>247</sup> **bisga**<sup>248</sup> unrim, on  
 anre niht, **earfeða**<sup>249</sup> **dreag**<sup>250</sup>(624b-626)  
 ongon þa on fleam sceacan, **wita**<sup>251</sup> neosan(630b-631a)  
 earmne **gehynan**<sup>252</sup> yflum **yrmpum**<sup>253</sup>(633b-634a)  
 Ða hyre sawl wearð **alæded**<sup>254</sup> of lice to þam langan gefean þurh  
**sweordslege**<sup>255</sup>(669b-671a)

- 
- 234aswebban, w.v.(1a), [ASWEVE]; put to death  
 235sweordbite, m. i-stem, [SWORD + BIT]; sword wound  
 236bineotan, v.(2), w. acc. and dat. [BE + NAIT]; deprive of  
 237cwalu  
 238(ge)bindan  
 239wite  
 240swingan  
 241wæpen, n. a-stem, WEAPON  
 242spor, n. a-stem; wæpnes spor, wound  
 243wrecan, v.(5), WREAK; avenge; recite  
 244niþ  
 245sorg, f. o-stem, SORROW, affliction  
 246bend  
 247fæst  
 248bisgo, f. o- or n-stem, [BUSY]; affliction  
 249earfeð, n. a-stem, earfeðe, n. ja-stem [ARVETH]; difficulty, hardship, suffering  
 250dreogan, v.(2), [DREE]; suffer  
 251wite  
 252gehynan, w.v.(1b), [I + HEAN]; humiliate  
 253yrmpu, f. o-stem, later indec. [ERMETHE(E)]; misery  
 254alædan, w.v.(1b), [A + LEAD]; lead away  
 255sweordslege, m. i-stem, [SWORD + SLAY]; sword stroke



**Swylt**<sup>256</sup> ealle **fornom**<sup>257</sup> secga hloþe(675b-676a)

in þam **þystran**<sup>258</sup> **ham**<sup>259</sup>, seo geneatscolu in þam **neolan**<sup>260</sup>

**scræfe**<sup>261</sup>(683b-684)Idiom

**Sar**<sup>262</sup> eal gemon, synna **wunde**<sup>263</sup>(709b-710a)

---

256swylt

257forniman, v.(4), [FORNIM]; destroy

258þystre, adj. [THESTER]; dark, gloomy

259ham

260neol, adj. [NUEL]; deep

261scræf, n. a-stem, pit

Idiom "gloomy home" & "deep pit" = hell as prison

262sar

263wund

## APPENDIX B:

### **Preliminary Thesaurus of the Lexicon of Torture and Pain in Old English Poetry:**

#### **Selected Torture Vocabulary terms from *Juliana* Cross-Referenced with Other Semantic Fields through the Use of *A Thesaurus of Old English***

In this appendix I have examined more closely the first one hundred or so terms from *Juliana* which I identified as torture vocabulary in Appendix A. A hundred terms is a good-sized sample in that it is large enough to give a representative idea of the terminology involved, but is small enough that it is not unwieldy for the limited purposes of this project. What I have done is take each term out of its poetic context and, using *A Thesaurus of Old English*, cross reference it in order to give a complete picture of the breadth of semantic fields encompassed by each term. Thus, while Appendix A contextualizes each term within its semantic, thematic, and poetic contexts (therefore illuminating for us the sense(s) of each given term in said contexts, and offering for us a further context of a lexicon of pain and torture within which each term has resonance with many other terms), Appendix B situates each term in the wider matrix of the various semantic rubrics under which it may be categorized. The value of the semantic cross-referencing to my on-going research was touched upon in the Afterword; I hope to construct a definitive lexicon of pain and torture in Old English poetry, and concurrently to cross-reference each term in turn in this semantic database. For the moment, I hope that scholars interested in *Juliana* will find the present pilot project of use in pointing to interesting linguistic and semantic areas of research concerning the lexicon of pain and torture.



Each term is listed in alphabetical order, based upon the form in which it appears in the text. This form is followed by the root form, specific information as to its conjugation/declension, etc., a gloss of an accepted reading in that particular context, the text from which it was taken (all are from *Juliana* for the moment), and the line number. There then follows a list of the various semantic fields under which the root form is listed in *A Thesaurus of Old English*. In cases where related forms offer additional and/or similar information, I have included these for reference. Although I have made clearly subjective judgments in my selection of the terms under scrutiny, in this appendix I have aspired to objectivity by including all listed information from the *Thesaurus*.

**Word** acwellan  
**Root** acwellan  
**Part of Speech** w.v.(1c)  
**Gloss** kill  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 303

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.02.04.03 to kill, slay  
((ge)cwellan) 02.02.04.03 to kill, slay  
(acwelan) 02.02.03 to die, perish  
(cwelan) 02.02.03 to die, perish

**Word** afongen  
**Root** afon  
**Part of Speech** s.v.(7)  
**Gloss** seize  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 320

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 05.10.05.04.02.04.02 support, maintenance; 08.01 heart, spirit, mood, disposition; 10.01.01 acceptance, receiving; 10.01.02 acquisition; 10.04.02.02 to seize, take, grasp, lay hold on



<b>Word</b>	ahebban
<b>Root</b>	ahebban
<b>Part of Speech</b>	s.v.(6)
<b>Gloss</b>	raise
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	228

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	04.01.02.02.05.04.01 preparation of bread; 04.05 building, construction; 05.03.01 a cause (of anything); 05.12.02.02 to carry off, remove; 06.02.07.01 strength, fortitude; 07.04.04 praise, acclamation, applause; 07.06.01.03 to be proud/arrogant; 07.08.06 exhaltation
--	--

<b>Word</b>	aheng
<b>Root</b>	ahon
<b>Part of Speech</b>	s.v.(7)
<b>Gloss</b>	hang
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	305

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	02.02.04.04.03 putting to death; 05.12.01.07.01 to hang; 14.05.05.01.01 crucifixion, death on cross
--	---

**Word**                   ahof  
**Root**                   ahebban  
**Part of Speech**   s.v.(6)  
**Gloss**                wage  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                 4

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**       04.01.02.02.05.04.01 preparation of bread; 04.05 building, construction;  
05.03.01 a cause (of anything); 05.12.02.02 to carry off, remove;  
06.02.07.01 strength, fortitude; 07.04.04 praise, acclamation, applause;  
07.06.01.03 to be proud/arrogant; 07.08.06 exhaltation

**Word**                   ahon  
**Root**                   ahon  
**Part of Speech**   s.v.(7)  
**Gloss**                hang  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                 228

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**       02.02.04.04.03 putting to death; 05.12.01.07.01 to hang; 14.05.05.01.01  
crucifixion, death on cross



**Word**                    ahon  
**Root**                    ahon  
**Part of Speech**    s.v.(7)  
**Gloss**                    hang  
**Text**                    Juliana  
**Line**                    309

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**            02.02.04.04.03 putting to death; 05.12.01.07.01 to hang; 14.05.05.01.01 crucifixion, death on cross

**Word**                    bælwylme  
**Root**                    bælwylm  
**Part of Speech**    m. i-stem  
**Gloss**                    surging fire  
**Text**                    Juliana  
**Line**                    336

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**            02.02.05.01.01 a grave, burial place, sepulchre; 03.01.09.02.01.01 a kind of fire  
(bæl) 02.02.05.01.01 a grave, burial place, sepulchre; 03.01.09.02 fire, flame  
(wielm) 01.01.03.01.01 moving water; 01.01.03.01.01.07 spring, fountain, well; 01.01.03.01.02.06 surging, rolling, heaving of waves; 02.08.05 inflammation; 03.01.09 heat; 03.01.09.02.01 fire, burning; 05.08.02 violence, force; 08.01.01.01 ardour, fervour, strong feeling; 08.01.03.05.02 anger  
(wielma) 02.08.05 inflammation

<b>Word</b>	bærndon
<b>Root</b>	bærnan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	w.v.(1b)
<b>Gloss</b>	burn
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	16
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	02.08.12.02.06 surgical ((ge)bærnan) 03.01.09.01 warmth, heat; 03.01.09.02.01 fire, burning; 17.05.04 to kindle, set alight (fire, lamp)

<b>Word</b>	bealo
<b>Root</b>	bealo
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. wa-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	evil
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	211

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(bealu) 04.06.02.06 poison; 07.03.02 ill, harm, hurt; 08.01.03.09.03 malevolence, malice
--	--

**Word** beam  
**Root** beam  
**Part of Speech** m. a-stem  
**Gloss** cross  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 228

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.07.03 a tree; 03.01.12.02 a beam of light; 04.02.04.06.07 ploughing equipment; 05.12.01.09.03.01 a ship, boat; 16.01.01.02.03 a wonder, miracle; 16.02.05.11 the cross (as Christian image); 17.03.09 a post, rod, stick, etc.

**Word** beam  
**Root** beam  
**Part of Speech** m. a-stem  
**Gloss** cross  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 309

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.07.03 a tree; 03.01.12.02 a beam of light; 04.02.04.06.07 ploughing equipment; 05.12.01.09.03.01 a ship, boat; 16.01.01.02.03 a wonder, miracle; 16.02.05.11 the cross (as Christian image); 17.03.09 a post, rod, stick, etc.



**Word** behliden  
**Root** behlidan  
**Part of Speech** s.v.(1)  
**Gloss** close  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 237

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 05.10.05.04.12 the condition of being covered

**Word** biheawan  
**Root** biheawan  
**Part of Speech** s.v.(7)  
**Gloss** behead  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 295

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** (beheawan) 04.02.04.05.04.01 a forester, woodman; 05.06.02 cleaving, splitting, cutting; 10.04.03.01 to take away, deprive of (heawan) 13.02.08.04.03.02.01 striking/attack with sword ((ge)heawan) 04.02.04.05.04.01 a forester, woodman; 05.06.02 cleaving, splitting, cutting; 13.02.08.04.03.02.01 striking/attack with sword; 17.02.04.02.01 cutting, hewing, shaping

<b>Word</b>	binden
<b>Root</b>	(ge)bindan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	s.v.(3)
<b>Gloss</b>	bind
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	336

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	03.03.06.01 a whole formed by joining; 05.05.03 binding, fastening; 11.11.02 a hindrance; 14.05.07 binding, fastening with bonds
--	--

<b>Word</b>	breotun
<b>Root</b>	breotan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	s.v.(2)
<b>Gloss</b>	destroy
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	16

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	05.06.01 devastation, laying waste
--	------------------------------------

<b>Word</b>	carcerne
<b>Root</b>	carcern
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	prison
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	233
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	14.05.08.01 prison, confinement, durance

<b>Word</b>	carcernes
<b>Root</b>	carcern
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	prison
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	236
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	14.05.08.01 prison, confinement, durance



<b>Word</b>	clustre
<b>Root</b>	clustor
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	bolt
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	236
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	05.10.05.04.15.01 a bar, bolt; 14.05.08.01 prison, confinement, durance; 17.03.10.01 a bolt, lock, bar
<b>Word</b>	cwale
<b>Root</b>	cwalu
<b>Part of Speech</b>	f. o-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	slaughter
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	289
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	02.02.04 killing, violent death, destruction

**Word** cwealde  
**Root** cwellan  
**Part of Speech** w.v.(1c)  
**Gloss** slay  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 5

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** ((ge)cwellan) 02.02.04.03 to kill, slay

**Word** cwelmdon  
**Root** cwelman  
**Part of Speech** w.v.(1b)  
**Gloss** slay  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 15

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** ((ge)cwellan) 02.02.04.03 to kill, slay

**Word**                deað  
**Root**                deað  
**Part of Speech**    m. a-stem  
**Gloss**                death  
**Text**                Juliana  
**Line**                256

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories**    02.02 death; 02.02.01 particular mode of death; 02.02.03.02 state of being dead; 02.02.03.04 spiritual death; 02.02.04.01 cause/occassion of death; 16.01.03.01 soul of a deceased person

**Word**                domas  
**Root**                dom  
**Part of Speech**    m. a-stem  
**Gloss**                doom  
**Text**                Juliana  
**Line**                134

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories**    05.02.01.01 the course of human affairs; 07 judgement, forming of opinion; 07.01 appraisal, appraising; 07.01.01 choice, election; 07.08 reputation, fame; 09.04.03 exposition, making clear by explanation; 12.01.01 authority; 14.01.06 a rule, order, precept, tenet, principle; 14.03.01 judicial body, authority; 14.03.03 law, action of the courts; 14.03.03.09 a sentence, judgement, ruling; 14.03.03.09.01 unfavourable judgement, condemnation



<b>Word</b>	domas
<b>Root</b>	dom
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	doom
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	210

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	05.02.01.01 the course of human affairs; 07 judgement, forming of opinion; 07.01 appraisal, appraising; 07.01.01 choice, election; 07.08 reputation, fame; 09.04.03 exposition, making clear by explanation; 12.01.01 authority; 14.01.06 a rule, order, precept, tenet, principle; 14.03.01 judicial body, authority; 14.03.03 law, action of the courts; 14.03.03.09 a sentence, judgement, ruling; 14.03.03.09.01 unfavourable judgement, condemnation
--	---

<b>Word</b>	eahtnysse
<b>Root</b>	eahtnys
<b>Part of Speech</b>	f. jo-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	persecution
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	4

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(eahtnes) 12.05.06.02.02 persecution
--	--------------------------------------

Word	engan ham
Root	[enge] ham
Part of Speech	[adj.] m. a-stem
Gloss	[narrow] dwelling
Text	Juliana
Line	323

Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories	[enge] 05.10.02 narrowness, scantiness of space; 08.01.03.07.04 severity, harshness (ham) 04.02 farm; 04.05.03 a dwelling-place, abode, habitation; 04.05.03.02.01 a building, house, hall, palace, etc.; 05.10.04.02 a region, zone; 12.06.04 native land; 16.01.02.01 heavenly dwelling place
---	--

Word	fetrum
Root	feter
Part of Speech	f. o-stem
Gloss	fetter
Text	Juliana
Line	433

Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories	(fetor) 04.02.05.05.04 rope, rein; 14.05.07 binding, fastening with bonds (fetorwrasen) 14.05.07 binding, fastening with bonds (gefetred) 14.05.08 captivity
---	--

<b>Word</b>	forht
<b>Root</b>	forht
<b>Part of Speech</b>	adj.
<b>Gloss</b>	afraid
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	320

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	06.01.08.06.03 cause of fear, terror, horror ((ge)forht) 06.01.08.06 fear
--	---

<b>Word</b>	forwyrd
<b>Root</b>	forwyrd
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem, orig. f. i-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	destruction
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	414

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	05.06 destruction, dissolution, loss, breaking (wyrd) 02.02.03.03 appointed death, doom; 05.03.02.01 chance, hap, event
--	---



<b>Word</b>	fylde
<b>Root</b>	fyllan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	w.v.(1b)
<b>Gloss</b>	destroy
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	5

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	((ge)fyllan) 03.03.04.02.01 abundance; 03.03.06 wholeness; 03.03.06.02 fullness; 05.06.01 devastation, laying waste; 05.10.04.03 presence; 05.12.05.13.03 to fall; 11.01.04 a doing, accomplishing (of something); 11.01.05 accomplishment, fulfilment; 11.01.06 end, completion (of action), fulfilment
--	--

<b>Word</b>	gæston
<b>Root</b>	gæstan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	w.v.(1b)
<b>Gloss</b>	persecute
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	17

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	06.01.08.06.03.01 causing dread, terrifying
--	---

**Word** galgan  
**Root** galga  
**Part of Speech** m. n-stem  
**Gloss** gallows  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 310

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** (gealga) 14.05.06 means/implement of torture

**Word** geat  
**Root** geotan  
**Part of Speech** s.v.(2)  
**Gloss** shed  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 6

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 03.01.16.01 moisture; 05.08.02 violence, force; 05.12.05.03.04.02 to flow out, well up, erupt; 11.08.03 needless, useless, unprofitable ((ge)geotan) 17.02.04.03.03 smelting, heating, scorification

**Word** gebunde  
**Root** (ge)bindan  
**Part of Speech** s.v.(3)  
**Gloss** bind  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 433

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 03.03.06.01 a whole formed by joining; 05.05.03 binding, fastening; 11.11.02 a hindrance; 14.05.07 binding, fastening with bonds

**Word** gepoliað  
**Root** (ge)polian  
**Part of Speech** w.v.(2)  
**Gloss** suffer  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 340

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 06.02.07.01 strength, fortitude; 08.01.03.07.03 suffering, torment, pain; 10.02.01 loss, deprivation; 12.05.06.04.01 submission to action, toleration (polian hyde) 14.05.05 physical punishments (polle) 04.01.02.02.06.01 cooking vessel/pot; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture



**Word**                   grimra  
**Root**                   grim  
**Part of Speech**   adj.  
**Gloss**                fierce  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                173

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories**   (grimm) 05.06 destruction, dissolution, loss, breaking; 05.08.02.01 (of living creatures) fiercness, roughness; 07.03.02 ill, harm, hurt; 08.01.03.07.04 severity, harshness; 08.01.03.09.11 hardheartedness, cruelty, severity

**Word**                   gringwræce  
**Root**                   wracu  
**Part of Speech**   f. o-stem  
**Gloss**                deadly punishment  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                265

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories**   (wracu) 08.01.03.07.03 suffering, torment, pain; 08.01.03.09.05 enmity; 12.05.04.02 vengeance, revenge; 12.06.05.01 state of exile, banishment; 14.03.03.09.03 outlawry; 14.05.02 torment, punishment; 14.05.03 retribution, requital

<b>Word</b>	gripe
<b>Root</b>	gripe
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. i-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	grasp
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	125
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	10.04.02 to grasp, take hold of; 12.05.06 grasp, power, control, mastery; 13.02.03.01 an attack, assault

<b>Word</b>	grornhofe
<b>Root</b>	grornhof
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	house of sorrow
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	324

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	16.01.05 hell, lower world, abode of the dead (grorn) 08.01.03 bad feeling, sadness; 08.01.03.03 anxiety (grorne) 08.01.03.04 grief (hof) 04.05.03 a dwelling-place, abode, habitation; 16.02.05.02.01 a temple
--	--

<b>Word</b>	gyrna
<b>Root</b>	gyrn
<b>Part of Speech</b>	f. or n. i-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	evil
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	173
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	08.01.03 bad feeling, sadness; 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction

<b>Word</b>	gyrnstafa
<b>Root</b>	stæf
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	affliction
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	245
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(gyrnstafas) 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction (gyrn) 08.01.03 bad feeling, sadness; 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction (stæf) 05.12.01.09.03.01.03 part of a ship; 06.01.07.01.01 strictness, exactness; 09.03.07.01 a written character, letter; 09.03.07.04.01 to punctuate, divide; 12.01.01.03 symbols of power; 16.02.05.05.08 a staff, wand of authority; 16.02.05.10.12 a computus ans calendar; 17.03.09 a post, rod, stick, etc. (see also stafas: learning, writing, a letter)



<b>Word</b>	hæftling
<b>Root</b>	hæftling
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	captive
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	246
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	14.05.08 captivity (hæft) 10 having, owning, possession; 12.01.01.09 bondage, slavery; 14.05.07 binding, fastening with bonds; 14.05.08 captivity; 17.03 implements, tools, etc. ((ge)hæft) 10.04.02.02 to seize, take, grasp, lay hold on; 14.05.08 captivity ((ge)hæftan) 12.01.01.09 bondage, slavery; 14.05.07 binding, fastening with bonds; 14.05.08 captivity (gehæftan) 03.03.06.01 a whole formed by joining; 12.05.06.01 restraint, check, curb, control; 12.05.06.04 a trampling upon, subjection
<b>Word</b>	hæstne
<b>Root</b>	hæste
<b>Part of Speech</b>	adj.
<b>Gloss</b>	violent
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	56
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(hæst) 05.08.02 violence, force; 05.08.02.01 (of living creatures) fierceness, roughness

**Word**                   heardestan  
**Root**                   heard  
**Part of Speech**   adj. sup.  
**Gloss**                most severe  
**Text**                Juliana  
**Line**                339

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**       02.05.07.01 strong taste, acidity, pungency; 02.07.03.05 particular  
trees/shrubs (alphabetical order); 03.01.03 hardness, callosity, hard  
material; 03.01.03.02 strength, power; 05.08.02.01 (of living creatures)  
fierceness, roughness; 06.02.07 will, determination, resolution;  
06.02.07.04.01 obduracy; 06.02.07.06.02 boldness; 08.01.03.07.04  
severity, hardness; 08.01.03.07.04.01 unbearableness; 08.01.03.09.10  
wrath, sternness, displeasure; 12.08.03.02 strictness, austerity, severity

**Word**                   heardlicu  
**Root**                   heardlic  
**Part of Speech**   adj.  
**Gloss**                severe  
**Text**                Juliana  
**Line**                263

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**       06.02.07 will, determination, resolution; 06.02.07.06.02 boldness;  
08.01.03.07.04.01 unbearableness; 08.01.03.09.12 pitilessness  
(see also heard and heardlice)

**Word** heardra  
**Root** heard  
**Part of Speech** adj.  
**Gloss** severe  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 56

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.05.07.01 strong taste, acidity, pungency; 02.07.03.05 particular trees/shrubs (alphabetical order); 03.01.03 hardness, callosity, hard material; 03.01.03.02 strength, power; 05.08.02.01 (of living creatures) fierceness, roughness; 06.02.07 will, determination, resolution; 06.02.07.04.01 obduracy; 06.02.07.06.02 boldness; 08.01.03.07.04 severity, hardness; 08.01.03.07.04.01 unbearableness; 08.01.03.09.10 wrath, sternness, displeasure; 12.08.03.02 strictness, austerity, severity

**Word** heolstre  
**Root** heolstor  
**Part of Speech** m. a-stem  
**Gloss** darkness  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 241

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 03.01.13 darkness, obscurity; 04.04.08 a covering, curtain, veil, garment, etc.; 04.05.03.05.02 a privy; 09.05.04.01 concealment, obscurity



<b>Word</b>	hildewoman
<b>Root</b>	woma
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. n-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	hostile violence
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	136

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(hildewoma) 02.05.10.03 noise, tumult, uproar; 13.02.02 battle (woma) 02.05.10.03 noise, tumult, uproar; 06.01.08.06.02 great fear, terror, horror
--	---

<b>Word</b>	hlinræced
<b>Root</b>	ræced
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	prison
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	243

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(hlinreced) 14.05.08.01 prison, confinement, durance (reced) 04.05.03.02.01 a building, house, hall, palace, etc.
--	--

<b>Word</b>	lean
<b>Root</b>	lean
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	retribution
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	195
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	06.02.06.03.01 to dissuade (from); 07.05.01 censure, reproof, rebuke; 10.03.05 recompense, reward; 12.05.04.02.01 retribution, requital; 15.02.04 spending, disbursement

<b>Word</b>	nið
<b>Root</b>	nip
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. a-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	hatred
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	56
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 08.01.03.09.05 enmity; 08.01.03.09.08 envy, jealousy; 12.05.04 strife, hostility; 12.08.06.02 wickedness, evil; 12.08.06.02.01 wrong, evil-doing; 13.02.02 battle; 16.01.05 hell, lower world, abode of the dead

<b>Word</b>	niðwræce
<b>Root</b>	niþwracu
<b>Part of Speech</b>	f. o-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	severe punishment
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	187

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	14.05 punishment (niþ) 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 08.01.03.09.05 enmity; 08.01.03.09.08 envy, jealousy; 12.05.04 strife, hostility; 12.08.06.02 wickedness, evil; 12.08.06.02.01 wrong, evil-doing; 13.02.02 battle; 16.01.05 hell, lower world, abode of the dead (wracu) 08.01.03.07.03 suffering, torment, pain; 08.01.03.09.05 enmity; 12.05.04.02 vengeance, revenge; 12.06.05.01 state of exile, banishment; 14.03.03.09.03 outlawry; 14.05.02 torment, punishment; 14.05.03 retribution, requital
--	--

<b>Word</b>	nydbysig
<b>Root</b>	nydbysig
<b>Part of Speech</b>	adj.
<b>Gloss</b>	harassed by misery
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	423

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction (nied) 06.02.04 necessity, inevitability; 06.02.04.01 want, need; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 09.03.07.01.01 a runic letter; 12.05.06.03 necessity, constraint; 12.07 an obligation, bounden duty; 14.05.08 captivity
--	---



**Word** nydcleafan  
**Root** cleafa  
**Part of Speech** m. n-stem  
**Gloss** prison  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 240

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** (nydcleofa) 14.05.08.01 prison, confinement, durance (nied) 06.02.04 necessity, inevitability; 06.02.04.01 want, need; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 09.03.07.01.01 a runic letter; 12.05.06.03 necessity, constraint; 12.07 an obligation, bounden duty; 14.05.08 captivity (cleofa) 01.01.02.01.03.01 cave; 04.05.03.02.02.01 dwellings in particular places; 04.05.03.04 a closet, chamber, room; 16.02.05.04.01 parts of monastery

**Word** rærdon  
**Root** ræran  
**Part of Speech** w.v.(1b)  
**Gloss** wage  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 12

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 04.05 building, construction; 05.05.01 an uthor, source, originator; 05.12.05.12.02 to raise, lift up, elavate; 06.02.06.03.03 incitement; 08.01.01.01.03 an incitement, cause of strong feeling; 11.01.05.02 furtherance, promotion

**Word** rode  
**Root** rod  
**Part of Speech** f. o-stem  
**Gloss** cross  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 305

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 04.02.03.03 a measure of land; 05.10.05.03 a measure of distance; 14.05.05.01.01 crucifixion, death on cross; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.02.04.18.01 sign of the cross; 16.02.05.11 the cross (as Christian image)

**Word** sacan  
**Root** sacan  
**Part of Speech** s.v.(6)  
**Gloss** contend  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 298

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 09.07.03.02 refusal, denial; 12.05.03.01 quarrel, contentiousness, strife; 12.05.04.01 fighting, contention, warfare, strife; 14.03.03 law, action of the courts; 14.03.03.01 accusation (gesaca) 12.05.02 hostility, contention, opposition; 14.03.03.01 accusation (sacu) 07.05.01 censure, reproof, rebuke; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 12.05.03.01 quarrel, contentiousness, strife; 12.08.09 guiltiness, guilt; 14.02.01 an offence; 14.03.03 law, action of the courts

**Word** sace  
**Root** sacu  
**Part of Speech** f. o-stem  
**Gloss** strife  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 230

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 07.05.01 censure, reproof, rebuke; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 12.05.03.01 quarrel, contentiousness, strife; 12.08.09 guiltiness, guilt; 14.02.01 an offence; 14.03.03 law, action of the courts (sacan) 09.07.03.02 refusal, denial; 12.05.03.01 quarrel, contentiousness, strife; 12.05.04.01 fighting, contention, warfare, strife; 14.03.03 law, action of the courts; 14.03.03.01 accusation (gesaca) 12.05.02 hostility, contention, opposition; 14.03.03.01 accusation

**Word** sar  
**Root** sar  
**Part of Speech** n. a-stem  
**Gloss** suffering  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 55

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.05.02 particular inflammation/swelling; 08.01.03.04 grief; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction ((ge)sar) 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort



Word	sar
Root	sar
Part of Speech	n. a-stem
Gloss	suffering
Text	Juliana .
Line	251
Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories	02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.05.02 particular inflammation/swelling; 08.01.03.04 grief; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction ((ge)sar) 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort

Word	sarslege
Root	sarslege
Part of Speech	m. i-stem
Gloss	painful blow
Text	Juliana
Line	341
Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories	05.06.09 act of striking (sar) 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.05.02 particular inflammation/swelling; 08.01.03.04 grief; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction ((ge)sar) 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort (slege) 01.03.01.03.01.01 thundering, thunder; 02.02.04 killing, violent death, destruction; 02.08.03.02 itch, irritation; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence; 04.04.03 a spinning-house or chamber; 05.06.09 act of striking; 05.12.02.06.01 to push, drive; 13.02.05.02 defeat; etc.

<b>Word</b>	seað
<b>Root</b>	seað
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. a-stem, orig. u-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	pit
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	422
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	01.01.02.01.03 hollow/depression in land; 01.01.03.01.03 lake; 01.01.03.01.03.01 pool; 02.06.01.08 a lair, den; 04.05.03.05.01 a cess-pool, midden, sewer; 17.02.04.02.04 leading/conducting of water
<b>Word</b>	singrimme
<b>Root</b>	grim
<b>Part of Speech</b>	adj.
<b>Gloss</b>	unceasingly fierce
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	230
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(singrim) 08.01.03.09.01 fierceness (grimm) 05.06 destruction, dissolution, loss, breaking; 05.08.02.01 (of living creatures) fiercness, roughness; 07.03.02 ill, harm, hurt; 08.01.03.07.04 severity, harshness; 08.01.03.09.11 hardheartedness, cruelty, severity

<b>Word</b>	slege
<b>Root</b>	slege
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. i-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	stroke
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	229

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	01.03.01.03.01.01 thundering, thunder; 02.02.04 killing, violent death, destruction; 02.08.03.02 itch, irritation; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence; 04.04.03 a spinning-house or chamber; 05.06.09 act of striking; 05.12.02.06.01 to push, drive; 13.02.05.02 defeat; 14.05.05 physical punishments; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 15.01.04 coinage, money; 17.03 implements, tools, etc.; 18.02.07.02.03 stringed instruments
--	--

<b>Word</b>	sorg
<b>Root</b>	sorg
<b>Part of Speech</b>	f. o-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	sorrow
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	443

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	08.01.03 bad feeling, sadness; 08.01.03.03 anxiety
--	--



<b>Word</b>	susle
<b>Root</b>	susl
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem or f. o-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	torment
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	142
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	08.01.03.07.03 suffering, torment, pain

<b>Word</b>	suslum
<b>Root</b>	susl
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. a-stem or f. o-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	torment
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	337
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	08.01.03.07.03 suffering, torment, pain

<b>Word</b>	sweltest
<b>Root</b>	sweltan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	s.v.(3)
<b>Gloss</b>	die
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	125
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	02.02.03 to die, perish

<b>Word</b>	sweopum
<b>Root</b>	swipu
<b>Part of Speech</b>	f. n-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	scourge
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	188

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	12.05.06.02.03 trouble, disturbance; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture
--	--

<b>Word</b>	swingan
<b>Root</b>	swingan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	s.v.(3)
<b>Gloss</b>	scourge
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	142

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	04.01.02.02.08 churn; 05.06.09.01 a slap with the hand, blow; 05.12.01.07 to fly (with wings); 18.02.02 play, (atheltic) sport (swingan on twa) 05.06.02.01 a cleft, split ((ge)swingan) 12.05.06.02.03 trouble, disturbance; 14.05.05 physical punishments
--	---

<b>Word</b>	swingan
<b>Root</b>	swingan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	s.v.(3)
<b>Gloss</b>	scourge
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	188

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	04.01.02.02.08 churn; 05.06.09.01 a slap with the hand, blow; 05.12.01.07 to fly (with wings); 18.02.02 play, (atheltic) sport (swingan on twa) 05.06.02.01 a cleft, split ((ge)swingan) 12.05.06.02.03 trouble, disturbance; 14.05.05 physical punishments
--	---



<b>Word</b>	swingen
<b>Root</b>	swingan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	s.v.(3)
<b>Gloss</b>	afflict
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	337

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	04.01.02.02.08 churn; 05.06.09.01 a slap with the hand, blow; 05.12.01.07 to fly (with wings); 18.02.02 play, (atheltic) sport (swingan on twa) 05.06.02.01 a cleft, split ((ge)swingan) 12.05.06.02.03 trouble, disturbance; 14.05.05 physical punishments
--	---

<b>Word</b>	swiðlic
<b>Root</b>	swiðlic
<b>Part of Speech</b>	adj.
<b>Gloss</b>	severe
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	55

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	01.03.01.03 bad weather; 02.05 sensation, perception, feeling; 03.03.04.01.01 greatness, bigness, size; 05.08.02.01 (of living creatures) fierceness, roughness; 08.01.01.01 ardour, fervour, strong feeling; 12 power, might; 12.08.03.02 strictness, austerity, severity
--	--

<b>Word</b>	swylt
<b>Root</b>	swylt
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. i-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	death
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	255

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	02.02 death; 02.02.03.04 spiritual death
--	--

<b>Word</b>	wægan
<b>Root</b>	wægan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	w.v.(1b)
<b>Gloss</b>	afflict
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	143

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	06.01.07.04.01 deception, a leading astray ((ge)wægan) 12.05.06.02 oppression (gewægan) 06.01.07.04.01 deception, a leading astray
--	--

**Word** welgrim  
**Root** grim  
**Part of Speech** adj.  
**Gloss** cruel  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 264

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** (grimm) 05.06 destruction, dissolution, loss, breaking; 05.08.02.01 (of living creatures) fierceness, roughness; 07.03.02 ill, harm, hurt; 08.01.03.07.04 severity, harshness; 08.01.03.09.11 hardheartedness, cruelty, severity

**Word** wita  
**Root** wite  
**Part of Speech** n. ja-stem  
**Gloss** torment  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 56

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence; 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment; 14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01 damnation, perdition, reprobation ((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment



**Word** wita  
**Root** wite  
**Part of Speech** n. ja-stem  
**Gloss** torment  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 172

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence; 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment; 14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01 damnation, perdition, reprobation ((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment

**Word** wita  
**Root** wite  
**Part of Speech** n. ja-stem  
**Gloss** torment  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 177

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence; 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment; 14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01 damnation, perdition, reprobation ((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment

**Word** wita  
**Root** wite  
**Part of Speech** n. ja-stem  
**Gloss** torment  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 211

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** 02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence; 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment; 14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01 damnation, perdition, reprobation ((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment

**Word** witebrogan  
**Root** wite  
**Part of Speech** m. n-stem  
**Gloss** fearful torment  
**Text** Juliana  
**Line** 135

**Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories** (witebroga) 06.01.08.06.02 great fear, terror, horror

<b>Word</b>	witebrogan
<b>Root</b>	wite
<b>Part of Speech</b>	m. n-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	fearful torment
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	196
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(witebroga) 06.01.08.06.02 great fear, terror, horror

<b>Word</b>	wites
<b>Root</b>	wite
<b>Part of Speech</b>	n. ja-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	torment
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	152
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence; 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment; 14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01 damnation, perdition, reprobation ((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment



**Word**                   witu  
**Root**                   wite  
**Part of Speech**   n. ja-stem  
**Gloss**                torment  
**Text**                Juliana  
**Line**                250

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**        02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence;  
08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment;  
14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01  
damnation, perdition, reprobation  
((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment

**Word**                   witu  
**Root**                   wite  
**Part of Speech**   n. ja-stem  
**Gloss**                torment  
**Text**                Juliana  
**Line**                264

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**        02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence;  
08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment;  
14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01  
damnation, perdition, reprobation  
((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment

**Word**                   witu  
**Root**                   wite  
**Part of Speech**   n. ja-stem  
**Gloss**                torment  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                 340

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**       02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence;  
08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment;  
14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01  
damnation, perdition, reprobation  
((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment

**Word**                   witum  
**Root**                   wite  
**Part of Speech**   n. ja-stem  
**Gloss**                torment  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                 143

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**       02.08.03 pain, bodily discomfort; 02.08.10.03.01 plague, pestilence;  
08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 14.05.02 torment, punishment;  
14.05.04.01 a fine; 14.05.06 means/implement of torture; 16.01.05.01  
damnation, perdition, reprobation  
((ge)wite) 14.05.02 torment, punishment

**Word**               wraþe  
**Root**               wraþe  
**Part of Speech**   adv.  
**Gloss**             cruelly  
**Text**              Juliana  
**Line**              172

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**       08.01.03.05.02 anger; 08.01.03.07.04 severity, harshness; 08.01.03.09.11  
hardheartedness, cruelty, severity; 12.08.06.02.03.01 wickedly

**Word**               wraðra  
**Root**               wrað  
**Part of Speech**   adj.  
**Gloss**             cruel  
**Text**              Juliana  
**Line**              177

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**       08.01.03.05.02 anger; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 08.01.03.07.04  
severity, harshness; 08.01.03.09.11 hardheartedness, cruelty, severity;  
16.01.01.01 attributes of God



**Word**                   wundian  
**Root**                   wundian  
**Part of Speech**   w.v.(2)  
**Gloss**                wound  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                 291

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**           ((ge)wundian) 02.08.04.01 a wound; 02.08.12.02.06 surgical;  
08.01.03.07.02.01 injury, offence

**Word**                   wundum  
**Root**                   wund  
**Part of Speech**   f. o-stem  
**Gloss**                wound  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                 355

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**           02.08.04.01 a wound; 02.08.05.02 particular inflammation/swelling;  
08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 08.01.03.07.02.01 injury, offence

**Word**                   wyrrestan  
**Root**                   wyrrest  
**Part of Speech**   adj. sup.  
**Gloss**                worst  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                 250

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**               (wierst) 03.02.01 decay, decline, corruption; 03.03.05.01.03 inferior;  
07.03 evil; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 12.08.06.01.03 evilly, badly

**Word**                   wyrrestan  
**Root**                   wyrrest  
**Part of Speech**   adj. sup.  
**Gloss**                worst  
**Text**                 Juliana  
**Line**                 340

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**               (wierst) 03.02.01 decay, decline, corruption; 03.03.05.01.03 inferior;  
07.03 evil; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 12.08.06.01.03 evilly, badly

<b>Word</b>	wyrrestum
<b>Root</b>	wyrrest
<b>Part of Speech</b>	adj. sup.
<b>Gloss</b>	worst
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	152

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(wierst) 03.02.01 decay, decline, corruption; 03.03.05.01.03 inferior; 07.03 evil; 08.01.03.06 adversity, affliction; 12.08.06.01.03 evilly, badly
--	--

<b>Word</b>	þennan
<b>Root</b>	þennan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	w.v.(1a)
<b>Gloss</b>	stretch out
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	187

<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	05.06.01 devastation, laying waste; 05.10.06.02.02 curvature, bend, twist; 07.08 reputation, fame; 11.03 endeavour ((ge)þennan) 05.10.05.02 extension, stretching; 05.10.05.02.01 diffusion, effusion, spreading
--	---



<b>Word</b>	þræce
<b>Root</b>	þracu
<b>Part of Speech</b>	f. o-stem
<b>Gloss</b>	violence
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	12
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	05.08.01 vigour, activity, force; 05.08.02 violence, force; 12 power, might

<b>Word</b>	þreagan
<b>Root</b>	þreagan
<b>Part of Speech</b>	w.v.(2)
<b>Gloss</b>	torture
<b>Text</b>	Juliana
<b>Line</b>	142
<b>Thesaurus of Old English Category or Categories</b>	(þrea) 07.05.01 censure, reproof, rebuke; 08.01.03.06.01 affliction, misfortune, calamity; 08.01.03.09.07 threat, threatening, menace; 14.05.01 correction, discipline (þreagan/þreawian) 08.01.03.09.07 threat, threatening, menace ((ge)þreagan) 08.01.03.07.02 misery, trouble, affliction; 08.01.03.07.02.01 injury, offence; 14.05.01 correction, discipline (geþreagan/geþreawian) 05.06.04 damage, injury, defect, hurt, loss; 12.05.06.03 necessity, constraint

**Word**                þrowade  
**Root**                þrowian  
**Part of Speech**   w.v.(2)  
**Gloss**               suffer  
**Text**                Juliana  
**Line**                229

**Thesaurus of  
Old English  
Category or  
Categories**        11.06.02 suffering (not acting)  
((ge)þrowian) 02.02.01 particular mode of death; 02.08.03 pain, bodily  
discomfort; 16.02.04.07.02.03 penance, an act/instance of penance;  
16.02.04.16 martyrdom  
(geþrowian) 03.06.03.01 compatible; 08.01.02.05 compassion

## APPENDIX C:

### Examining the Lexicon of Torture and Pain in Old English Poetry in the Context of the Language at Large:

#### A Sample Term from the Torture Vocabulary of *Juliana* Examined in All of its Extant Contexts through the Use of *The Microfiche Concordance to Old English*

In this appendix I have examined in depth a single term--*sorg*--drawn from my survey of the torture vocabulary of *Juliana*. In Appendix A I identified all such terminology and presented it in its literary context, while in Appendix B I examined a sample group of such terms outside of such context, focusing instead upon the varied semantic fields in which each term might fall. In Appendix C I narrow the subject of my examination to a single term, while simultaneously broadening the field of my interest to include all extant usages of that term. In the same way that Appendix B was designed to offer a sense of the multivalence of the lexicon of torture in Old English, I hope that Appendix C will provide insight into the precise nature of the usage of a term which is of some importance to this study. In Chapter Two I discussed this term at some length, and so I need not reiterate my thematic arguments here. Instead this appendix is designed to present a fuller picture of the kinds of texts and usages in which this term appears. This appendix both serves as a more formal example of the kind of research which I presented in the body of my thesis in my discussion of *sorg*, *spor*, *sceran*, *geclænsod*, and other terms, and offers a very specific idea of the linguistic basis upon which I hope to construct my on-going research into the function and nature of pain and torture in Old English verse.

The term *sorg* most often appears in poetic works; as I noted in Chapter Two, its received meaning in such contexts is "sorrow, anxiety, care"; and the emotional state described by this term is often directly



related to physical circumstances. In all, the form *sorg* may be found in 20 instances, 15 of which are poetic (several of which I discussed in Chapter Two). A complete break-down is as follows:

### Table of Instances of the Form *Sorg*:

*Genesis A,B* 2180

*Andreas* 1689

*Christ A,B,C* 1284

*Guthlac A,B* 348, 379, 1038, 1091

*Phoenix* 50

*Juliana* 438, 525, 717

*Wanderer* 29,37,50

*Solomon and Saturn* 312

*Blickling Homily Number 8* 133

*The Pastoral Care of Gregory the Great* 36.259.17

*The Consolation of Philosophy of Boethius* 31.70.27

*CorpGL 2 (Hessels)* [Latin-Old English Glossaries] 1.165

*CLGL 1 (Stryker)* [Latin-Old English Glossaries] 1316

It is clear that this form occurs most often in poetry, and its meaning in such contexts has been the subject of some investigation in this thesis. What is of particular interest in the terms of my larger project, however, is the nature of the non-poetic texts in which terms from the Old English lexicon of pain and torture appear, and what such terms mean in these more varied contexts. I therefore include in the following table the complete citation for each occurrence of the form *sorg* from non-poetic sources. It is not the purpose of this appendix to present a cogent analysis of the significance of these non-poetic occurrences, but rather to

possible directions for further enquiry. These citations appear, therefore, without critical comment:

**Table of Citations of Non-Poetic Instances of the Form *Sorg*:**

Ne biþ þær sar ne gewinn, ne nænig uneþnes, ne sorg ne wop, ne hungor, ne þurst, ne ece yfel.

*[Blickling Homily 8]*

Sio sorg ðonne aswæpð aweg ðæt yfel of ðæm mode.

*[The Pastoral Care]*

Hwæt, ælc mon mæg witan hu hefig sorg men beoð seo gemen his bearna; ne þearf ic þe þeah þæt secgan, for ðæm þu hit hæfst afunden be þe selfum.

*[The Consolation of Philosophy]*

[Accidia tedium uel anxietas id est] sorg

*[CorpGL 2 (Hessels)]*

[Cura] sorg

*[CLGL 1 (Stryker)]*

It is clear that the form *sorg* is primarily a poetic one. Indeed, although it is not my purpose in this appendix to analyze the significance of these findings, it is clear that the poetic sense of the term *sorg* is reflected in the non-poetic instances noted in the table above. Moreover, this term in all its various and related forms is most often found in poetic contexts, a fact which the three most common forms (*sorga*, *sorge*, *sorgum*) overwhelmingly illuminate (see comprehensive break-down, below). Further, there are a large number of forms derived from *sorg* (most of which appear only one time) which are found exclusively in

poetry. In each of these cases, the use of the term is consistent with our understanding of the root term *sorg*:

**Table of *Sorg*-Variants and Compounds which Occur Only in Poetry:**

sorgbyrþen (1)

sorgceare (1)

sorgcearig (4)

sorgcearu (1)

sorgedon (2)

sorgfullne (1)

sorgfulran (1)

sorgfulre (1)

sorgiendum (1)

sorglease (2)

sorgleasra (1)

sorglufu (1)

sorgna (1)

sorgstafum (1)

sorgwælmum (1)

sorgwylmum (1)

The purpose of this appendix is to suggest the semantic flexibility of a sample term from the Old English lexicon of pain and torture; it is notable, therefore, that although *sorg* and its related and derivative forms are primarily poetic terms, many of these forms appear in varied contexts. The further exploration of the significance of such variety is a fundamental cornerstone of my on-going investigation into the nature and function of pain and torture in Old English poetry, and so it is fitting



to conclude this appendix with a comprehensive table which illustrates the sorts of contexts (outside of poetic descriptions of torment) in which the various forms of this sample term appear:

**Comprehensive Table of Forms Derived from and Related to *Sorg*:  
(Listed by descending number of occurrences)**

sorge: 36 poetic, 1 Lord's Prayer, 1 metrical charm, 3 prose saints' lives, 1 Ælfric letter, 1 Ælfric de creatore et creatura, 12 homiletic, 1 OT (Judges), 8 Pastoral Care, 1 Orosius, 4 Boethius, 2 Gregory the Great Dialogues, 1 Bede, 1 C chronicle, 1 medical, 2 prognostics, 1 glossary

sorgum: 24 poetic, 4 homiletic, 1 OT (Psalms), 1 Pastoral Care, 2 Boethius, 1 Bede, 2 glossaries, 1 runic (Ruthwell Cross)

sorga: 13 poetic, 7 homiletic, 1 OT (Proverbs), 1 OT (Psalms), 4 Pastoral Care, 1 runic (Franks' Casket)

sorgende: 3 poetic, 4 Bede, 1 glossary

sorgode: 2 poetic, 1 homiletic, 4 Pastoral Care

sorgian: 2 poetic, 2 homiletic, 1 Pastoral Care, 1 Gregory the Great Dialogues

sorgiende: 1 poetic, 2 Boethius, 2 Bede, 1 glossary

sorgleas: 1 precepts, 5 Durham Ritual

sorgaþ: 1 poetic, 2 Pastoral Care, 1 medical, 1 NT (Gospels)

sorgiaþ: 2 homiletic, 1 NT (Gospels)

sorgigende: 2 prose saints' lives, 1 OT (Psalms)

sorgendi: 2 glossaries

sorgendum: 1 poetic, 1 prose saints' lives

sorges: 1 homiletic, 1 Boethius

sorgful: 1 precepts, 1 Pastoral Care

sorgfulle: 2 homiletic

sorgienne: 1 Boethius, 1 Bede

sorgleasum: 2 Durham Ritual

sorgodon: 1 poetic, 1 Gregory the Great Dialogues

sorgung: 2 homiletic

sorgfullan: 1 Pastoral Care

sorgfulra: 1 Pastoral Care

sorgianne: 1 homiletic

sorgie: 1 prose saints' lives

sorgiendan: 1 Theodulf of Orleans Capitula

sorgiendne: 1 Boethius

sorgigaeþ: 1 NT (Gospels)

sorgigaþ: 1 NT (Gospels)

sorgige: 1 NT (Gospels)

sorgleasne: 1 Durham Ritual

sorglic: 1 OT (Psalms)

sorglice: 1 Prudentius Psychomachia

## GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Michael J. B. and Daniel G. Calder. *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: The Major Latin Texts in Translation*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1976.
- Amnesty International. *Report on Torture*. London: Duckworth in association with Amnesty International Publications, 1973.
- . *Torture in the Eighties*. An Amnesty International Report. Oxford and London: Martin Robertson & Company, Ltd., and Amnesty International Publications, 1984.
- Bakan, David. *Disease, Pain, and Sacrifice: Toward a Psychology of Suffering*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1968.
- Baldwin, John W. "The Intellectual Preparation for the Canon of 1215 against Ordeals." *Speculum* 36 (1961): 613-636.
- Barker, Francis. *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection*. New York: Methuen, 1984.
- Baum1, Franz. "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy." *Speculum* 55 (1980): 237-265.
- Beckwith, Sarah. *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Benson, Larry D. "The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic Poetry." *PMLA* 81 (1966): 334-341.
- Biggs, Frederick M. "The Passion of Andreas: Andreas 1398-1491." *Studies in Philology* 84.4 (1988): 413-427.
- Bjork, Robert E. *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives: A Study in Direct Discourse and the Iconography of Style*. McMaster Old English Studies and Texts, Alvin A. Lee, ed. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1985.
- Blake, N. F., ed. *The Phoenix*. Old and Middle English Texts, G. L. Brook, gen. ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1964.



- Bond, Michael. *Pain: Its Nature, Analysis and Treatment*. New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1984.
- Bosworth, Joseph and T. Northcote Toller. *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.
- Boyer, Regis. "An Attempt to Define the Typology of Medieval Hagiography." Odense: Odense UP, 1981.
- Brooks, Kenneth R., ed. *Andreas and the Fates of the Apostles*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1961.
- Brown, Peter. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981.
- . *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.
- Burckhardt, Titus. *Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*. William Stoddart, trans. London: Stuart & Watkins, 1967.
- Burgers, Herman and Hans Danelius. *The United Nations Convention Against Torture: A Handbook on the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*. London: Nijhoff, 1988.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*. New York: Zone, 1992.
- . *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987.
- . 'Docere Verbo et Exemplo': *An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality*. Harvard Theological Studies, Number 31. John Carman, et al., eds. Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1979.
- . *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*. Lectures on the History of Religions, Number 15. New York: Columbia UP, 1995.

- Caenegem, R. C. van. "The Law of Evidence in the Twelfth Century: European Perspective and Intellectual Background." *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Medieval Canon Law: Boston College, 12-16 August 1963*. Stephen Kuttner and J. Joseph Ryan, eds. Institute of Medieval Canon Law, Series C: Subsidia, Vol. 1. E Civitate Vaticana: S. Congregatio de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus, 1965. 297-310.
- . *The Birth of the English Common Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973.
- Caie, Graham D. *The Judgment Day Theme in Old English Poetry*. Publications of the Department of English, University of Copenhagen. Michael Chesnutt, Graham D. Caie, Lis Christensen and Niels Davidsen-Nielsen, eds. Copenhagen: Nova, 1976.
- Calabrese, Michael A. "Meretricious Mixtures: Gold, Dung, and the Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and Tale." *The Chaucer Review* 27.3 (1993): 277-292.
- Calder, Daniel G. "Strife, Revelation, and Conversion: The Thematic Structure of *Elene*." *English Studies* 53 (1972): 201-210.
- . *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry II: The Major Germanic and Celtic Texts in Translation*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983.
- Chance, Jane. *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature*. Syracuse: U of Syracuse P, 1986.
- Cixous, Hélène. "Castration or Decapitation?" Annette Kuhn, trans. *Signs* 7 (1981): 41-55.
- Clanchy, M. T. *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*. London: Edward Arnold, 1979.
- Clark, Susan L. and Julian N. Wasserman. *The Poetics of Conversion: Number Symbolism and Alchemy in Gottfried's Tristan*. Utah



- Studies in Literature and Linguistics 7. Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1977.
- Clogan, Paul Maurice, ed. *Medieval Hagiography and Romance*. New Series 6. Cambridge: U of Cambridge P, 1975.
- Council of Europe. *European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Punishment: Text of the Convention and Explanatory Report*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1987.
- Crystal, David. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Culler, Jonathan. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982.
- Damico, Helen. "The Valkyrie Reflex in Old English Literature." *Allegorica* 5 (1980): 149-167.
- Danielou, Jean, S.J. *The Bible and Liturgy*. Wulstan Hibberd, trans. Volume III of University of Notre Dame Liturgical Studies. South Bend: U of Notre Dame P, 1956.
- . *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*. Wulstan Hibberd, trans. London: Burns and Oates, 1960.
- Delany, Sheila. "Rewriting Woman Good: Gender and the Anxiety of Influence in Two Late-Medieval Texts." *Chaucer in the Eighties*. Julian N. Wasserman and Robert J. Blanch, eds. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1986. 75-92.
- . *Writing Woman: Women Writers and Women in Literature, Medieval to Modern*. New York: Schocken Books, 1983.
- Delehaye, Pere H. *The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiography*. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907.
- Dinshaw, Carolyn. *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989.



- Dobbie, Elliot Van Kirk, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*. Vol. VI of *ASPR*. New York: Columbia UP, 1942.
- Dobbs, Betty Jo Teeter. "Alchemical Death and Resurrection: the Significance of Alchemy in the Age of Newton." Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Libraries, 1988.
- . *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy: or, "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon"*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.
- . *The Janus Faces of Genius: the Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.
- Douglas, David C. and George W. Greenaway, eds. *English Historical Documents, 1042-1189*. Vol. II of *English Historical Documents*. David C. Douglas, gen. ed. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953.
- DuBois, Page. *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.
- . *Torture and Truth*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Duverger, Christian. "The Meaning of Sacrifice." In part 3 of *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*. Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi, eds. New York: Zone, 1989. 367-385.
- Earl, James W. "Typology and Iconographic Style in Early Medieval Hagiography." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 8 (1975): 15-46.
- Eisler, Robert. *Man into Wolf: An Anthropological Interpretation of Sadism, Masochism, and Lycanthropy*. London: Spring Books, 1951.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Forge and the Crucible*. Stephen Corrin, trans. 2nd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978.
- Farrell, R. T., ed. *Daniel and Azarias*. Methuen's Old English Library, A. J. Bliss and A. Brown, gen. eds. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1974.

- Fee, Christopher. "Productive Destruction: Torture, Text, and the Body in the Old English *Andreas*." *Essays in Medieval Studies* 11 (1994): 51-62.
- . "Swa Smæte Gold: Material Purgation and Spiritual Refashioning in Old English Visions of Judgment." *The Glasgow Review* 4 (1996): 51-62.
- Feher, Michel with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi, eds. *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*. Parts 1-3. New York: Zone, 1989.
- Fish, Stanley. *Is There a Text in This Class?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge & the Discourse on Language*. A. M. Sheridan Smith, trans. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- . *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Alan Sheridan, trans. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Frantzen, Allen J. *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990.
- . *Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies*. SUNY Series in Medieval Studies, Paul E. Szarmach, ed. Albany: SUNY P, 1991.
- . "When Women Aren't Enough." *Speculum* 68.2 (1993): 445-471.
- . "Writing the Unreadable *Beowulf*: 'Writan' and 'Forwritan,' The Pen and the Sword." *Exemplaria* 3.2 (1991): 327-57.
- Frese, Dolores Warwick and Katherine O' Brien O' Keefe, eds. *The Book and the Body*. University of Notre Dame Ward-Phillips Lectures in English Language and Literature, Volume 14. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1997.
- Gatch, Milton McC. "Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies." *Traditio* 21 (1965): 117-165.



- . *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1977.
- Gellrich, Jesse M. *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Gradon, P. O. E., ed. *Cynewulf's Elene*. Methuen's Old English Library, A. H. Smith and F. Norman, gen. eds. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1958.
- Graziano, Frank. *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality, & Radical Christianity in the Argentine "Dirty War"*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.
- Greenfield, Stanley B. and Daniel G. Calder. *A New Critical History of Old English Literature; with a Survey of the Anglo-Latin Background* by Michael Lapidge. New York: New York UP, 1986.
- Gubar, Susan. "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity." *Writing and Sexual Difference*. Elizabeth Abel, ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982.
- Healy, Antonette DiPaolo and Richard L. Venezky, eds. *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1985.
- Heath, Stephen. "Male Feminism." *Men in Feminism*. Alice Jardine and Paul Smith, eds. Methuen: New York, 1987. 1-32.
- Heist, W.W. *Fifteen Signs before Doomsday*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State UP, 1952.
- Hermann, John P. *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1989.
- . "The Recurrent Motifs of Spiritual Warfare in Old English Poetry." *Annuaire Mediaevale* 22 (1982): 7-35.



- . "The Theme of Spiritual Warfare in the Old English *Judith*." *Philological Quarterly* 55 (1976): 1-9.
- . "Why Anglo-Saxonists Can't Read: Or, Who Took the Mead out of Medieval Studies?" *Exemplaria* 7.1 (1995): 9-26.
- Heusch, Luc de. "The Sacrificial Body of the King." In part 3 of *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*. Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi, eds. New York: Zone, 1989. 387-394.
- Hilberry, Jane. "'And in oure madnesse everemoore we rave': Technical Language in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale." *The Chaucer Review* 21.4 (1987): 435-443.
- Hill, Thomas D. "Further Notes on the Eschatology of the Old English *Christ III*." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 72 (1971): 691-698.
- . "Notes on the Eschatology of the Old English *Christ III*." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 70 (1969): 675-677.
- . "The Old World, the Levelling of the Earth, and the Burning of the Sea: Three Eschatological Images in the Old English *Christ III*." *Notes and Queries New Series* 19 (1972): 323-325.
- Hoffman, Richard. "Structure and Symbolism in *Judgment Day II*." *Neophilologus* 52 (1968): 170-178.
- . "The Theme of *Judgment Day II*." *English Language Notes* 6 (1969): 161-164.
- Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Irvine, Martin. "Anglo-Saxon Literary Theory in Old English Poems: Interpreting the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood* and *Elene*." *Style* 20 (1986): 157-181.
- Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.
- Jardine, Alice and Paul Smith, eds. *Men in Feminism*. New York: Methuen, 1987.

- Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982.
- . *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982.
- Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l'Ecriture feminine." *The New Feminist Criticism*. Elaine Showalter, ed. New York: Pantheon, 1985.
- Jones, Charles W. *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1947.
- Kates, Carol A. *Pragmatics and Semantics: An Empiricist Theory*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1980.
- Keller, James R. "The Science of Salvation: Spiritual Alchemy in Donne's Final Sermon." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 Fall (1992): 486-493.
- Knott, John R. *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694*. Cambridge: U of Cambridge P, 1993.
- Krapp, George Phillip and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, eds. *The Exeter Book*. Vol. III of ASPR. New York: Columbia UP, 1936.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. New York: Columbia UP, 1980.
- . *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. European Perspectives: A Series of the Columbia UP. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.
- Langbein, John H. *Torture and the Law of Proof: Europe and England in the Ancien Régime*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976.
- Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1990.
- Lea, Henry Charles. *The Ordeal*. With additional original documents in translation by Arthur E. Howland. Edited, with Introduction and Bibliography by Edward Peters. From *Sources of Medieval*



- History*. Edward Peters, ed. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1973.
- . *Superstition and Force: Essays on The Wager of Law, The Wager of Battle, The Ordeal, Torture*. 4th ed., rev. Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1892.
- Lee, Alvin A. *The Guest-Hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of Old English Poetry*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1972.
- Leech, Geoffrey. *Explorations in Semantics and Pragmatics*. Volume 5 of *Pragmatics and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary Series of Language Studies*. Herman Parret and Jef Verschueren, eds. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B. V., 1980.
- . *Principles of Pragmatics*. From the *Longman Linguistics Library*. R. H. Robins and Martin Harris, eds. London: Longman, 1983.
- Le Goff, Jacques. *The Birth of Purgatory*. Arthur Goldhammer, trans. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.
- . "Head or Heart? The Political Use of Body Metaphors in the Middle Ages." In part 3 of *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*. Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi, eds. New York: Zone, 1989. 13-27.
- Lerer, Seth. *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature*. Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1991.
- Leslie, R. F., ed. *Three Old English Elegies: The Wife's Lament, The Husband's Message, The Ruin*. Old and Middle English Texts, G. L. Brook, gen. ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1961.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1963.
- Lomax, Eric. *The Railway Man*. London: Vintage, 1995.
- Longworth, Robert M. "Privileged Knowledge: St. Cecilia and the Alchemist in the Canterbury Tales." *The Chaucer Review* 27.1 (1992): 87-96.



- McGann, Jerome. *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985.
- Melzack, Ronald and Patrick Wall. *The Challenge of Pain*. 2nd ed. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1988.
- . *The Textbook of Pain*. 3rd ed. New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1994.
- Menner, Robert J. "The Vocabulary of the Old English Poems on Judgment Day." *PMLA* 62 (1947): 583-597.
- Milsom, S. F. C. *Historical Foundations of the Common Law*. London: Butterworth & Co., Ltd., 1969.
- Morris, David B. "How to Read *The Body in Pain*." *Literature and Medicine* 6 (1987): 139-155.
- Newman, William. "Technology and Alchemical Debate in the Late Middle Ages." *Isis* 80 September (1989): 423-445.
- O' Keeffe, Katherine O' Brien. "Orality and the Developing Text of Caedmon's Hymn." *Speculum* 62 (1987): 1-20.
- Orr, Linda. "The Revenge of Literature: A History of History." *New Literary History* 12 (Autumn 1986): 1-22.
- Overing, Gillian R. "Swords and Signs: A Semiotic Perspective on *Beowulf*." *American Journal of Semiotics* 5 (1987): 35-57.
- The Oxford English Dictionary*. Vol. XI, T-U. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1933.
- Pagel, Walter. "Jung's Views on Alchemy." *Isis* 39 (1948): 44-48.
- Panken, Shirley. *The Joy of Suffering: Psychoanalytic Theory and Therapy of Masochism*. New York: J. Aronson, 1983.
- Parsons, David, ed. *Tenth-Century Studies: Essays in Commemoration of the Millennium of the Council of Winchester and 'Regularis Concordia'*. London: Phillimore, 1975.
- Patterson, Lee. *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987.

- Peters, Edward. *Torture*. New Perspectives on the Past Series, R. I. Moore, gen. ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985.
- Plucknett, Theodore F. T. *A Concise History of the Common Law*. 5th ed. London: Butterworth & Co., Ltd., 1956.
- Pollock, Frederick and Frederic William Maitland. *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*. Vol. II. 2nd ed. London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1898.
- Regan, Catherine A. "Evangelicalism as the Informing Principle of Cynewulf's *Elene*." *Traditio* 29 (1973): 27-52.
- Riffaterre, Michael. "Syllepsis." *Critical Inquiry* 6 (1980): 625-638.
- . "The Intertextual Unconscious." *Critical Inquiry* 13 (1987): 371-385.
- Roberts, Jane and Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy. *A Thesaurus of Old English*. 2 vol. King's College London Medieval Studies, Janet Bately, gen. ed. London: KCLMS, 1995.
- Robertson, D. W. Jr. *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1962.
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. R. R. Reiter, ed. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975. 157-210.
- Ruthven, Malise. *Torture: The Grand Conspiracy*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978.
- Said, Edward. *The World, the Text and the Critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.
- Schibanoff, Susan. "Taking the Gold Out of Egypt: The Art of Reading as a Woman." *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts*. Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocínio P. Schweickart, eds. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986. 83-106.



- Scholes, Robert. *Semiotics and Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1982.
- . *Textual Power: Literary Theory and the Teaching of English*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1985.
- Skeat, W. W. *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. New Edition Revised and Enlarged. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1946.
- Stenton, Frank M. *Anglo-Saxon England*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989.
- Stock, Brian. "Medieval Literacy, Linguistic Theory, and Social Organization." *New Literary History* 16 (1984): 13-29.
- Swanton, Michael, ed. *The Dream of the Rood*. Old and Middle English Texts, G. L. Brook, gen. ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1970.
- Thorndike, Lynn. *A Catalogue of Incipits of Medieval Scientific Writings in Latin*. London: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1963.
- . *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*. Publications of the History of Science Society. New York: Macmillan, 1923-1958.
- Timmer, B. J., ed. *Judith*. Methuen's Old English Library, A. H. Smith and F. Norman, gen. eds. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *Introduction to Poetics*. Richard Howard, trans. Sussex: Harvester P, 1981.
- Trigg, Roger. *Pain and Emotion*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1970.
- Vance, Eugene. *From Topic to Tale*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987.
- . *Mervelous Signals*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1986.
- Waldron, R. A. *Sense and Sense Development*. 2nd ed. The Language Library, Eric Partridge and David Crystal, gen. eds. London: André Deutsch Limited, 1967.



Weekley, Ernest. *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*.

London: John Murray, 1921.

Whitbread, L. "After Bede: The Influence and Dissemination of his

Doomsday Verses." *Archiv. fur das Studium der neueren*

*Sprachen* 204 (1967): 250-266.

---. "The Old English Poem *Judgment Day II* and its Latin Source."

*Philological Quarterly* 45 (1966): 635-656.

Whitelock, Dorothy, ed. *English Historical Documents, c. 500-1042*.

Vol. I of *English Historical Documents*. David C. Douglas, gen.

ed. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955.

Woolf, Rosemary, ed. *Juliana*. Methuen's Old English Library, A. H.

Smith and F. Norman, gen. eds. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd.,

1955.

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches. *Against Torture*. With a

preface by Allan A. Boesak and Edmond Perret. Vol. 8, Studies

from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Geneva: World

Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1987.