PÁZMÁNY PÉTER KATOLIKUS EGYETEM

Bölcsészet- és Társadalomtudományi Kar

Kőváriné Závoti Zsuzsa

Mental Disorders in Anglo-Saxon England

Phd dissertation
2022

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Elmebajok az angolszász Angliában

Doktori (PhD) értekezés
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ABBREVIATIONS

Bede, *HE*	Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (ed. Plummer, pp. 9-360)
Bede, *VC*	Bede, *Vita Cuthberti* (ed. Colgrave, *Cuthbert*, pp. 60-141)
BLch	*Bald's Leechbook* (books I & II) (ed. Cockayne II, pp. 1-299)
Bosworth-Toller	*An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Bosworth, Toller, Christ and Tichy
DOE	*Dictionary of Old English* (ed. Cameron, Amos, Healey, et. al.)
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th ed. (American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013)
Felix, *VG*	Felix, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* (ed. Colgrave, *Guthlac*, pp. 60-171)
Lch III	*Leechbook* III (ed. Cockayne II, pp. 300-360)
Lcn	*Lacnunga* (ed. Pettit)
MdQ	*Medicina de Quadrupedibus (ed. De Vriend)*
OE Guth	*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St Guthlac* (ed. Goodwin)
OEH	*Old English Herbarium* (ed. De Vriend)
OEHC	*Old English Herbarium Complex (ed. De Vriend)*
OEHE	*The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (ed. Miller)
VCA	Anonymous Life of Cuthbert' (ed. Colgrave, *Cuthbert,* pp. 59-140)

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

'If sanity and insanity exist, how shall we know them? The question is neither capricious nor itself insane. However much we may be personally convinced that we can tell the normal from the abnormal, the evidence is simply not compelling ... Whenever the ratio of what is known to what needs to be known approaches zero, we tend to invent "knowledge" and assume that we understand more than we actually do. We seem unable to acknowledge that we simply don't know'.[1] Thus says Rosenhan after conducting experiments that prove that the evaluation of insanity is not at all reliable, not even in mental institutions carried out by professionals. Madness is a captivating and enigmatic phenomenon. Terrifying and titillating at the same time, few feel indifferent about it and even fewer understand it: 'it seems strangely inevitable that madness can only ever be associated with disorders that we do not understand', as Professor of Neuropsychology Chris D. Frith admits.[2] The present dissertation seeks to investigate the topic of madness and mental disorders in post-Conversion Anglo-Saxon culture. The investigation aims to outline what conditions were acknowledged as mental disorders, how they were perceived, how they were treated and what cultural background they had; as well as to demonstrate that the way mental disorders precipitated in Anglo-Saxon written culture is a result of the amalgamation of antique Graeco-Roman medical, Christian, and Germanic folkloric notions stemming from pre-Conversion ideas native to Anglo-Saxon England. These three very distinct streams are combined into one wide river: streams of Christian religious themes, Germanic folkloric streams, and Graeco-Roman somato-medical streams. Effectively comprising the main constituents of the context of Anglo-Saxon mental disorders, they form the frame of the structure of this dissertation. They are three independent and alien influences that were synthesised into one organic system; hence, exploring their interaction provides us valuable insights to the history of medicine and the history of psychology. This cultural historical view is what I will apply in my analysis of the phenomena of Anglo-Saxon mental disorders. I am not attempting to find evidence of modern mental disorders amongst Anglo-Saxons, as I do not regard modern definitions and demarcations of mental disorders to be universal and permanent. Therefore, my intention is not to search for signs that can be putatively identified as modern mental disorders thus forcing modern categories on medieval conditions, and also not to offer retrospective diagnoses. Rather, my aim is to find out what Anglo-Saxons

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[1] Rosenhan, 'On Being Sane', pp. 379, 397.
[2] Frith, 'Understanding madness?', p. 639.

considered madness. Thus, the meaning of madness will have to be defined, as well as its territory: the mind and soul. Once the theories of mind, soul and mental disorder are examined from and Anglo-Saxon perspective, I will analyse 'practical' texts that reveal the Anglo-Saxon approach to madness, thereby building up a broad picture of mental disorders in post-Conversion Anglo-Saxon England. To the best of my knowledge, the topic of Anglo-Saxon mental disorders represents relatively uncharted research territory: it has only been discussed marginally but no monograph has yet seen the light of day. The present dissertation therefore intends to invite further discussions as well as to fill a huge gap in the history of medicine, history of psychology and Anglo-Saxon research.

This introductory chapter is divided into three segments. In the first segment, I establish certain definitions that must first be clarified in order to discuss the topic of Anglo-Saxon madness effectively. I explore first the term 'mental disorder', then I explain the peculiar concept of the Anglo-Saxon mind-soul called *mod*, afterwards I discuss the meaning of the term 'supernatural', and lastly, I expound the phenomenon of demon possession. After the definitions, in the second segment I summarise what scholarly literature has hitherto said about the topic of medieval Anglo-Saxon mental disorders. Finally, I will present the structure of the dissertation by briefly summarising its chapters. I will also briefly mention the methodology I applied.

Lastly, a few words about terminology: I will be using 'madness', 'insanity' and 'mental disorder' interchangeably – for various reasons. Firstly, for the sake of ease. Secondly, because as we shall see in later chapters, these categories are irrelevant in the context of Anglo-Saxon madness: according to the sources, Anglo-Saxons' perception and categorisation of madness were not at all like their modern equivalents. Thirdly, because Anglo-Saxon concepts akin to these conceptions need to be and will be analysed and defined in the forthcoming chapters. It also must be noted that the terms 'madness' and 'insanity' are not used by the medical field any more: indeed, they ring obsolete and, to some degree, pejorative. Nowadays 'madness' sounds harsher than 'mental disorder' or 'mental illness', and these latter expressions include far more states of mind than 'madness'. 'Madness' in a way is more black-and-white compared to the nuanced and multihued 'mental disorder'. As Gomory *et al* put it, the word 'madness' is 'a linguistic black hole that (metaphorically) sucks in all peculiar human behaviour that society cannot digest or normalise but still feels compelled to explain in order to respond to it or control it',[3] while 'mental disorder' or 'mental illness' are associated with a more medical dimension

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[3] Gomory *et al*, 'Madness', p. 122.

that has been neatly categorised and institutionalised. Simply put, 'madness' in the modern discourse is more colloquial, more imprecise and fuzzy compared to the precise 'mental disorder' which conveys a more scholarly tone. There will be exceptions in my dissertation where I resort to observing the subtle difference between the expressions, but I will justify and explain these instances. Once the sources have been analysed, it will be clearer as to whether the differentiation is justified or not in the Anglo-Saxon context.

A brief note on the terminology of the sources: I will use the term 'leechbook' in lowercase as a generic term including all three *Leechbooks*, the *Lacnunga*, and books with medical recipes in general, and will use '*Leechbook(s)*' in capital referring to the two parts of *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook* III.

1.1 DEFINITIONS

1.1.1 MENTAL DISORDER

Bearing in mind the pitfalls of retrospective diagnosis, it first has to be established what the term 'mental disorder' denotes in today's medical discourse; moreover, a brief summary of its modern history, modern terminology and definitions is also required. Despite its apparent irrelevancy to medieval mental disorders, this short introduction is inevitable and necessary in many respects. By sketching the modern history of mental disorders, I wish to give a glimpse of its ever-changing nature; and by showing how much change the topic has gone through only in the last 150 years, my aim is to give a taste of its turbulence to the readers, thereby preparing their mindset to fathom the difference a thousand years has made. Reviewing modern research demonstrates how wide, varied, subjective and sometimes contradictory the perception of madness can be, and it prepares us to accept that the same was so a thousand years ago, too, probably even more so. Modern research can also help with ideas, mindset, and various approaches which can be applied during the examination of Medieval contexts, although carefully. An example for this would be the dichotomy of how the phenomenon of madness is perceived differently by scholars and by common people: referring to someone as 'mad', 'crazy', or 'mental' in colloquial speech has a profoundly different meaning than diagnosing someone with a mental disorder in a clinical context; in fact, terms used to denote irrational behaviour in colloquial speech are not used in clinical contexts at all. It can be expected that

this dichotomy was present in medieval perception as well: the most common Old English word for madness, *wod*, never occurs in medical texts.

In this section, I first outline what modern mental disorders mean, then I define what I mean by mental disorder in the medieval context. It has to be stressed here that the term 'mental disorder' is anachronistic in a medieval perspective and is only used here for simplicity's sake; what medieval people thought to be 'mental disorders' or 'madness' has to be (and will be) analysed in detail and established throughout the chapters of this dissertation. I then narrow the topic down to defining mental disorders in an Anglo-Saxon context.

Defining what mental disorders are has always been a challenging task, even in modern times, even for specialists in the field. The concept itself is very controversial and has been subject to drastic changes ever since its very first mentions in ancient texts. Unlike mathematics, physics or other branches of natural science, the science of the abnormal mind is greatly dependent on social norms. The first modern systematisation has been designed by Kraepelin at the end of the 19th century: he 'gave to psychiatry the first comprehensive description of what he believed were entities of mental disease'.[4] He identified only three major groups of conditions: *dementia praecox*, one of whose sub-categories was later to be called schizophrenia; *manic depressive illness*, the group of mood disorders; and finally *paranoia* with delusional beliefs but minor changes in the patient's personality.[5] However, his system was vigorously debated in many countries, and his academic rivals also provided alternative classifications,[6] without even mentioning the forthcoming generations' countless categories, definitions and theories. Ever since Kraepelin's *Textbook of Psychiatry*, myriads of theories and diagnoses have come into being.

The ever-shifting nature of perceiving mental disorders is further illustrated by the consecutive editions of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* itself: the book published by the American Psychiatric Association grows larger and larger with each edition, housing more and more conditions, with newly recognised conditions emerging and others vanishing, depending on the fluctuating perception of society and the society of psychiatrists.[7] The ambiguous and disputable nature of mental disorders cannot be better demonstrated than by Thomas Szasz's book *The Myth of Mental Illness* where he rejects the idea of mental illnesses altogether: '[p]sychiatry is conventionally defined as a medical specialty

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[4] Kolb, *Modern Clinical*, p. 4.
[5] Bentall, *Madness*, pp. 15–6.
[6] Bentall, *Madness*, p. 18.
[7] One such 'vanishing' condition is homosexuality, which was deemed a disease in DSM-2 but was later removed due to activists in the gay rights movement (Bentall, *Madness*, p. 57).

concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of mental diseases. I submit that this definition, which is still widely accepted, places psychiatry in the company of alchemy and astrology and commits it to the category of pseudoscience. The reason for this is that there is no such thing as "mental illness"'.[8] He argues that the category of mental illness is highly arbitrary and is only made up: 'the names, and hence the values, we give … disabilities depend on the rules of the system of classification that we use. Such rules, nonetheless, are not God-given, nor do they occur "naturally"'.[9] While Szasz's view is certainly extreme and subject to considerable debate, it does highlight the fact that the phenomena that are today called mental disorders, or simply madness, are subjective and might have denoted something completely different a thousand years ago.

Furthermore, Darian Leader draws the attention to what is called 'white psychosis', 'everyday psychosis', or in his own words 'quiet madness' – madness that goes unnoticed because there is no trigger for an eruption, there is no shocking visible or audible sign of it.[10] Essentially, one can be psychotic without any blatant sign, and such people can carry out their everyday life: '[t]hese [are] the discreet psychoses that had always managed to fit in well with society, never exploding into spectacular symptomology, never disintegrating into breakdown or crisis'.[11] Nonetheless, it is always incidental whether these cases do explode or not. Leader discusses several instances where people carried their madness silently for decades before it suddenly became obvious.

Despite the difficulties, several attempts have been made to define mental disorders. For example, according to DSM-5,

> mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress or disability in social, occupational, or other important activities. An expectable or culturally approved response to a common stressor or loss, such as the death of a loved one, is not a mental disorder. Socially deviant behavior (e.g., political, religious, or sexual) and conflicts that

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[8] Szasz, *Myth*, p. 1.
[9] Szasz, *Myth*, p. 38.
[10] Leader, *What is*, p. 9.
[11] Leader, *What is*, p. 11.

are primarily between the individual and society are not mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict results from a dysfunction in the individual, as described above.[12]

Even though coined in the 21st century, the definition does offer some universal points that can be useful in determining what a mental disorder was in medieval cultures too: it was a *disturbance*, and there were forms of it which, although appeared as abnormal, were *culturally approved*. Further, according to the online *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a mental disorder is 'any illness with significant psychological or behavioural manifestations that is associated with either a painful or distressing symptom or an impairment in one or more important areas of functioning'.[13] The *Encyclopaedia* also points out that '[t]here is no simple definition of mental disorder that is universally satisfactory', the reason being that 'mental states or behaviour that are viewed as abnormal in one culture may be regarded as normal or acceptable in another'; furthermore, 'it is difficult to draw a line clearly demarcating healthy from abnormal mental functioning'.[14]

The realm of mental disorders is divided into the following categories in DSM-5:

- Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders
- Bipolar and Related Disorders
- Depressive Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders
- Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders
- Dissociative Disorders
- Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders
- Feeding and Eating Disorders
- Elimination Disorders
- Sleep-Wake Disorders
- Sexual Dysfunctions
- Gender Dysphoria
- Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders

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[12] DSM-5, p. 20.
[13] Shepphird et al., 'Mental Disorder'
[14] Shepphird et al., 'Mental Disorder'

- Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders
- Neurocognitive Disorders
- Personality Disorders
- Paraphilic Disorders
- Other Mental Disorders
- Medication-Induced Movement Disorders and Other Adverse Effects of Medication
- Other Conditions That May Be a Focus of Clinical Attention

The list contains disorders whose 'primary clinical deficit is in cognitive function',[15] e.g. reasoning, problem solving, abstract thinking, academic learning;[16] and disorders of a 'pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture'[17] which do not necessarily include deficits in mental abilities. The former group contains e.g. intellectual disability (otherwise known as intellectual developmental disorder), dementia or delirium, whereas the other group contains psychotic or personality disorders, as for instance, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders or obsessive-compulsive disorders. Even though some of the disorders are indubitably culturally induced,[18] it can safely be assumed that there are modern conditions that were present in medieval society as well: as the DSM-5 states, 'a variety of medical conditions may cause psychotic symptoms', e.g. cerebrovascular disease, Huntington's disease, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, auditory or visual nerve injury or impairment, deafness, migraine, and central nervous system infections.[19] These diseases can be considered organic, as the psychotic symptom can be traced back to an organic malfunction. The problem, however, with many mental disorders is what Szasz also objected to; namely, that a structural deterioration or change cannot be found on any organ that could be held responsible for the mental condition. Although modern science after Szasz has amply demonstrated that chemical alterations can be witnessed in the brains of patients with mental disorders (though sometimes inconsistently), it cannot be known for sure which one was the chicken and which one was the egg, that is, which one came first and which one caused the other: the disease or the chemical imbalance. It cannot be stated that certain mental disorders are always necessarily accompanied by certain somatic changes, so mental disorders cannot be attributed and reduced

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[15] DSM-5, p. 591.
[16] DSM-5, p. 31.
[17] DSM-5, p. 645.
[18] The DSM-5 points out that, e.g. anorexia nervosa is 'probably most prevalent in post-industrialized, high-income countries such as in the United States, many European countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan' and its prevalence is 'comparatively low among Latinos, African Americans, and Asians in the United States', p. 342.
[19] DSM-5, p. 99.

to purely somatic and physical factors. Physicality is what connects us with medieval people: our bodily functions are the same as theirs, our bodily diseases are roughly the same as theirs. E.g. our bone structures are the same, and we know from experience that given a certain amount of force, bones can fracture; hence, we can be sure that medieval people had bone fractures. We know that certain bacteria cause tuberculosis and since medieval people had lungs, we know that medieval people could contract tuberculosis and we even have evidence for it. We do not have this kind of physical certainty with mental disorders. Mental disorders do not consistently have tangible, measurable physical factors that reliably span centuries. Thus, we cannot rely on today's categorisations when trying to identify medieval mental disorders because they are simply not reliable and not stable enough.

Establishing a definition for insanity in the early Middle Ages is even more complicated than in modern times: firstly, our sources speak of conceptions formed only by the literate layers of society, and these conceptions were greatly influenced by Christian traditions and by antique Mediterranean sources. Thus, we cannot know for sure what non-literate people thought of madness, and we do not know how they reacted to it. Furthermore, while juridical texts and legal interrogations of the supposedly insane survive from the 13th century on, there is nothing of this sort before the 1200s. Secondly, medieval conceptions of insanity might differ from ours so much that we can make tentative definitions only after a meticulous study of sources about mental disorders. Moreover, the multitude of possession stories seems to be a treasure chest for investigating medieval mental disorders, as the captured signs of possession appear to be very similar to some of our modern mental disorders. However, this might be misleading: since possession was not considered strictly a disease of the mind *per se*, it is problematic to refer to it as 'mental disorder' in a modern sense. Possession could cause symptoms characteristic of mental disorders, but whereas the modern term 'mental disorder' has a strong connotation of illness, possession had more of a touch of the supernatural. Nevertheless, I still discuss it in this dissertation and will include it as a member of the group of mental disorders, as it was discerned very much the same way as other mental disorders, and contemporary society admittedly had difficulty in distinguishing it from madness; thus, it can be inferred that even medieval people recognised that it was an abnormal functioning of the mind and soul. Demon possession requires more clarification, so I will return to it later in this chapter.

What is certain is that medieval people also recognised both the cognitive and the psychotic groups as abnormal, even if they might not have necessarily made this distinction explicit (especially as there is a high percentage of co-morbidity of the two types), and regarded both as manifestations of ill-being, be it demonic or natural. Literate layers of society had access

to works which clearly distinguished between what we today call intellectual disability and psychotic conditions;[20] still, whether this distinction was present in popular belief too can only be surmised. Written sources reveal that mental disorders were chiefly considered to be diseases of the head, whereas there are cases where popular belief attributes a 'weird' behaviour to possession. However, the high volume of trepanned skulls that survive from ancient times imply that the relation between behaviour and the head had been discovered quite early, even if trepanning was applied to let out the possessing spirit. As Neaman says, '[i]n cases of brain tumors or collection of fluids on the brain, the operation was successful and the relief it brought lent weight and proof to the continued faith in the efficacy of the practice'.[21]

As noted earlier, there are organic conditions that are proven by modern science to result in mental disorders, and thus they most plausibly occurred in medieval societies as well. Furthermore, there were mental disorders identified by physicians of the antique periods that can still be witnessed today, e.g. mania (manic episode of a bipolar disorder) or intellectual disability. There are also disorders which were probably not present in medieval societies (e.g. anorexia), but there were medieval conditions which modern psychiatry probably would not call a mental disorder (e.g. love-sickness). Conversely, there were conditions which medieval people did not regard as a mental disorder, but which modern psychiatry perhaps would, like visions of supernatural creatures that are likely to be deemed as hallucinations by modern Western doctors. Lastly, there is the question of possession: it can result in mental disorders in a medieval context, whereas from a modern point of view it can be a form of dissociative identity disorder; however, the DSM-5 also apprehends the existence of possession outside of dissociative identity disorder.[22] The diagram below illustrates these relations with examples.

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[20] E.g. Isidore's *Etymologies* that we will discuss in the next chapter.

[21] Neaman, *Suggestion*, p. 156.

[22] 'However, the majority of possession states around the world are normal, usually part of spiritual practice, and do not meet criteria for dissociative identity disorder'. DMS-5, p. 293.
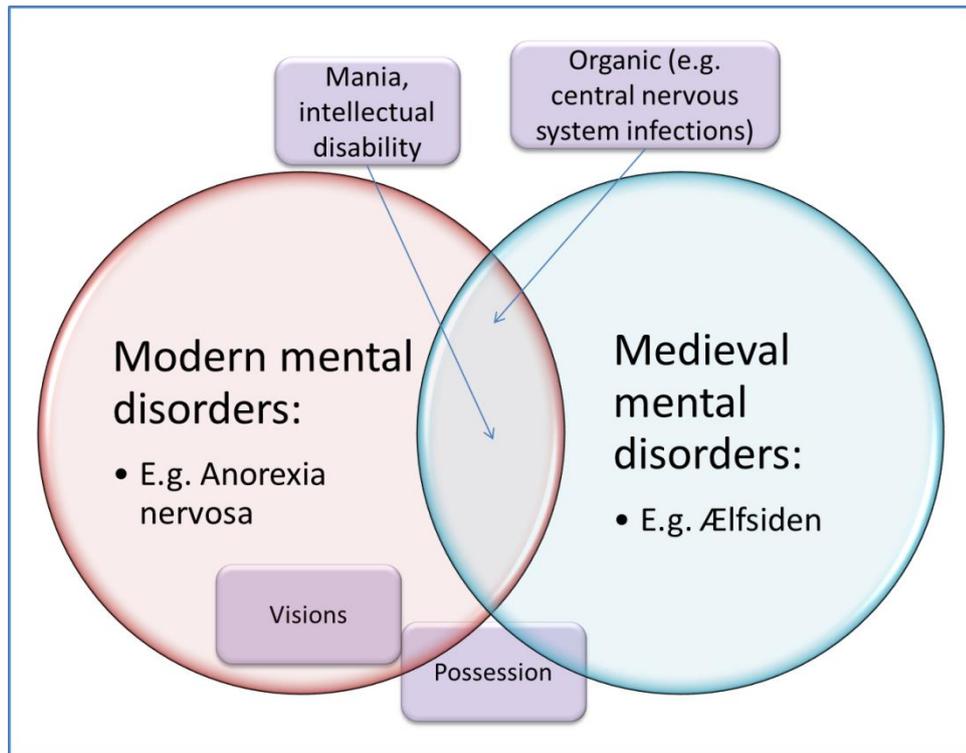
Table 1.1. Mental disorder categories

The subject of the present paper is the blue group along with the purple subgroups: what conditions they contain and what role their members played in medieval culture. In short, I am looking at conditions that were thought by *medieval* people to manifest or originate in mental or spiritual malfunctioning. When I use the terms 'mental disorder', 'mental abnormality' or 'mental illness', I have this meaning in mind rather than its modern sense and the lists in the DSM or ICD editions. Because the concept of mental disorder in Anglo-Saxon England was largely constituted of the three main systems of thought mentioned above, and all these three systems had such diverse concepts of mental disorders, I will examine the definitions in these three separate contexts. I will formulate the definitions in the coming chapters – and for now the taxonomy above will suffice.

Reconstructing the original indigenous Anglo-Saxon view of mental disorders is a difficult task. As already highlighted, the snapshot we have of post-Conversion Anglo-Saxon madness is the synthesis of various ideologies. Its sources were captured in a culture where the process of Christianisation had been going on for decades, even centuries; its original era did not have a significant written culture. Hence, it is natural that only traces of its elements can be gleaned by meticulous work.

So where and how should we look for the Anglo-Saxon native concept of madness? Modern psychology and Western civilization trace mental disorders to the brain where,

according to our understanding, the mind resides. But as will be demonstrated in the next section, the location of the Anglo-Saxon mind is not as straightforward, thus, the cradle of mental disorders is also uncertain, so much so that modern scholars offer completely contradictory opinions. McIlwain states '[w]hat the various [mental] disorders have in common is that, when an organ is identified as ultimately responsible for the manifestations, that organ is the brain'.[23] However, while Lockett agrees that 'Latin source materials underlying Old English medical texts explicitly link mental functions, and even the soul [i.e. the rational mind] to the head or brain', she believes that native Anglo-Saxon views did not coincide with this idea at all.[24] She adds that cephalocentric notions were not necessarily accessible or assimilated in the Anglo-Saxon period; in fact, she argues that they were limited to texts influenced by classical discourses only. She also notes that Old English medicine 'implicates the head and the brain in psychological events and states, not as the organic seat of the *mod* but … as the source of harmful humours that emanate from the brain and derange the mind'.[25] Thus, the role of the brain in the aetiology and locus of madness in Anglo-Saxon culture is uncertain, but it is very likely that in the original native tradition the brain did not have a madness-causing function. But since *mod* encompassed mind and soul and it was thought to be responsible for cognitive and emotional processes, it can be assumed that the abnormal functioning of it could produce symptoms that were deemed mental disorders. Therefore, when analysing the sources, if we wish to determine whether a suspicious case we encounter is a case of mental disorder, it is useful to assess the condition of the *mod*. Symptoms of a malfunctioning *mod* are what might be interpreted as mental disorders both by Anglo-Saxons and modern readers, but for the modern readers the context will reveal whether the symptoms were really regarded as mental disorders. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5.2, a malfunctioning *mod* on its own does not always necessarily mean a mental disorder. Also, it is risky to build a theory on a modern logic: just because modern psychology locates the origin of madness in the mind, it cannot be taken for granted that the approach was the same in Anglo-Saxon England. This is where examining the vocabulary and the mapping of the *Thesaurus of Old English* proves to be useful. As shown on Table 1.3, terms that express aspects of insanity are often compounds with a constituent denoting the mind; not necessarily *mod* but other mind-expressions like *gewit* or *gemynd*. Thus, it can safely be assumed that mental disorders were indeed considered to be malfunctions of the mind.

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[23] McIlwain, 'Brain and Mind', p. 112.
[24] Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 40.
[25] Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 39.

Based on my research, I establish two types of classification of mental disorders in Anglo-Saxon England: one relates to the cultural history I have already described, while the other pertains to aetiology, both having different aspects and different purposes. Analysis of the aetiological classification reveals more of Anglo-Saxons' views on the conditions, while the classification according to cultural development yields more retrospective results, showing us a phase of medical history that has mostly been hidden from our eyes as the history of psychology in the Middle Ages is largely unattested.

My aetiological classification is closely related to terminology: the way Anglo-Saxons expressed certain conditions is indicative of what they thought about their aetiology. The names Anglo-Saxons bestowed upon certain conditions unveil what the causes were thought to be. According to the terminology and aetiology, three main categories can be distinguished: the somatic, the neutral and the supernatural. It must be noted that these categories are somewhat arbitrary and might sound anachronistic: I coined them based on my interpretation of the terminology. But they also behave as distinguishable categories in the texts; moreover, they are treated differently, which indicates that they were indeed recognised as different categories, although not necessarily explicitly, and the separation is in fact reasonable and justified. Thus, the categorisation has a hybrid nature: the naming is retrospective but the grouping itself reflects the medieval approach.

The somatic category can be traced back to natural philosophical texts, mainly Isidore, and ultimately to Greco-Roman medical works. Descriptions of the somatic category have a scholarly overtone and they view mental disorders as having their origin in somatic – mainly organic and humoral – issues.

The group of terms I labelled neutral does not have a supernatural overtone, nor are its constituents products of imported scholarly texts. They originate in Anglo-Saxons' physiological observations and sensations in relation to the *mod* ('mind-soul') and its other aspects, e.g. *gewit* ('rational mind'). Thus, the terminology of this category is based on native Anglo-Saxon ideas. This category bears a heavy 'biological' trait: biological in the sense that expressions belonging to this group are formed of words that are various aspects of the Anglo-Saxon mind. I expound in the next section that for Anglo-Saxons, the mind was more significantly part of the physical and biological reality than it is for modern people, and it was both something metaphysical but even more so an organ; thus, 'biological' is the attribute that I am using in this context to emphasise the conceptions' physicality in contrast to the supernatural category. The reason for this is that in word formations of neutral madness, rather than using an external factor as the cause of the disease (like e.g. *demon* possession or *ælf-*

disease), it is the subject's biological-metaphysical mind that is named. Thus, these expressions highlight a more biological perception of the conditions than e.g. expressions of supernatural madness, because they designate the organ of the mind as the nidus of the problem. But this must not deceive us, as sometimes neutral terms might conceal purported supernatural causes: consequently, the contexts always need to be carefully analysed. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, most probably a reasonable proportion of these conditions were not considered madness at all but expressed various states of consciousness. Those terms that denote madness are coined by naming the affected aspect of mind along with an indicator of malfunction, e.g. *wedenheorte* or *gewitseoc*. These neutral terms thus express no specific cause of the condition, contrarily to members of the somatic and supernatural categories where the name inherently implies the supposed cause (e.g. *bræcseoc* and *ælfsiden*). Nonetheless, even neutral terms can conceal cases where the cause of the ailment is suspected either to be somatic or supernatural. An example for this is *gewitseoc*, which, although neutral in form, is often used in homilies to denote people possessed by a demon.

The most significant differences between neutral and somatic aetiologies are that the somatic conception is ultimately of Graeco-Roman origin, while the neutral conception is Anglo-Saxon; and that the somatic is more 'material' in the sense that its objects are physical, material, observable, *touchable* entities (like blood, liver, etc.), while those of the neutral conception are non-touchable, abstract, and assumed, despite the hint of a biological trait (like *mod*, *andgyt*, etc.).

Lastly, the supernatural category consists of mental disorders that were thought to be brought about by supernatural forces. Apart from demon possession, the perpetrators of this category are members of the native Anglo-Saxon folklore and thus they can shed the most light on the native Anglo-Saxon beliefs, even if this light is heavily filtered by the centuries and by other cultural influences. As many Indo-European languages attest, there was a close connection between madness, the divine, and poetry. The Proto-Indo-European **u̯ōt-* 'seer, poet' is cognate with Latin *vates* 'see, poet', Old Norse *ōðr* 'poetry, madness, fury' Old English *woþ* 'song, poetry', and Old English *wod* 'madness'.[26] The meaning of a divinely inspired seer is also well attested.[27] There is a strong similarity between the characters of Óðr and Óðinn, and it is argued that Óðr is the hypostasis of Óðinn, who is the god of frenzy and poetry. Óðinn is cognate with the Old English god Wodan, whose name is derived from the stem *wod* and is inherited from the Proto-Germanic **wōðaz*. The Proto-Germanic **wōðaz* is also cognate with

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[26] Mallory, J.P., Douglas Q. Adams, *Encyclopedia*, p. 436.
[27] Mallory, J.P., Douglas Q. Adams, *Encyclopedia*, p. 436.

ON *óðr* and Goth *woþs* (possessed).[28] *Wōđin and *wōđjanan, both meaning to rage, to be furious, to be mad are derived from *wōđaz; but the name of the 'highest god of the Germanic pantheon' is also derived from it.[29]

As these examples suggest, there was a strong link between the godhead, frenzy, madness, and inspiration. Old English *wod*, which is the most frequently occurring word with its derivations for madness in the Old English corpus is thus related to the god Wodan. Unfortunately, we do not know much about him; we can only tentatively presume that he had similar traces to those of his Proto-Germanic ancestor and his other Germanic counterparts, and that madness was amongst these traces. Even if there is no clear evidence of the Anglo-Saxon Wodan and madness apart from the name, there is reason to believe that the connection between madness and the divine was present in Anglo-Saxon culture before the Conversion. As Hall argued, the words *gydig* and *ylfig* were 'member[s] of the common lexicon'.[30] Their meaning can be rendered as 'engaged with / possessed by a god' and 'engaged with / possessed by an *ælf*' respectively. In the context they came down to us they express forms of mental disorders; and Hall demonstrated that *ylfig* probably designated a state where the subject was possessed by an *ælf* and thus obtained prophesying powers.[31] As discussed in Chapter 5, the concept survived for centuries as the idea of *ælfe* causing various mental disturbances is well attested in Old English medical compendia written in the 10th century.

Apart from madness, *wod* also often expresses extreme aggression and fury, sometimes even irrational or diabolic, in line with its Proto-Germanic cognate: '[h]wæt ða se sceocca sona fordwan of his gesihðe mid swiðlicum reame, swa þæt ða munecas micclum afyrhte wurdon awrehte ðurh his wodlican stemne, and eodon to uhtsange, ær timan swa þeah'.[32] The irrational rage along with the disoriented state echo in the term for rabies that occurs in medical sources: 'Wid wedehundes slite hundes heafod gebærned to acxan 7 þæron gedon.[33] Occurrences of *wod* will further be discussed in relevant chapters.

Thus, the usages of *wod*, *ylfig* and *gydig* paint a vague picture of the Anglo-Saxon madman in a frenzy, probably possessed by supernatural beings while being in an inspired state with possible prophetic knowledge.

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[28] Orel, *Handbook*, p. 469.

[29] Orel, *Handbook*, p. 469.

[30] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', p. 241.

[31] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', p. 241.

[32] Ælfric, ' XUIII. Kalendas Februarii Natale Sancti Mauri Abbatis' 315–18 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.vi, 148–69, at 166). 'So then the devil straightway vanished out of his sight with a mighty outcry, so that the monks, much affrighted, were aroused by his furious voice'.

[33] *MdQ* XIV.7 (ed. De Vriend, p. 270). 'For rabid dog's bite, dog's head burnt to ashes to be put on' (my translation).

In broad terms, it can be stated for the time being that texts leaning on antique Graeco-Roman medicine that survive in Anglo-Saxon England attribute mental disorders to natural causes, and in some cases to the morbidity of bodily humours; religiously themed texts tend to hold possession responsible for mental disorder-like symptoms; while Old English medical texts embrace both theories along with native Germanic traditions.[34] The fact that Old English medical texts used all these three systems implies that all three were more or less widespread and accepted.

1.1.2 SOUL AND MIND IN ANGLO-SAXON CULTURE

To understand how Anglo-Saxons viewed the mind and soul is perhaps even more difficult than understanding Antique or Christian concepts. The Anglo-Saxon laity did not produce philosophical texts about the topic; hence, the material we must make do with needs to be carefully handpicked from the Old English corpus. It is possible to identify words that denote mental and psychological phenomena; however, the context does not always make it clear what the words mean. In addition, the Old English words which are interpreted as more or less analogous to modern equivalents are sometimes used interchangeably, which makes their interpretation problematic. In fact, Low expressed her scepticism as to whether 'we can say that a distinct Anglo-Saxon concept of mind existed … [as] the words for the mind in Old English show a large degree of semantic overlap … [and] distilling their individual qualities is a virtually impossible task'.[35] Nevertheless, a tentative analysis of the mind-soul phenomenon has to be carried out in order to gain a better understanding of mental disorders as well. The topic is enormous and would justify a dissertation in its own right; hence, this section will be largely based on the extensive works of Leslie Lockett and Soon Ai Low, whose research adequately summarises the essence of the topic.

As noted by Lockett, Godden and others two distinct trends can be identified in the Anglo-Saxon view of the mind: one is what Godden calls the 'classical tradition' and the other is the 'vernacular tradition'.[36] The classical tradition is represented by Anglo-Saxon authors who drew on late antique writers like Plato or St Augustine, 'but developed that tradition in

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[34] All of these will be discussed with examples in the coming chapters.
[35] Low, 'Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 169.
[36] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', p. 271.

interesting and individual ways': their main trademark is that 'they show the gradual development of a unitary concept of the inner self, identifying the intellectual mind with the immortal soul and life-spirit'. [37] Whereas the vernacular tradition is mainly represented in poetic works; it is 'more deeply rooted in language' and it 'preserve[d] the ancient distinction of soul and mind, while associating the mind at least as much with passion as with intellect'.[38] Authors representing the classical tradition and its main traits are outlined below in Chapter 3; here I expound only the vernacular tradition in detail.

The words that are most frequently used to express mental, emotional and spiritual phenomena are *mod*, *heorte*, *sawol* and *gast*, but *hyge* and *sefa* are also classified as significant basic expressions.[39] *Mod*, *hyge* and *sefa* are commonly considered to express phenomena connected to what Modern English calls mind and thought, so roughly correspond to cognition, but they also entail emotions and passion.[40] *Sawol* and *gast* express the spiritual dimension, while *heorte*, on the one hand, denotes the physical location of all these; on the other, it is metaphorically identical with them.[41] Low collected the 'mental' terms in a table that shows their frequency (the bottom of the list is left out containing terms with a frequency of 1-9):

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[37] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', p. 271.
[38] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', p. 271.
[39] Low, 'Approaches', p. 11.
[40] E.g. North, *Pagan Words*, p. 67.; Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', pp. 287–89.
[41] E.g. Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', pp. 289.

Terms	No. of occurrences in extant corpus
mod heorte gast sawol	>1000
andgyt gemynd geþoht wisdom	500-1000
breost geþanc gesceadwisnes hyge ingeþanc ingehygd sefa	100-499
hreþer ferhþ gehygd gewitt modgeþanc modsefa þoht	100-99

Table 1.2. List and frequency of Old English 'mental' terms. Source: Low, 'Old English Vocabulary', p. 12.

Three basic aspects can be established regarding the Anglo-Saxon mind-soul phenomenon: that mind and soul (in the modern sense) as reason and emotion were not as distinct as they are in modern thought; that the mind-soul is contained in the body and was

conceived as resembling liquid; and that it was often illustrated as flying out from the body – both figuratively and non-figuratively.

It is argued that in contrast to our modern reason-emotion dichotomy, Anglo-Saxons' view of mind and feelings was much more unified.[42] Having dissected phrases and lines of poetry, Low came to the conclusion that the usage of 'mental terms … suggest[s] that thought and feeling were conceived of as aspects of the same experience'.[43] For instance, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, *mod* can mean the following: the inner man, the spiritual as opposed to the bodily part of man; with more special reference to intellectual or mental qualities, mind; with reference to the passions, emotions, etc, soul, heart, spirit, mind, disposition, mood; a special quality of the soul, in a good sense, courage, high spirit; in a bad sense, pride, arrogance.[44] As Lockett summarises, '… the *mod* of Old English narrative encompasses the faculties of reason, memory, imagination, deliberation, will, and governance of the body, along with the whole range of emotions and passions'.[45] She goes on to say that *mod* is never presented as having more rational or less emotional meaning compared to other entities, so the contrast of reason and emotion is generally not present – the only exception being those texts that are influenced by Latin discourses.[46] In poetry, which is generally less influenced by Latin works than texts of ecclesiastical subject, there is no clear-cut difference between the mind and the soul in the modern sense or in the sense as it is visible in the Antique or other Medieval texts discussed below.[47] The *mens* and *anima* seem to have the same function as the *mod*, while *sawol* is mostly relevant in terms of the afterlife. Augustine, Isidore and other Christian writers believed that beings other than humans owned souls too, and that mind was a special part of the soul distinguishing man from beast. Its speciality lay in its intellectual nature, and exactly this intellectual mind was what made humans – humans. Nonetheless, medieval Christian writers' views still resemble the Anglo-Saxon view more than our modern-day thinking: Christian writers presumed that both rational and emotional processes took place in the soul, even if the rational part was carried out by the special part called *mens*. Anglo-Saxons, however, did not even make this distinction. For them, the soul had a 'transcendental' part and a subsisting part: the transcendental soul, *sawol* participated in the afterlife, whereas *feorh* enlivened the body; while *mod* was what carried out all mental and psychological activities.

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[42] E.g. Low, 'The Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 34; Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 37.
[43] Low, 'The Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 34.
[44] 'mod', *Bosworth-Toller*, p. 693.
[45] Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 37.
[46] Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 37.
[47] See Chapters 2 and 3.

Thus, *mod* is similar to the Latin *anima* insofar as it contains people's identities and inner lives, both the rational and the emotional parts.

According to Lockett, Old English poetry demonstrates that *sawol* was thought to join the body at the beginning of life, it 'ha[d] no responsibility for making decisions and ha[d] no recourse when the body misbehave[d]'.[48] Furthermore, it left the body at death to participate in the afterlife, and 'its primary purpose [was] to represent the individual in the afterworld'.[49] Conversely, *mod*, *hyge* and *sefa* are never mentioned as leaving the body after death or to have any roles in the afterlife, they were left behind just like the life-force *feorh*. They were all thought to be localised in the chest, where all sorts of mental and psychological activities were described as taking place: in contrast to our understanding, the mind was not in the head but in the breast. In fact, as Lockett puts it, 'the head is conspicuously absent from the Old English portrayals of the mind; it is excluded from nearly all Anglo-Saxon representations of mental activity, be they literal or metaphorical, verse or prose, vernacular or Latin'.[50] Instead, mental activity is usually described as happening in the *heorte*, in the *breost* or in the *hreðer*. We have established that rational and emotional processes were thought to be carried out by the same faculty in Anglo-Saxon culture. Thus, it is not surprising that often in Old English poetry, both emotional and mental activities are described as 'coincid[ing] with cardiocentric swelling, boiling, or seething, but this spatial deformation is attributed variously to the mind, to the mind's contents or condition, and to the fleshly organs of the chest cavity'.[51] According to Lockett, '… *mod* and *heorte* when mentioned in tandem do not represent a complementary pair such as the intangible and the bodily, or the rational and the passionate. Most collocations of *heorte* with *mod* and its synonyms, in fact, give the impression that they are functionally identical'.[52] Furthermore,

> [t]he heart is the most secluded and protected part of the mind-in-the-breast, a bodily container within a container … When the heart is differentiated at all from the mind, therefore, it is usually in order to emphasise that its contents are the most silent, the most permanent, the most inscrutable, or the most sincere of all the contents of the mind.[53]

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[48] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 30.
[49] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 35.
[50] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 79.
[51] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 63.
[52] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 89.
[53] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 91.

The mind, either conceived as *mod* or as *heorte* or as *breost* is spoken of as if it has physical limits and a physical locality. The mind is a container, which occasionally fills up with emotions, thoughts, or wisdom, and might even face the risk of blowing up. Lockett describes this as a 'loose psycho-physiological pattern, in which psychological disturbances are associated with dynamic changes of pressure and temperature in the chest cavity … [and these] physical changes resemble the behaviour of a fluid in a closed container'.[54] This phenomenon is present in many diverse cultures and is thought to have arisen due to the 'bodily sensations that accompany intense mental events'.[55] This so-called hydraulic model inherently implies that the mind is 'corporeal, localized in or near the heart, and subject to spatial and thermal changes'.[56]

As I have already stated, defining the terms expressing mental and psychological processes is highly problematic. Several words are sometimes used interchangeably, but sometimes they are used in opposition; furthermore, they are disturbingly polysemous, just as we can expect from expressions of the inner life in modern languages. For example, *breost* is used as the physical body part of humans, but it is also used to denote the locus of mind, and the mind itself in action. Or *ingehygd*, which 'denotes at times the fleeting thoughts or ideas that arise in our minds, and at others a more enduring though somewhat indefinable feature of the mind, and at other times again it refers to the mind itself'.[57] There are also words that appear to be synonymous and the nuances in their meanings have been lost to us. For instance, *andgit* is primarily used as 'meaning', but it is also used as 'understanding', 'intelligence' and in certain contexts it can be interpreted as 'an abstract quality like wisdom, an ideal virtue which mortal minds must strive to cultivate'.[58] *Andgit* is the word that is used by Ælfric when Nebuchadnezzar's sanity is returned: 'Ic Nabochodonosor ahof mine eagan up to heafonum, and min andgit me wearð forgifen'.[59] Another similar word is *gewit*; *gewit* frequently comes up as an opposite to madness or irrationality and is thus a key term in our pursuit of mental disorders. *Gewit* denotes the mind, rationality, a general state of being 'of sound mind', of being sane. For instance, in one of Ælfric's homilies, king Polymius asks Bartholomew 'nu bidde ic ðe þæt þu [min dohtor] on gewitte gebringe' as his daughter is mad and Bartholomew successfully exorcised a demon-possessed madman earlier.[60]

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[54] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 5.
[55] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 12.
[56] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 13.
[57] Low, 'Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 10.
[58] Low, 'Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 13.
[59] Ælfric, 'Dominica XII. post Pentecosten' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* II.xxxiii, 434–35). 'I Nebuchadnezzar lifted mine eyes up to heaven, and my understanding was given unto me'.
[60] Ælfric, 'Bartholomei' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* I, 458–59) 'now I beseech thee bring [my daughter] to her wits'

Thus, when examining the phenomenon of mental disorders amongst the Anglo-Saxons, the difference – or rather the mixture of the two different systems must be considered first: the vernacular and the classical traditions. And secondly, it must be borne in mind that the mind and the soul were thought to be welded together. If soul and mind are one 'organ' so to speak, then both mental and emotional abnormalities can be traced to the disease of this one organ. It might be assumed that these mental and emotional abnormalities were then labelled madness by Anglo-Saxons; however, we need to be cautious as their tolerance and evaluation rate of 'abnormal' might differ considerably from ours. Therefore, even if the 'organ' that needs to be studied has been located, it is still unknown what was ill and abnormal for Anglo-Saxons and what had osmosed through the tolerance barrier.

1.1.3 SUPERNATURAL

Another problematic term is 'supernatural' that I refer to multiple times throughout my dissertation. The label might sound anachronistic: it is questionable whether the word *supernatural* can be used in connection with Anglo-Saxons at all. As it has been noted by Neville, the 'Anglo-Saxons did not have a word or expression for the modern conception of the natural world because they did not conceive of an entity defined by the exclusion of the supernatural';[61] consequently, the conception of supernatural was probably also absent. The first reference to the supernatural was not made until the Middle English period,[62] and phenomena we today call supernatural were part of reality for Anglo-Saxons. Instead of perceiving and categorising supernatural beings as one distinct identifiable group, Old English sources name certain traits: extraordinary, terrible, threatening and alien – of course these only apply to malevolent supernatural beings.[63] As it will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, according to the leechbooks, malevolent supernatural beings inducing mental disorders include *ælfe*, demons, *nihtgenga* – beings that are certainly extraordinary, terrible, threatening and alien. But according to Neville's view, for Anglo-Saxons, these beings were not 'supernatural'. The conditions they caused can be characterised as invasive, so perhaps, this category might more appropriately be called so; however, such a designation would lose an important point.

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[61] Neville, *Representations*, p. 2.
[62] Mearns, 'This, that and the other', p. 214.
[63] Mearns, 'This, that and the other', p. 224.

Treatment of conditions belonging to this group involves rituals and is markedly different to those of somatic and neutral illnesses: hence, it can be assumed that they were perceived and approached differently. As Jolly also pointed out, 'mind-altering afflictions' are often grouped together accompanied by the demonic 'indicating a consciousness of a similarity between these ailments'.[64] Even though 'invasive' might be a more accurate term for these Anglo-Saxon mental disorders, it does not convey the whole message to the modern reader: namely, that the agents involved were special, they were outside of the group of humans, and thus conditions caused by them were also more special as opposed to somatic and neutral ailments. This indicates that these beings were indeed perceived as special. In fact, Pascal Boyer, cognitive anthropologist and evolutionary psychologist argues that recognition of supernatural beings is intrinsic to the human brain and is thus universal across time and space. He explains that humans learn new concepts with the help of templates called ontological categories which capture certain characteristics of certain groups. For instance, the ontological category of MAMMAL contains e.g. that all members are vertebrates, that the females produce milk to feed their offspring, they cease to grow when they die, etc. As Boyer describes, these ontological categories 'are special because they include all sorts of default inferences that help us acquire new kind-concepts':[65] returning to the previous MAMMAL example, if we learn about a new mammal, we will automatically expect it too to be a vertebrate, its female to produce milk for its offspring, etc. What is special about religious and supernatural concepts is that they always violate certain expectations from their ontological categories;[66] e.g. the Fang people believe that certain heroes have iron innards and are thus invulnerable: this violates the ontological category expectation of PERSON as members of this group should have the same innards.[67] Likewise the idea of ghost violates the ontological category of PERSON, as it is a person but it can e.g. go through walls. In an experiment, Boyer found that 'violations of ontological expectations – as found in the templates for supernatural concepts – are recalled better than … "mere oddities"', both in groups of Western people and people whose everyday lives are permeated with ghosts, witchcraft, and spirits. As Boyer concludes:

> [T]here is indeed a general sensitivity to violations of intuitive expectations for ontological categories. That is, the cognitive effects of such violations do not seem to be much affected by (1) what kinds of religious concepts are routinely used in the group

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[64] Jolly, *Popular Religion,* p. 133.
[65] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, p. 61.
[66] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, p. 62.
[67] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, p. 66.

people belong to, (2) how varied they are, (3) how seriously they are taken, (4) whether they are transmitted from literate sources or informal oral communication and (5) whether the people tested are actually involved in producing local 'theories' of the supernatural.[68]

This, in turn, suggests that supernatural elements can indeed be recognized as 'supernatural' by people whose everyday reality entails the supernatural. Anglo-Saxons may not have had a separate word for this phenomenon, but since it has been shown that the recognition of ontological violation is universal, they could very well perceive supernatural elements and beings as supernatural even though they did not have a term for it. The fact that supernatural beings are treated according to a distinctively different approach (e.g. in medical recipes) indicates that this was indeed so. Hence, it is reasonable and justified to use the term 'supernatural' in its modern English sense for an independent mental disorder category, firstly for the sake of simplicity (instead of using 'extraordinary, terrible, threatening, invasive and alien'), and secondly because it provides a more accurate description and highlights the facet of 'extraordinary otherness' this group of mental disorders is fraught with. I call the opposite side of the spectrum 'profane', where the nature of mental disorder or its causing agent had no supernatural quality as it was understood in terms of biological or physical laws of the period.

1.1.4 DEMON POSSESSION

Demon possession as a form of mental disorder is closely connected to Christianity, although categorizing it as a mental disorder is problematic. Firstly, it was not regarded a mental disorder *per se* by contemporary society: although madness and demon possession might look the same, they are two separate conditions. Also, as contemporary sources emphasise, it was chiefly a physical condition rather than something that affects the soul as demons cannot possess the soul, only the body, as Christian authors say. As Caciola summarises:

The physical incorporation of a foreign spirit was understood to be an interior violation manifested in the body through extreme exterior signs: thus was spirit

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[68] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, p. 84.

possession inscribed on the body's surface. This inscription or remolding of the body was constructed as an external signifier of the victim's internal, spiritual violation.

> For this reason, demoniacs sometimes were said to enter a physically depressed state of trance involving removal from the senses … This state sometimes was accompanied by an intense bodily rigidity maintained with supernatural strength … Another describes the victim as … fully entranced, and her body … distorted.[69]

Conversely, Kemp and Williams show that while many cases of demon possession did not always have bodily symptoms, they resulted almost in a new personality; and apart from physiognomic changes such as body distortion and deepened voice, 'the thoughts expressed by the new personality [were] quite different from those of the old one and [were] often scatological or blasphemous';[70] while episodes of possession were followed by amnesia.[71] This implies that the mind was indeed affected and even though the possessing demons do not have power over the soul, they do have power to influence the thoughts. This is what can also be seen in Anglo-Saxon sources as it will be discussed later in the dissertation.

Even though members of the Church *theoretically* could distinguish between demon possession and mental disorder, due to the stark mental nature of their symptoms, it was not so evident for common people. We can safely assume that sometimes it was not evident for representatives of the Church either, as there are instances in the sources where only a distinguished saint could identify the problem and could cope with the possessed. The resemblance of possession to mental disorder was striking as well as deluding, and it was not undoubtful either for the Church or for the laity whether a certain case represented possession or malfunction of the brain. Due to the similarity of the symptoms and the fact that it was easy to confuse them, the histories of mental disorders and demon possession were inextricably interwoven. In addition, as it has been stated in connection with the Anglo-Saxon mind, the idea of the mind-body dichotomy was not typical of medieval people: their view of the mind and body was more holistic. Hence, the boundaries between diseases of the mind, the soul and the body were fuzzy.

The similarity of madness and possession was emphasised by the Church; but madness and possession were also sharply distinguished as different categories – at least in theory.

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[69] Caciola, *Discerning*, pp. 44–45.
[70] Kemp and Williams, 'Demonic possession', p. 21.
[71] Kemp and Williams, 'Demonic possession', p. 21.

Contrarily to recent popular opinion,[72] the Church did not reject the natural/somatic causes of mental disorders, but it always had to consider the possibility of demon possession. For instance, Origen, in his exegesis of the parable of the lunatic boy in Matthew 17, explains lunacy by the workings of demons but also with humourism. In this passage, he gives an account of the natural-humoral explanation of the condition based on an accepted view by physicians of the time that involves the moon and the humours moving to the head. However, he claims that the moon was not created by God to have malevolent influence; rather, it is demons that observe the changes of the moon and other planets, and they attack people according to these phases in order to trick the unsuspecting victims into thinking the planets are to blame.[73] Roughly around the same time, people with epilepsy were prohibited from receiving holy orders because it was thought that epileptic seizures arose from demonic possession.[74] Approaches to demon possession were broadly speaking the same as those applied to physical diseases: it could be viewed as God's punishment or sent by Him as testing, but it was also commonly thought to be an accident suffered by the innocent victim.

These characteristics were bequeathed to the Anglo-Saxons by the Gospels and various ecclesiastic treatises: demon possession was a malady with a wide variety of mental and physical symptoms; it was a hostile alien force that invaded the person; since it ultimately came from God, it could be cured by beseeching Him. Demon possession in Anglo-Saxon England is attested both by ecclesiastic and by medical texts, although Dendle and Raiswell imply that these cases are only instances of Christian propaganda – ʿan insecure church try[ing] to counter what it cast as the superstition of an idolatrous competitor'.[75] Furthermore, they state that

> [s]o great is the literary dependence on continental forerunners that the vast majority of references in the Anglo-Saxon documentary record that relate to demon possession or exorcism are simply retellings of events that happened not in England but on the continent – and usually, a number of centuries earlier … In fact, there are only nine references to cases of demon possession for the entire Anglo-Saxon period that provide any demographic details to particulars whatsoever.[76]

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[72] Kemp complains that textbooks on psychology contain inaccuracies and invalid stereotypes concerning mental illness in the Middle Ages ('Modern Myth', p. 1), and the word of woe is still relevant (see e.g. Millon, *Masters of the Mind: Exploring the Story of Mental Illness from Ancient Times to the New Millenium* from page 42)

[73] Migne, *Origen*, pp. 1106–07.

[74] Kemp and Williams, 'Demonic possession', p. 23.

[75] Dendle and Raiswell, 'Demon Possession', p. 741.

[76] Dendle and Raiswell, 'Demon Possession', p. 743.

Dendle and Raiswell argue that Anglo-Saxon possession cases show a significantly stronger dependency on the clerical exorcist than their Biblical or continental precedents and this demonstrates how the Church established and exhibited its power:

> possession is intimately linked to questions of spiritual leadership in a relatively open market of ideas and so is a locus at which a host of political, social, and intellectual tensions are tightly knotted together … the evidence suggests that the Roman Church's annexation of possession was just the beginning of a process that saw it establish its power as an institution homogeneously across the country.[77]

While there undoubtedly was such a sociological facet to it, Anglo-Saxon demon possession as mental and behavioural disorder has deeper and more widely extending roots reaching back farther in time – although most plausibly in a very different form, that of the Germanic divine possession which I have briefly touched upon above.

1.2 REVIEW OF PAST RESEARCH

Relatively little research has been carried out about madness in the Anglo-Saxon period as opposed to the much more profuse research of later times, which is probably due to the paucity of materials before 1250.[78] The anonymity of the physicians and the lack of records on patients keep the subject in obscurity. Most research done into madness in England covers the period starting from the thirteenth century, as jurisdictional texts started to shed light on the subject only from that time on. One of the first documents showing the Crown's jurisdiction over the mentally ill is the *Prerogativa Regis*, which 'arose from the Crown's paternal responsibility to protect subjects unable to protect themselves'.[79] Or it can be regarded a 'predatory feudal kingship extending its rights to wardship where personal service could not be rendered',[80] for that matter. Texts like the *Prerogativa Regis* give clear indications as to who were regarded as mentally disturbed and how these people were treated. However, it is much more difficult to explore what the situation was before the Norman Conquest .

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[77] Dendle and Raiswell, 'Demon Possession', p. 766.
[78] Turner, *Care and Custody*, p. 15.
[79] Neugebauer, 'Treatment', p. 159.
[80] Roffe, 'Perceptions', p. 28.

The earliest articles that thoroughly examine insanity in the Middle Ages object to the prejudiced attitude of 'popular histories' which simplify the question by dismissing 'psychiatry' in the Middle Ages as demonising. Kroll points out in 1973 that 'popular histories … focus unduly on insanity as demonology. They fail to distinguish lay notions and professional approaches of the times'.[81] Neugebauer also says in his 1979 article that '[h]istorians of medieval and early modern psychiatry have utilized limited source materials in their research. They have focused on printed works, particularly formal treatises by celebrated authors. The resulting histories depict early European psychiatric thought as dominated by demonology'.[82] Indeed, the two most prominent early monographies on the history of madness, Zilboorg's *History of Medical Psychology* published in 1941 and Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation* published in 1961 are 'sometimes factually inaccurate', 'careless' and 'under-documented'.[83] As Zilboorg says commenting the *Codex Theodosianus*, which officially prohibited certain forms of magic in 429,

> [t]he whole field of mental diseases was thus torn away from medicine. … Medical psychology as a legitimate branch of the healing art practically ceased to exist. It was recaptured by the priest and incorporated into his theurgic system. Seven hundred years of effort seemed for a long while to have spent themselves in vain. The ardent voice heard in Hippocrates' discourse on the Sacred Disease was lost in the wilderness; it was silent for nearly twelve centuries.[84]

Neugebauer and Kroll, conversely, demonstrate by the help of medieval documents that the situation was not as bleak as depicted earlier. Kroll states that 'the foundation of medieval medical psychology was biological, not demonical',[85] and Neugebauer expounds how people with mental illnesses were categorised and interrogated by the authorities and how they and their properties were legally taken into custody in England. Although Kroll briefly mentions *Bald's Leechbook*, neither he, nor Neugebauer delves into the Anglo-Saxon period.

The first milestone in the subject of history of mental disorders in Anglo-Saxon England is Basil Clarke's *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain* (1975). He starts his discussion with

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[81] Kroll, 'Reappraisal', p. 276.
[82] Neugebauer, ' Medieval', p. 477.
[83] Harper, 'Subject', pp. 5–6.
[84] Zilboorg, *History*, p. 103.
[85] Kroll, 'Reappraisal', p. 281.

attitudes towards mental disorders in 'tribally organised communities',[86] as, for instance, the Yoruba or the Cree groups around James Bay. He argues that '[w]e have a cultural continuity with the Middle Ages. … It is therefore reasonable to look for helpful analogies in alien cultures of the present, a method familiar in archaeological reconstructions of aspects of past societies'.[87] He then discusses ancient Near Eastern, Indian, Chinese and antique Greek medical theories and practices of madness. His book covers sources on mental disorders in the British Isles, including Celtic societies from the earliest written sources till the 17th century; consequently, the Anglo-Saxon period is quite limited. He analyses the *Leechbooks*, glossaries and hagiographies; nevertheless, he does not define what he means by 'mental disorder', so he considers every suspicious case that might involve a 'non-ordinary' state of mind. Clarke parallels the language in the *Life of Guthlac* with that of medical texts on mind-altering elves and humourism. Hence, Clarke comments on Guthlac's 'psychiatric status' as a condition that 'could probably be [regarded] as a pathological condition by many a sound psychiatrist using standard criteria within the values of a modern bourgeois democracy'.[88]

A more cautious approach can be observed in Jackson's 'Unusual Mental States in Medieval Europe' (1972) as the title already suggests. Which, by the way, probably best circumscribes the phenomenon we are looking for: the term 'unusual mental state' expresses best both the modern and the medieval perception of mental disorders at the same time. It is careful enough not to deem too hastily everything an illness that might seem so for the modern eye. It reflects medieval views well in the sense that they might not have called certain psychotic states an illness; nevertheless, they did recognise them as 'unusual'. It is also fit for modern terminology discussing medieval mental disorders, as it stresses the awareness that the usage of the term 'mental disorder' is problematic in a medieval context. Even though Jackson's study is not limited, let alone focused on Anglo-Saxon England, it provides a relatively comprehensive summary of authors, treatments, and theories of mental disorders in the Middle Ages, which can be quite useful for research in Anglo-Saxon grounds as well. Jackson points out that '[i]n medieval literature there are also numerous accounts of mental states considered distinctly unusual, but where those affected did not think of themselves as ill or mentally disordered and were not usually so considered'.[89] Thus, Jackson emphasises the fact that the phenomena we now consider mental disorders were deemed differently in the Middle Ages and today's category of 'mental disorders' does not cover the same conditions as a thousand years

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[86] Clarke*, Mental Disorder*, p. 2.
[87] Clarke*, Mental Disorder*, p. 2.
[88] Clarke*, Mental Disorder*, p. 53.
[89] Jackson, 'Unusual', p. 263.

ago. He identifies main groups of unusual mental states based on the writings of Oribasius, Alexander of Tralles, and Paul of Aegina amongst others: *phrenitis*, *melancholia*, *mania*, *lycanthropy*, *incubus*, *love-sickness*, *possession* and *effeminate men*.[90] Thus, Jackson's article is based on the theories of mental disorders established by learned men practicing medicine, while he only briefly touches upon 'folk' beliefs.

In her 1975 book *Suggestion of the Devil: the Origins of Madness* Neaman gives a comprehensive summary of medieval medicine and theories of madness, and stresses the similarities between medieval and modern notions. As she points out in the introduction, her aim is to convey a more precise knowledge about the topic of medieval insanity and the 'historical formation of many concepts current in our lives'.[91] As the title suggests, she puts great emphasis on the religious aspect of madness: she explains the religious ideologies from which theories of madness derive and she discusses its diabolical origin. However, she does not blur possession and madness together and says that 'medieval theologians, lawyers and physicians made clear distinctions between insanity and possession. Insanity might follow from possession or possession from insanity, but they were not identical, merely associated'.[92] She stresses the importance reason had for medieval people, how the loss of reason was dependent on the 'corruptible' flesh and how it was thus connected to sin and, eventually, to insanity.[93] Sin could cause insanity and insanity could cause sin. But just like ordinary diseases, mental diseases could be interpreted as coming from God rather than the devil: they could be a test (as e.g. the sufferings of Job), purgation or punishment. Neaman also discusses the legal and social facets of insanity and stresses that '[t]he diagnosis and treatment of the extreme form of irrationality we call "insanity" are today, as they always were, determined by the biases of society'.[94]

In her book about elf charms, Karen Louise Jolly discusses popular religion in Anglo-Saxon England and illustrates the synthesis of native and Christian beliefs by the way elves were incorporated into the Christian cosmology. She analogises the Christian-pagan worldview to that of the Neoplatonic by emphasising their 'common outlook on the intimate connection between the spiritual and the material' and the hidden virtues of nature.[95] Jolly dedicates a whole chapter to the so-called 'mind-altering afflictions' in connection with elves and demons

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[90] Jackson, 'Unusual', pp. 268–86.
[91] Neaman, *Suggestion*, p. 4.
[92] Neaman, *Suggestion*, p. 40.
[93] Neaman, *Suggestion*, p. 42.
[94] Neaman, *Suggestion*, p. 5.
[95] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 171.

where she clusters demon possession, nightmares, mares, fevers and other mind-altering afflictions together with elves. However, her main concern is to demonstrate the amalgamation of the Christian and the pagan worldview rather than expounding what these conditions could have been. She points out that the *Leechbooks* were organised according to type of disease, and since elf-ailments were accompanied by devil sickness, dementedness and fever, 'early medieval minds found a logical coherence' between these conditions.[96] She suggests that all these conditions were perceived as being akin in Anglo-Saxon society, because 'human beings [were] multifaceted creatures with a complex interaction of body and soul, a mixture of matter and spirit in the Neoplatonic scale of being'.[97] Jolly's book aims not so much to analyse the relationship between elves and mental disorders as to exhibit and explain a worldview where such an association could be possible.

Extensive research has been carried out on the relationship between *ælfe* and altered mental states by Alaric Hall. Examining recipes, glosses, and even non-Anglo-Saxon evidence, such as Irish and Icelandic texts, he argues that *ælfe* were believed to inflict altered mental states which might even include prophetic utterances. Ailments characterised by epilepsy-like and possession-like syndromes were attributed to elves and thus '*ælf*-beliefs', Hall says, 'afforded not only a means to renarrate illness to facilitate its curing, but a means of constructing certain kinds of ailment in a positive way, as sources of knowledge and power in themselves'.[98] Illnesses with high fever were also associated with elves as both involve altered mental states.[99] In short, according to Hall's research, there was a close relationship between elves, illnesses with high fever and certain mental disorders, and thus altered states of mind in general. Furthermore, based on Latin and Old English glossaries, he argues that the word *ylfig* had the approximate meaning of 'possessed by an elf and thus being capable of foretelling the future'.[100] He also discusses the terms *fyllewærc, bræcoþu,* and *deofolseoc*, which are independent of elves; yet, he argues that these terms are not intrinsically Old English notions: '[b]ut most of these were probably originally coined in response to Mediterranean and Christian medical traditions: early glossators like the Common Recension glossator probably had only *gydig* – which they were apparently unwilling to use – and variants on *wod* "frenzied, enraged, mad"'.[101] Thus, Hall suggests that originally, certain forms of mental disorders were strongly

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[96] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 146.
[97] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 146.
[98] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 155.
[99] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 122.
[100] Hall, 'Elves on the Brain', pp. 237–41.
[101] Hall, 'Elves on the Brain', p. 241.

associated with elves and were bestowed almost a prestigious character due to their prophetic nature in Anglo-Saxon England.

In her recent book on the 'mentally ill, incompetent, and disabled', Wendy Turner expounds the legal and social status and treatment of mentally incapacitated people and establishes the following categories:

> [T]he term 'incompetent' serves to distinguish persons with mental difficulties, which were sometimes frustrating but not disabling, from other persons with mental illnesses or disabilities. The term 'mental illness' in the present work has been limited to two groups: those individuals with diseases recognized by the medieval medical community as mental illnesses (such as mania), and those persons with some form of derangement while sick (such as high fever). The general term 'incapacitated', a modern word, is used as an overarching term for all persons mentally disabled (those needing physical or legal care), mentally incompetent, and mentally ill.[102]

This tripartite classification is mainly based on a practical approach: the determining factor is the extent to which the afflicted person was dependent on caretakers and to the extent they were functional in society. As Turner explains it,

> persons referred to as 'mentally ill' would be either sick persons with some sort of mental break in conjunction with an illness, or those with conditions commonly found in medieval medical writings. … persons referred to as having a mental disability were non-functioning in society, quite literally without ability. … Mentally incompetent persons, … did have mental impairments …, yet that impairment did not keep them from participating, at least somewhat, in society.[103]

Finally, the term 'mental incapacity' is used by Turner as a general category that encompasses all these three main groups.

Turner mainly bases her research on legal sources and as we have already mentioned, while legal texts are quite expansive in terms of attitudes towards the insane from ca. 1200, they are quite taciturn in the Anglo-Saxon period and thus are not particularly helpful in our investigation. Nevertheless, she highlights the huge impact the Bible had on the perception of

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[102] Turner, *Care and Custody*, p. 3.
[103] Turner, *Care and Custody*, p. 6.

mental disorders along with the Classical sources, which is undoubtedly true about the Anglo-Saxon period as well.

1.3 STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

This dissertation can be divided into two main parts: the first half, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 introduce and analyse the elements and theories that make up the system of Anglo-Saxon mental disorders. The second half, Chapter 5 shows these elements in action and in practice, and it reveals the way they were synthesised into one organic whole. In the first half, I discuss the ideas of mind, soul, and mental disorders first in the context of Graeco-Roman medicine, then in the patristic and biblical traditions, so as to determine the impact they could have had on Anglo-Saxon culture. I discuss in detail only those texts that were accessible to Anglo-Saxons, as those could have been influential to them; and in determining the group of texts available for Anglo-Saxons I rely on Gneuss' and Lapidge's works. Once the main traits are identified I move on to expound the same topic in Anglo-Saxon authors' works: this will illustrate how the classical and patristic/biblical elements have been embraced in the written Anglo-Saxon culture.

In the second half, I analyse occurrences of mental disorders in glossaries and medical texts which I term 'practical' texts. These are special as opposed to texts with religious topics as both of them were of practical use instead of spiritual use (like e.g. homilies). As the primary purpose of such texts is to serve needs, ideology sinks into the background to a 'vegetative' level, all available means are invoked in order to achieve the goal (e.g. to heal the patient), and everything is resorted to that is thought to be of use; therefore, things which might be rejected in a religious text might rear their head in these 'practical' texts. Hence, these practical texts reveal a wider perspective on Anglo-Saxons' beliefs of mental disorders than texts with a didactic or spiritual purpose, and perhaps they even paint a more faithful picture. When analysing the 'practical' group of texts, namely the medical ones, I further distinguish between 'imported' and 'locally produced' groups. The purpose behind sifting through the texts in this way is to identify the non-Anglo-Saxon ideas, to see if they were integrated in the 'locally produced' texts and how they behave there.

As for the methodology of my research, I had to resort to a 'double-approach' since the subject of the dissertation is so elusive as mental disorders are so hard to define. I had to approach the question from its two ends: the vocabularic and the thematic. In order to understand a phenomenon, one must study how it works in various contexts. For this purpose, the expressions describing it need to be identified and after that, the sources that contain narratives of them: this is the first phase that I call 'vocabularic'. In this first phase, I searched the *Thesaurus of Old English* for words that express phenomena related to mental disorders and mapped them in the table below. Once I had the expressions, I could collect the sources that have them and could start analysing the expressions in their contexts.

Insanity, madness

Paroxysm of	Madness, frenzy, folly					Crazed, ill		To be/become mad	A madman
	dēofolsēocnes fēonda ādl		fēondgyld mōnaþsēocnes		ungewitfulnes ungewitt	ungewittignes (ge)witlēast	wōdscipe woffung		
scinnlāc wōdþrāg	fīenda ādl gemǣdla gemyndlȳst	ungemynd ungewitfæstnes ungewittignes	gewēd wēdenheort wēdenheortnes	wēding wōdendrēam wōdheortnes	wōdnes wuhhung	(ge)brǣcsēoc brægensēoc dēofolsēoc fēondsēoc gydig gemǣd mōnaþsēoc mōnsēoc ofset ofseten	unwīs ungewitful ungewittig wēde wēdende wēdenheort (ge)witlēas (ge)witsēoc wōd ylfig	āwoffian	gedwola (ge)witsēoc wōda

To rage, rave	The devil (in possession)	Maddened, furious	Madly, furiously	Madly, without reason	(Of creature) to foam (at the mouth)	(Of creature) to rage, be violent, furious	Melancholic	To be mad	To go mad	To make mad, derange
woffian wōhhian	dēofol fēond stician on	ierre gemād wēdende wēden(d)sēoc wōdlic wōdsēoc	wōdlīce	ungewittiglīce	fǣman	wēdan	wansēoc	āwēdan dwolian wēdan	āwēdan dwelian	geðēod(g)ian

Table 1.3. Mapping of expressions of mental disorders based on the Thesaurus of Old English

Having analysed the relevant texts and thus obtaining an overall sense of how mental disorders appear in them, I started looking for sources that contained madness-like traits but did not exhibit any items from the previously listed vocabulary. This was the second 'thematic' phase, where texts were picked and analysed based on suspected occurrences of madness. These texts had to be treated with precaution and suspicion, because they might not concern cases of madness at all – at least not in the eyes of Anglo-Saxons. Nonetheless, I did not omit those texts that proved not to be about medieval madness, as these findings are also useful because they show us how certain phenomena we regard as insanity were interpreted by Anglo-Saxons.

CHAPTER 2. CLASSICAL INHERITANCE: THEORIES OF MIND, SOUL, AND MENTAL DISORDERS

In this chapter I discuss the antique ideas of mind, soul, and mental disorders that directly or indirectly shaped Anglo-Saxon concepts. After briefly summarising the general features of the period, I discuss the relevant authors and trends in detail and in chronological order. Examination of the antique texts that may have influenced the concepts of Anglo-Saxon mental disorder is crucial, as we also need to understand their ideological background, as these ideologies also left their imprints on the Anglo-Saxon beliefs. Even if certain cornerstone antique texts, such as for instance *On the Sacred Disease*, might not have been available to Anglo-Saxons, the seeds of their theories were sown to spring into medical theories in the Middle Ages that were then transplanted into Anglo-Saxon soil. Thus, it is necessary to discuss and define the antique theories as well because they were the base and the starting point of medieval continental and subsequently of Anglo-Saxon theories.

Regarding the sources, it needs to be pointed out first that those texts are in focus here that consider the topic of mind and soul from the perspective of natural philosophy instead of religion. It also must be noted that several natural philosophical texts could potentially affect the Anglo-Saxon concepts of mind and mental disorder; nonetheless, we only have evidence for a couple of them, chiefly from Latin or translated Greek authors. Actual texts are rare, and their prevalence mainly dates after the composition of the *Leechbooks*; however, some scholars believe that the lack of physical texts does not necessarily mean their absence from the Anglo-Saxon libraries altogether. For instance, Cameron believes that authors that quote or refer to certain works may be deemed to be evidence for the presence of the work in Anglo-Saxon England. He claims that 'the compiler [of *Bald's Leechbook*] had the following works available for direct quotation: Oribasius' *Synopsis* and *Euporistes*; *Practica Alexandri* (for all extracts from the works of Philumenus, Philagrius and Alexander of Tralles); Marcellus' *De Medicamentis*; *Physica Plinii* and possibly *Medicina Plinii*'.[104] Nevertheless, he does note that '[i]t is not always easy to decide just which work may have been a source … , because the works themselves are interrelated and frequently share common sources'.[105] He further parallels the remedies of the *Leechbook* with the original Latin texts and provides convincing evidence with almost literal correspondence. Yet, analogies as these have to be handled with caution: since no

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[104] Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook', p. 155.
[105] Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook', p. 154.

complete manuscript of the original works has survived and there are also no tangible implications (e.g. booklists) that they were ever present in Anglo-Saxon England, it must not be taken for granted that the complete works were available. As they are not present among the surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, we cannot even be sure whether Anglo-Saxons had access to and used the original works or they had pieces of the works in compendia and might not even have been aware what they were using. Hence, my analysis is mainly based on texts that are listed in Gneuss and Lapidge's *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* with a few exceptions. What can be known for certain is that antique medical texts that involve mental disorders and can be found in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts are Quintus Serenus Sammonicus' *Liber Medicinalis* and the pseudo-Galenic *Liber Tertius*.

As it unfolds in the texts, the view on how and where the mind and soul work was quite eclectic. The topic was debated from the earliest times on, by philosophers and by physicians alike and opposing theories thrived cheek by jowl. The debate and the theories were inherited by medieval Christian authors and survived well into Anglo-Saxon times. For instance, as I discuss in a later chapter,[106] the concept of the tripartite soul is reflected in the writings of the eighth century Anglo-Saxon Alcuin or tenth century Anglo-Saxon Ælfric, through the influence of Augustine, Isidore of Seville, Lactantius and others.

Consequently, the conception of mental disorders in the antique world is also quite difficult to grasp, firstly, because the concept of the soul, the mind and the seat of consciousness was extremely heterogeneous, and the view on mental disorders is of course greatly dependent on these concepts. Furthermore, madness had several facets to it: medical, philosophical, literary, and folkloric. Madness is a different concept in all these four fields and the field that is relevant to our research – medical – does not treat the topic systematically. In fact, we never can see a medical text where the author makes a clear, explicit categorisation of mental disorders: they 'seldom saw such a crucial distinction between, say, melancholy and diabetes as would necessitate establishing a distinct medical category for mental illness'.[107] Therefore, distinction between the terms 'madness' and 'mental disorder' is indeed appropriate in this chapter: conditions discussed by medical authors that have mental symptoms are not labelled by them as madness but are explained by somatic and organic malfunction and a specialised vocabulary is applied to them, a bit like in modern psychiatry. Hence, in this chapter I use the word 'madness' only where the original text has it, and I include in my discussion conditions that are described as having mental symptoms or – in texts with cephalocentric views – affecting

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[106] See Chapter 4

[107] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 2.

the brain. As for the definition of 'mental symptom', I turn to Ahonen who, in relation to antique medical texts, calls 'mental symptoms' the group of symptoms that affect 'thought, perception and emotional life, such as delusions, hallucinations, disorganised behaviour, strange moods and so on'.[108]

Although medical authors tended to explain insanity in strictly somatic terms, we can suspect that the question of bodily versus mental diseases lingered in some authors' minds. Indeed, conditions such as apoplexy or rabies that exhibited strong mental symptoms besides bodily symptoms could raise doubts. Caelius Aurelianus, translating Soranus, discusses such a topic in relation to *hydrophobia*: 'Etenim quidam esse aiunt animi passionem, siquidem appetere uel desiderare sit animae speciale, non corporis … Sed his, qui haec asserunt, consentiendum non est. Etenim appetere uel delectari potu, sicut etiam mandere, ex corporis quadam nascitur passione'.[109] Caelius feels the need to address the problem and to explain his view, namely, that the primary symptoms of *hydrophobia* are physical and the mental symptoms are only the secondary causes, thus rendering *hydrophobia* mainly a bodily disorder. The fact that he spells out the difference indicates that the strict somatic view that can be observed in the surviving texts was not universal at all.

Three main types of mental disorders emerged in medical texts beside other minor mental conditions: mania, melancholy and phrenitis. Mania could 'manifest itself as a drastic change in the behaviour and mental state of the patient, so that he became beside himself, deviating both from the accepted norms of rationality and from his usual disposition'.[110] Typical symptoms of the illness were thought to be excessive joyfulness, gloominess, anger, anxiety, memory disorders, dysfunction of senses and various delusional ideas.[111] Some authors (e.g. Caelius Aurelianus) considered mania an 'affliction of the head and the whole nervous system'; and despite the 'mental nature of the symptoms', mania was thought to be 'a physical illness that affect[ed] the mind only via the body'.[112] Black bile was believed to be the cause of melancholy, whose symptoms were generally described by medical authors such as Caelius, Aretaeus, Rufus of Ephesus or Galen as anxiety, depression, silence and sometimes

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[108] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 2.
[109] Caelius Aurelianus, *Celerum Passionum* III.xiii (ed. and transl. Bendz and Pape pp. 356–358). 'for some say that it is the disease of the soul, as to wish or to desire are the functions of the soul and not of the body … But those who claim this are not be agreed. The desire to drink and the pleasure of drinking, just as of eating, arises from a certain bodily feeling. In fact, the fear is the result of the sympathy of the soul that suffers together with the body' (my translation).
[110] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 13.
[111] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 15.
[112] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 15.

delusions.[113] The toxic black bile was the culprit of many diseases, not confined only to mental disorders. In addition, people with conditions that we would call today hallucinatory delusions were also thought to have an attack of black bile; and thinking that one is an earthen vessel or a bird was identified as a symptom of melancholy.[114] The third main type was phrenitis (*phrenesis* in Greek), although modern medicine would rather call its conditions neurological than psychiatric, as the causes might have been 'various general medical conditions, such as meningitis, typhoid or perhaps malaria'.[115] Generally, it denoted a delirious state. Its mental symptoms 'were similar to those of mania, comprising hallucinations, delusions, strange moods, and general impairment of judgement and other cognitive functions', and a phenomenon called *krokydismos* or *karphologia* in Greek that refers to the picking movement of the fingers on the bedclothes or walls.[116]

In general, mental disorders in medical texts were described as being primarily somatic diseases inflicting the brain, but because the brain was the seat of the soul, they also affected the soul, deteriorated its functions, thus producing mental symptoms manifested by e.g. strange behaviour. The explanations for these phenomena are reduced to somatic-materialistic processes. Madness is demystified as its symptoms are merely manifestations of down-to-earth humoral and organic events. Nonetheless, a certain contrast between medical and non-medical madness seems to have been recognized as even Caelius Aurelianus notes that the Stoics distinguished between two kinds of them: lack of wisdom versus loss of reason that is a 'concomitant bodily affection'.[117] The Stoic Aristo comments on madness that the difference between 'general insanity' and insanity subject to medical treatment is that 'the latter is suffering from disease and the former from false opinions'.[118]

2.1 HOMERIC TEXTS

Even if it seems unrelated at first glance, the narrative has to start with antique Greek beliefs, because those provide the basis for classical Graeco-Roman, and subsequently, to

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[113] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, pp. 20–1.
[114] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 195.
[115] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 23.
[116] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 23.
[117] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 105.
[118] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 105.

medieval medicine; thus in order to understand medieval principles we have to be conscious of the antique theories they sprang forth from.

According to the extensive research conducted by Onians, ancient Greeks before the fifth and sixth centuries BC believed the *phren* or *phrenes* to be the location of thinking, which is usually translated as the diaphragm. However, Onians has demonstrated that it meant, in fact, primarily the lungs, and took on the meaning of diaphragm only later.[119] Thinking thoughts, feeling emotions and impulses were believed to take place mainly in the *phrenes* and in the *thymos*: the 'vital principle that thinks and feels and prompts to action'.[120] The head and brain played also an important part: *psyche* was associated with the head, and the head was also the seat of life, while psyche was the 'holy life-soul and the executive power' that survives death and comes from the gods.[121] The tradition was similar for the Romans: the chest was believed to be the seat of mind and consciousness.[122] The idea of a faculty that is responsible for cognitive and emotional processes residing in the chest cavity is an ancient one: apart from e.g. Greeks, Romans and ancient Egyptians, interestingly, Anglo-Saxons had a similar perception, as I explained in the Introduction.

As regards to madness, it was generally thought to have a supernatural origin, and the verb *mainomai* referred to it. As Ahonen observed in Homeric texts, mania-related expressions 'denote a condition of rage and fury, involving elements of high energy, danger, uncontrollability, aggression and destructiveness'; however, they do not involve hallucinations and bizarre delusions, and 'none of the occurrences seem to refer to a condition considered a medical illness'.[123]

2.2 HIPPOCRATIC TRADITION

Around the fifth century BC, the theory of the seat of the mind shifted and it was located in the brain by some philosophers: Alcmaeon of Croton states that the brain receives impulses, and perception and processing information is carried out by it.[124] The idea of the brain as the

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[119] Onians, *Origins*, p. 13.

[120] Onians, *Origins*, p. 28.

[121] Onians, *Origins*, pp. 96–138.

[122] Onians, *Origins*, p. 40.

[123] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 31.

[124] Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 48.

seat of consciousness and thinking is emphatically represented by the author of the Hippocratic *On the Sacred Disease*:

> Men ought to know that from the brain, and from the brain only, arise our pleasures, joys, laughter, and jests, as well as our sorrows, pains, griefs, and tears. Through it, in particular, we think, see, hear, and distinguish the ugly from the beautiful, the bad from the good, the pleasant from the unpleasant, in some cases using custom as a test, in others perceiving them from their utility. It is the same thing which makes us mad or delirious, inspires us with dread and fear, whether by night or by day, brings sleeplessness, inopportune mistakes, aimless anxieties, absent-mindedness, and acts that are contrary to habit. These things that we suffer all come from the brain, when it is not healthy, but becomes abnormally hot, cold, moist, or dry, or suffers any other unnatural affection to which it was not accustomed. … In these ways I hold that the brain is the most powerful organ of the human body, for when it is healthy it is an interpreter to us of the phenomena caused by the air, as it is the air that gives it intelligence. Eyes, ears, tongue, hands, and feet act in accordance with the discernment of the brain.[125]

Regarding the earlier belief about *phrenes* as the main organ of mind the writer says: ʿ[w]herefore, I assert that it is the brain that is the interpreter of consciousness. The diaphragm has a name due merely to chance and custom, not to reality and nature, and I do not know what power the diaphragm has for thought and intelligence'.[126] The author of *On the Sacred Disease* argued for the cardinal role of the brain but this cephalocentric view was far from universal; the cardiocentric theory was also strongly represented by various authors, e.g. by the author of the Hippocratic treatise *De corde*.[127] As Eijk puts it, ʿmany medical authors of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE assume a cognitive centre somewhere in the body from where abilities such as perception and movement are "transported" or "transferred" to peripheral organs', although this centre was not agreed upon.[128] As I will later demonstrate, the uncertainty persisted in medieval sources too which were in use in Anglo-Saxon England as well, and Old English sources also exhibit this duality.

Madness in cephalocentric texts is attributed to the malfunctioning of the brain:

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[125] Jones, *Sacred Disease*, pp. 175–79.
[126] Jones, *Sacred Disease*, pp. 179.
[127] Crivellato and Ribatti, ʿSoul, mind, brain', p. 332.
[128] Eijk, *Medicine and Philosophy,* p. 129.

Madness comes from its moisture. When the brain is abnormally moist, of necessity it moves, and when it moves neither sight nor hearing are still, but we see or hear now one thing and now another, and the tongue speaks accordance with the things seen and heard on any occasion … The corruption of the brain is caused not only by phlegm but by bile. You may distinguish them thus. Those who are mad through phlegm are quiet, and neither shout nor make a disturbance; those maddened through bile are noisy, evil-doers and restless, always doing something inopportune.[129]

The ideas of this text are echoed in many works on medicine for centuries to come. As Jouanna points out, *On the Sacred Disease* is 'the foundation of two themes in the history of insanity: first, it associates madness with the state of the brain, … and, secondly, it distinguishes two opposing types of insanity, a calm madness and an agitated one'.[130] This binary typology is also present in, for instance, the text of *On Regimen*,[131] and was passed down e.g. to Isidore's texts.[132] The text also offers an explanation for visual and auditory hallucinations by stating that when the brain is moist and it moves, 'we see or hear now one thing and now another'; hence the reason for hallucinations is established as humoral imbalance as opposed to e.g. *umbrae* as it will be in some medical texts of Anglo-Saxon prominence.[133]

2.3 PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

Plato also localised rationality in the brain: he believed in a tripartite soul whose most noble part that was endowed with rationality and immortality was linked to the head and encompassed by the brain.[134] The same idea is reflected in various texts that were influential to Anglo-Saxons: starting from Galen, running through Augustine and Isidore and resurfacing at

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[129] Jones, *Sacred Disease*, pp. 175–77.
[130] Jouanna, 'Typology', p. 100.
[131] Jouanna, 'Typology', p. 100–1.
[132] E.g. in *Eytmologiae*, IV.vi.3. he describes frenzy as '[e]st autem perturbatio cum exagitatione et dementia ex cholerica vi effecta' (ed. Lindsay). ('It is a disturbed state, accompanied by agitation and dementia, caused by an onslaught of bile', transl. Barney, p, 110). Whereas of lethargy he says '[e]st enim oppressio cerebri cum onlivione el somno iugi, veluti stertentis' (ed. Lindsay). ('It is an overpowering of the brain, accompanied by forgetfulness and incessant sleep like that of one who is snoring', transl. Barney, p, 110).
[133] See pp. 131–34.
[134] Crivellato and Ribatti, 'Soul, mind, brain', pp. 330–31.

Alcuin and Ælfric.[135] Whereas according to Aristotle, the heart 'is assigned the role of "beginning" or "origin" (*archē*), both as a source of essential bodily heat (required among other things for the digestion of food) and as the seat of the central sense organ, which is connected with the limbs and the separate sense organs and co-ordinates the data it receives from them'.[136]

Furthermore, philosophical and non-medical literary sources also reveal a different attitude towards mental disorders. As Ahonen says, in 'ancient philosophical ethics, the phrase "disease of the soul" referred not to mental illness but to the various internal obstacles to attaining peace of mind, wisdom and virtue'.[137] Nevertheless, certain medical and philosophical authors did consider forms of madness as diseases of the soul. Plato discusses *mania* in *Phaedrus*, where he distinguishes between two types: 'one caused by human illnesses and one by a divine impulse that does away with habitual rules'.[138] Divine madness has further four sub-categories: prophetic (*mantiki*), ritual (*telestiki*), poetic (*poitiki*), and erotic (*erotiki*).[139] Hence, as Dodds says, the insane were regarded 'with a respect amounting to awe; for they were in contact with the supernatural world'.[140] Ahonen also reflects on the bright side of madness but at the same time mentions the downside as well:

> Madness was recognised as a honourable way of communicating with the divine, both for professionals (such as the well-respected Panhellenic oracles) and amateurs (such as those participating in various ecstatic rites). The tragic poets, on the other hand, depicted madness as a god-sent punishment in their interpretations of traditional mythological stories, although the divine forces active on the stage could be interpreted as representing the inner dynamics of the human mind, madness being the result of devastating suffering and passion.[141]

Reference to the supernatural origin of madness is attested by the expressions *daimonan* (also *daimonizesthai*) and *nympholeptos*, both hinting at a state of being possessed by a supernatural being.[142]

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[135] These occurrences will be discussed in Chapter 4.

[136] Eijk, *Medicine and Philosophy,* p. 129.

[137] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 4.

[138] Jouanna, 'Typology', p. 103.

[139] Jouanna, 'Typology', p. 103.

[140] Dodds, *The Greeks*, p. 68. Nevertheless, he also notes that they were shunned and spitted at (68). Although this difference might lie in the fact that Dodds did not discuss mental deficiency and psychotic disorders that could have been regarded as e.g. prophetic separately; and while the former might have been despised, the latter was apparently respected.

[141] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 30.

[142] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 32.

2.4 QUINTUS SERENUS SAMMONICUS

The oldest medical text that we can find in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts is Quintus Serenus Sammonicus' *Liber medicinalis*, a poem that describes various diseases in hexameter in a 'strictly practical orientation'.[143] Although the dating of Serenus' life is still debated, it is estimated that he may have lived around the second or third century AD. *Liber medicinalis* draws heavily on Pliny, but instead of the original *Natural History*, he apparently used the shorter *Medicina Plinii*.[144] The text is in MS Paris, Bibliothéque nationale de France, lat. 4839 with English provenance in the tenth-eleventh century.[145]

Liber medicinalis contains three stanzas that are of interest to us: *Phrenesi et capiti purgando, Lethargiae expellendae* and *Comitiali morbo depellendo*. They deal with phrenitis, lethargy and epilepsy.[146] They do not reveal too much about these diseases: since the main purpose of the text is that of practicality, it does not dwell upon the topic of aetiology or does not give detailed descriptions of the symptoms. The emphasis is rather on the remedies and the *materia medica*.

The stanza about phrenitis attributes the 'raging' disease to a defect in the brain and speculates its cause to be wine or fever or cold winds:

> Ex uitio cerebri phrenesis furiosa mouetur
> amissasque refert frendens amentia uires,
> siue calens febris iactatos exedit artus
> siue meri gustus seu frigoris efficit aura. [147]

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[143] Temkin, *The Double Face*, p. 170.
[144] Temkin, *The Double Face*, p. 173.
[145] Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, p. 637.
[146] Epilepsy may not always necessarily have mental symptoms, but beside its main symptoms (convulsions and loss of consciousness), occasionally it does have mental symptoms as well, like hallucinations and alienated speech that was often considered prophetic or supernatural in origin in the past. And because epilepsy had a strong connotation to madness in the Middle Ages, it needs to be included in the discussion.
[147] Sammonicus, *Liber Medicinalis* VII (ed. Vollmer, p. 9). 'Raging phrenesis originates from the malfunction of the brain. This teeth-grinding madness brings back lost strength, either if hot fever digests the jerking limbs, or if indulging in wine brought it forth or cold wind' (my translation).

The text recommends herbal and animal medicines to cure phrenitis but emphasises that since it is sometimes difficult to cure this disease, the best approach is to take prophylactic measures – again, with herbal substances.

> non semper praesens dolor est sanabilis: ergo
> cura magis prodest uenturis obuia morbis
> atque ideo sanos etiam curarier est par.
> purgatur cerebrum mansa radice pyrethri,
> unguitur et sucis, dederit quos parua sabucus (sic),
> expressusque hederae mandatur naribus umor
> aut mixtum rutae cerebro instillatur acetum. [148]

Lethargic patients are described as languid and struck by sleepiness akin to death.

> denique nonnunquam somno sic membra grauantur,
> ut coniungatur leto sopor altus acerbo.[149]

Again, herbal and animal recipes are given. Finally, the stanza on epilepsy mentions the origin of the name of the condition (morbus comitialis): public assemblies were interrupted by epileptics and the assembly had to be dismissed.

> est subiti species morbi, cui nomen ab illo
> haesit, quod fieri prohibet suffragia iusta.
> saepe etenim membris atro languore caducis
> concilium populi labes horrenda diremit.[150]

Moreover, it also draws parallel between the course of the moon and the occurrence of the disease.

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[148] Sammonicus, *Liber Medicinalis* VII (ed. Vollmer, p. 9). ʽongoing suffering cannot always be remedied: therefore, treatment before the ailment is more efficient. Therefore, it is appropriate if we treat those of sane mind. The brain needs to be purged with ground root of *pyrethrum* and be smeared with small elder tree sap and juice of ivy to be dripped into the nose or vinegar with rue to be dripped on the brain' (my translation).

[149] Sammonicus, *Liber Medicinalis* LV (ed. Vollmer, p. 47). ʽFinally sometimes the limbs get so heavy in their sleep as if the slumber of bitter death yoked them' (my translation).

[150] Sammonicus, *Liber Medicinalis* LVI (ed. Vollmer, p. 48). ʽThis sudden disease has a type which got its name from the fact that assemblies were cancelled due to it. Often the terrible wretchedness of the falling *caduceus*' dark limbs disbanded the assemblies' (my translation).

ipse deus memorat dubiae per tempora lunae

conceptum, talis quem saepe ruina profundit.[151]

The concept of the connection between epilepsy and the moon was so ancient and perseverant that it was widely popular through millennia. Ancient Greeks thought epilepsy was brought on by Selene, goddess of the moon, to those who sinned against her; while Origen and later Isidore also mentioned the course of the moon in relation to epilepsy.[152] The connection of epilepsy with the moon and the connection of epilepsy with periodicity is also witnessed by the Old English expressions *monseoc* which means moon-sick and *monaþseoc* which means month-sick, both denoting conditions with mental symptoms in Old English gospels and medical texts. Both will be expounded in later chapters.

2.5 GALEN AND BEYOND

According to Ahonen, Galen, whose immense influence is clearly visible also in medieval texts directly or indirectly, thought that the soul is tripartite: *thymos* resides in the heart and desires power and dominion; *epithymia* resides in the liver, craving carnal pleasures; and the rational soul located in the brain craves virtue and knowledge.[153] However, as Siegel demonstrated, Galen did not exactly believe in the partition of the soul into three different, material sub-souls, nor did he suggest that there were three separate souls or a single divisible soul.[154] Rather, that there are different functions or faculties (*dynamies*), aspects (*eide*), or principles (*arche*) of it 'which are manifested by the activity of head, heart and liver'.[155] Further, in Galen's view, the soul 'should not be understood as a divisible entity but as the sum total of the various functions such as reason, emotions, instinctive responses and vegetative drives, movement and others'.[156] According to Galen, the brain and the *pneuma psychikon* are the 'first

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[151] Sammonicus, *Liber Medicinalis* LVI (ed. Vollmer, p. 48). 'The god himself mentions that man takes it at the time of the dim moon who is overwhelmed by such falling down' (my translation).
[152] Temkin, *The Falling Sickness*, pp. 6–16.
[153] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 141.
[154] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 125.
[155] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 126.
[156] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 127.

instruments' of the soul.[157] The *pneuma psychikon* is the air-like substance that flows through the brain which is responsible for perception, voluntary motion and cognition, and 'the rational soul can, then, be seen as the principle of all the various functions of the brain-nerve system'.[158] Furthermore, the sense organs conveyed the stimuli to the brain which Galen thought to be the 'sole coordinating center'.[159] Apart from receiving and processing stimuli, the function of the brain was to form images, apprehend all thought and to maintain life.[160]

As for mental disorders, Galen dealt only with those conditions that were due to a somatic disease and '[m]ost of [them] do not indicate primary psychiatric disorders … but rather the so-called brain syndromes during acute and chronic diseases';[161] and he 'did not recognize diseases of the soul as independent of the body'.[162] He did mention, however, that the 'mental processes of the soul had their seat in the body of the brain' and that the *pneuma psychikon* functions as an activator and resides in the ventricles; consequently, as Galen inferred, abnormalities of consciousness occurred when the brain and its ventricles were damaged.[163] The three main forms of mental disorders (mania, melancholy and phrenesis) were also recognised by him. His view on mania was that it was always a 'manifestation of somatic disturbance'; it was 'either a primary or a sympathetic affection of the brain', or 'it occurred secondary to another ailment'.[164] He 'stressed that mania was caused by yellow bile', and its 'predominant manifestations' were '[d]isturbance of the reasoning power and hallucinations'.[165] He agreed that melancholy was caused by black bile and the mental manifestations of it were recognized by Galen as e.g. delirium, 'bestial raving', and epilepsy with mental alterations.[166] Galen used two expressions for delirious states: *phrenitis*, which was delirium with fever; and *paraphrosyne*, which was delirium without fever. Galen, along with other medical authors, such as Aretaeus or Paulus of Aegina believed that '*phrenitis* was caused by an inflammation of the membranes of the brain, or by a sympathetic involvement of the brain arising from the diaphragm during febrile disease'.[167] Galen also noted that 'people suffering from *phrenitis* were delirious but returned to normal behavior when the fever abated'.[168] *Paraphrosyne* in

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[157] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 142.
[158] Ahonen, *Mental Disorders*, p. 141.
[159] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 137.
[160] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, pp. 135–36.
[161] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 263.
[162] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 232.
[163] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 239.
[164] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, pp. 272–73.
[165] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 273.
[166] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, pp. 191–92.
[167] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 271.
[168] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 270.

Galen's texts had the same mental symptoms without fever, and he associated it with head trauma or drug poisoning.[169] *Paraphrosyne* denoted a wide range of mental abnormalities 'induced by metabolic, toxic or mechanical factors', and thus, as Siegel infers, it regarded patients with 'cerebral arteriosclerosis, brain tumor, involuntary psychoses, true schizophrenia or other paranoid states'.[170]

As a sidenote, it must be mentioned that interestingly, there are conditions in Galen's texts that were not described as having mental symptoms but are definitely regarded as mental disorders in modern psychology. Galen mentions *boulimia* and *pica* or *kitta* as conditions with abnormal appetites: *boulimia* was also called *kynos orexis* (dog's hunger) and involved an excessive appetite with a demand for frequent feedings, whereas *pica* was characterised by a desire to consume non-nutritious substances like earth. Galen explained *boulimia* as an 'abnormal sensation from the stomach to the brain' and attributed it to an abnormal humour that 'provok[ed] an exaggerated desire for nutrition'.[171]

The pseudo-Galenic *Liber Tertius* can be found in two Anglo-Saxon manuscripts: Cambridge, Peterhouse College, 251 and Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 14. 50.[172] Although the manuscripts where the *Liber Tertius* appears in its completeness are dated only to the 11th century well before the *Leechbooks*, Cameron believes that this work was amongst their sources.[173] Banham, however, does not recognise a connection between the texts.[174] In MS Cambridge, Peterhouse College, 251, it is bound together with Galen's *Ad Glauconem de medendi methodo* (translated into Latin around the fifth century), *Liber Aurelii de acutis passionibus*, *Liber Esculapii de chronicis passionibus*, and *De podagra* – also tentatively attributed to Galen.[175] The *Liber Tertius* often appeared together with these texts, especially after the two books of *Ad Glauconem*, hence the name 'third book'.[176] A putative medical compendium containing the above mentioned books might have been the 'prototype' for the Salernitan Gariopontus' *Passionarius Galeni*, and nearly every tenth extant pre-Salernitan medical manuscript contains the *Liber Tertius* following *Ad Glauconem*.[177] The *Liber Tertius*

For more on Banham's view see 'England Joins the Medical Mainstream: New Texts in Eleventh-century Manuscripts', in Sauer and Story (eds), *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*

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[169] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 264.
[170] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 265.
[171] Siegel, *Galen on Psychology*, p. 254.
[172] Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, pp. 136, 159.
[173] Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook', pp. 163–64.
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[175] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 136.
[176] Fischer, 'Liber Tertius', p. 106.
[177] Fischer, 'Liber Tertius', p. 107.

mentions two conditions that might be of interest to us: its first chapter *Morbi capitis* discusses diseases of the head and contains passages on *epilepsia* and *mania*.

According to the *Liber Tertius*, there are two types of epilepsy: one where the patient suddenly falls down unconscious, his limbs and neck contract and he is shaking; the other where the patient foams at the mouth and snores and his limbs do not contract when falling down – as the text notes, patients affected by this latter one are called 'demoniacus' by common people.[178] According to the text, the cause of epilepsy is that 'viscid and bitter' blood and corrupt black bile mix and their foam reaches the brain where, confusing the soul, result in its breakdown.[179] The various cures for epileptics consist of herbal drinks and poultices. Thus, epilepsy was clearly considered a 'mental disorder': it attacked the brain where 'the soul primarily resided' ('cerebrum … in quo principaliter anima habitat'). Epilepsy thus was not simply illness of the brain but a psychological condition affecting the soul itself.

The chapter on mania explains that the main traits of the condition are exceeding cheerfulness and happiness or sadness and fury; and the signs of mania are alienated speech, anxiety, hiding in darkness, suicidal tendencies, and extreme behaviour.[180] The causes of mania can be excessive black or yellow bile[181], intoxication by wine and poisonous herbs, bleeding or the brain being dry and cold.[182] The text also distinguishes between two types of mania as we have seen in earlier Hippocratic texts: a calm madness resulting from cold and dry humours,

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[178] Fischer, 'Liber Tertius', p. 298. 'Epilepsiae genera sunt duo: unum est tale, in quo cadunt subito nescientes et contractionem pedum et manu<u>m uel ceruicis seu tremorem patiuntur; aliud autem est, in quo spumant uel stertunt, non contrahunt membra, cum ceciderint, quos uulgus daemoniacos dicit'. 'There are two types of epilepsy: one kind is where they suddenly fall down unconscious and suffer contraction or tremor in the feet, hands or neck; the other is where they foam and snore, limbs not contracting when falling, [this is] what folk call *daemoniacus*' (my translation).

[179] Fischer, 'Liber Tertius', p. 298. 'Nascuntur autem haec causae de sanguine uiscido uel amaro <et> de felle nigro uitiato, quae cum se miscuerint, cerebrum petunt <bulliendo>, in quo principaliter anima habitat, quo conturbato cadunt'. 'These causes arise because the viscose and bitter blood and black bile get corrupted, they mix and boiling they rise into the brain, where the *anima* primarily sits, then confusing it the sick collapse' (my translation).

[180] Fischer, 'Liber Tertius', p. 299. 'Mania est quae amentes uel insanos facit, quorum uaria est diuersitas: Nam alii eorum laeti et hilares sunt, alii tristes et furiosi. mania<e> signa sunt haec: Aliena loquuntur, homines <timent>, in tenebris se abscondunt, aliqui autem se ferro percutiunt et praecipitant, aliqui rident, aliqui cantant. sunt et alii tristes et taciti uel omnia quae eis dicta fuerint ut obseruent faciunt, alii inoboediunt et nudi currunt uel illicita[s] faciunt'. '*Mania* is what makes people *amens* and *insanus*, who have various types: some are happy and gay, some are sad and raging. These are the signs of *mania*: alienated speech, one is scared, hides in the dark, one stabs himself with sword and attacks others, one laughs, one sings. Some are sad and silent, and they do whatever they are told, others are disobedient and run about naked and behave inappropriately' (my translation).

[181] Despite other texts using 'yellow bile', *Liber Tertius* has *coleribus uiridibus*, which is literally green bile. Fischer comments on the surprising adjective and expresses his uncertaintiy: he translates the phrase as green bile but notes '[w]enn das die zutreffende Bedeutung von uiridis an dieser Stelle ist' (115 n.35). Nonetheless, considering the secondary literature where bile is described either black or yellow, I translate this as 'yellow bile'.

[182] Fischer, 'Liber Tertius', p. 299. 'Multis etiam sine uenenis et sine colera scimus hanc causam ex uino nimio contrahitur, uel quibus solet sanguis de naribus aut ex haemorroidis uenire et non uenit, aut quibus siccum cerebrum et calidum fuerit'. 'Nevertheless, for many it is not poison or bile that triggers this effect but exceeding wine consumption, or for those whose nose or haemorrhoids bleed and it does not, or whose brain is dry and hot' (my translation).

and an agitated, 'loud' madness produced by wet and hot humours.[183] The biological explanation of mania is not as detailed as that of epilepsy; however, the description of the psychotic symptoms are much more elaborate. Although we have no explicit reference to the soul, only to the brain, to *amentes* and *insanos*, the absence of the word 'soul' does not necessarily mean that the soul was not believed to be involved – after all, it did reside in the brain that was impacted by the ailment.

One major medical work that is referred to by Bede is Cassius Felix's *De Medicina*.[184] In *Retractatio in Actus Apostolorum*, Bede quotes the opening part of Cassius Felix's text on dysentery.[185] Cameron points it out that *De Medicina* had no significant influence on Anglo-Saxon medicine,[186] furthermore, despite Bede's citation, we have no evidence that *De Medicina* in its entirety was present in Anglo-Saxon libraries. Nevertheless, Lockett mentions that an optimistic part of the scholars researching Anglo-Saxon medicine believe that 'Latin works identified as ultimate sources of the surviving Old English compilation are presumed to have been consistently available at multiple centres of learning, in their integral forms rather than solely in epitomes and digests'.[187] As for *De Medicina*, I choose the optimistic approach and include it in this discussion. The reason for this is that some Old English glosses and *Leechbook* III contain elements that resemble Cassius' writings – I discuss these in Chapter 5.

Cassius Felix was a North African Christian and wrote his handbook in the middle of the fifth century AD. His work is closer in nature and is a direct continuation of classical medicine. *De Medicina* contains three conditions that are of interest to us: frenzy, lethargy, and epilepsy – the same conditions that were discussed by Serenus Sammonicus's text.

In Cassius Felix's text, *frenesis* is clearly described as a condition affecting the mind. According to the text, *frenesis* is a change in the mind with tenacious fever and various mental symptoms; the symptoms are described as tense and increased eye movement, insomnia, slight pulse, alienated mind and *crocydismos* which is the patient's uneasy fiddling with the fingers as if picking the threads of the blanket.[188] Also characteristic are the extreme mood swings: they

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[183] Fischer, 'Liber Tertius', p. 299. 'Qui autem taciti sunt, humores infestantur frigido et sicco. qui locuuntur uel clamant, humore infestantur calido et humido'. 'Those who are silent, the humours are cold and dry. Those who chatter and cry out, the humours are warm and wet' (my translation).

[184] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 205.

[185] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 28.

[186] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 28.

[187] Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 41.

[188] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXII (ed. Rose, p. 154). 'Est autem frenesis immutatio mentis cum febre in uno perseverans … sequitur autem aegrotos … multa mobilitas oculorum cum tensione, lucubratio sive insomnietas, pulsus parvitas … mentis alienatio et crocydismos id est flocorum electio, si quidem digitis frequenter ipsi patientes operimenta attractare videantur'.

can be frenetically happy or frenetically sad.[189] The therapies involve herbal salves, poultices and phlebotomy.

Lethargy is characterised by dulling of the senses, 'forgetfulness of the mind', sleepiness and again acute fever.[190] Contrarily to Serenus and Isidore, Cassius Felix emphasises the presence of fever in this condition, which was not mentioned in any of the previous texts.

Lastly, *De Medicina* discusses epilepsy to a level of detail not encountered in the previous texts so far. Similarly to the *Liber Tertius*, the text identifies two types of this condition: one that strikes during sleep and one that seizes the limbs.[191] As a general introduction, Cassius Felix describes *epilepsia* as a condition where the body suddenly falls, the limbs are contorted and the patient foams at the mouth;[192] in addition, the patient can experience insensibility and darkening of the sight.[193] The causes of *epilepsia* are reportedly melancholic and cold phegmatic humours that inflict the brain and the nerves that descend from the brain; however, the origin is sometimes the stomach, in which case visions can torture the eye.[194] Cures for epilepsy involve herbal salves, phlebotomy and a ligature made of stones that are found in young swallows' stomachs (*chelidonius*) and never touched the ground.[195] Interestingly, the same ligature is prescribed in *Leechbook III* in the recipe for headache, temptation of the devil, *nihtgengan*, lent disease, *mære*, and evil charms. Whether it was Cassius' text that influenced *Leechbook III* remains a question, but it must be noted that this type of usage of the *chelidonius* had already been noted by Pliny as well. Thus, it was probably widespread by the time of *Leechbook III*.[196]

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[189] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXII (ed. Rose, p. 154). 'et aliquando cum hilaritate frenetizant, aliquando vero cum tristitia'.

[190] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXIII (ed. Rose, p. 155). 'Lethargici dicuntur ii qui sensibus obtusis cum oblivione mentis acuta febre iactantur. sequitur autem patientes ut supra diximus febris acuta, sensuum pressura somno similis, insensibilitas'.

[191] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXXI (ed. Rose, p. 168). 'Et sunt distantiae passionis duae. Aliquando enim sub diuerso raptu membrorum efficitur, aliquando cum somno'.

[192] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXXI (ed. Rose, p. 168). 'Est autem epilepsia subitus corporis casus cum spumatione et raptu membrorum effecta'.

[193] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXXI (ed. Rose, pp. 168–69). 'Sequitur autem patientes … subitus … insensibilitas et tenebratio'. [*Tenebratio* is ambivalent, however, the text later has 'Trociscus scotomaticis, id est qui subito ante oculos tenebras patiuntur', hence we have reason to believe that the first *tenebratio* also refers to darkening of the vision.]

[194] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXXI (ed. Rose, pp. 169). 'In his cerebrum patitur et omnis neruositas a cerebro descendens sub melancholico humore et frigido flegmate … Et si forte, ut dixi, a stomacho passio fuerit nata et cerebrum petierit, accessionis tempore fantasiae oculis efficiuntur'.

[195] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXXI (ed. Rose, pp. 172). 'Hirundininum pullum de primario fetu luna prima apprehendens aperies, et inuenies ‹lapides in uentre› unum formosum et alium malefactum. Et ita ut terram non tangant, ligabis in pelle uitulina aut ceruina et in collo aut in brachio sinistro suspendes'.

[196] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, xxx.27.

The tradition that can be seen in these antique medical texts is that there are certain conditions that affect the brain, which in turn affects the patient's behaviour since soul and mind reside in the brain. The brain is afflicted either by corrupt humours or extreme moistness, dryness, heat or cold. Thus, mental disorders are conditions where malfunction of the brain deteriorates the functioning of the mind and soul, which is visible in abnormal behaviour. The idea that mental disorders originate in the brain and in corrupt humours is also reflected in some Old English texts: e.g. Aldhelm's Latin *freneticus* is glossed as *brægenseoc* (brain-sick) in MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 146, while the term *bræcseoc* (humour-sick) is used in glossaries, gospels, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and in the *Leechbooks*. In the second part of *Bald's Leechbook*, the author connects 'evil juices, humours venom-bearing' forming in the stomach that are 'in communication with the brain' with diseases demonstrating mental symptoms.[197] Thus, traces of antique theories of mental disorders can be found in the Anglo-Saxon medical culture, which might have been planted directly from the antique texts or indirectly by medieval authors who carried further the classical ideologies.

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[197] *Bald's Leechbook* II.i (ed. Cockayne, pp. 176–77). 'Se maga biþ neah þære heortan 7 þære gelodr 7 geadortenge þam brægene of þam cumað þa adla swiþost of þæs magan intingan 7 on yflum seawum wætan atterberendum.'

CHAPTER 3. PATRISTIC AND BIBLICAL INHERITANCE: THEORIES OF MIND, SOUL, AND MENTAL DISORDERS

In the following chapter, I discuss the patristic and biblical influences that can be witnessed in the Anglo-Saxon sources. Firstly, I expound those patristic authors' views on mind, soul, and mental disorders whose works were available to the Anglo-Saxons and thus could exert their influence. Afterwards, I analyse biblical texts that deal with cases of mental disorders. This analysis serves two purposes: one is to identify certain patterns and motifs that served as cultural models for Anglo-Saxons; the other purpose is to examine the Old English vocabulary these elements were expressed with.

The Church in the early Middle Ages had a significant role in preserving antique knowledge: knowledge and learning was based on antique authors together with Christian literature. Consequently, among the learned, early medieval notions of mind, soul and consciousness drew heavily both upon antique and upon Christian ideas. Thus, while antique medical writing was largely free from religious elements, medieval medical writing was often affected by it. As described in the previous chapter, antique medical writing was by and large materialistic and organic in the sense that the origin of the various mental and physical states was thought to be derived from the ratio and quality of humours and their effect on the organs. Authors writing about medical subjects confined themselves to such materialistic-organic explanations, and as it has been shown in the previous chapter, even when discussing a delicate subject such as the soul, they did not give any implication of the supernatural being involved. In contrast, texts on medical subjects written by Christian authors are permeated with the supernatural, let alone texts concerning the mind and soul. Apart from the conservation of antique knowledge, some novel contributions were made in the Middle Ages, such as the extension of mathematics 'to the whole of physical science, a departure from Aristotelian restrictions', 'a radically new approach to the question of space and motion', and measuring instruments and special apparatus.[198] In terms of psychology and medicine, one essential medieval contribution was the ventricular theory concerning the brain that will be discussed in this chapter.

According to Lockett, amongst the various medieval ideas of mind and soul, it was Augustine's, Isidore of Seville's, and Gregory the Great's versions that were probably most

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[198] Gerard, 'Medieval Psychology', p. 316.

influential to the Anglo-Saxons, and to a minor extent Alcuin's.[199] Lockett collected a list of works which have 'available evidence for direct knowledge' in England, and these include writings by Augustine, Cassiodorus, Boethius, Gregory and Isidore.[200] She argues that Gregory's and Isidore's works were the most influential and the most widely known both geographically and chronologically and 'left their mark on many types of literature'.[201]

Regarding mental disorders, there had been a strong tendency in modern scholarship to dismiss the Middle Ages as superstitious, lacking anything scientific, and blinded by religion. The period of the early Middle Ages is seldom discussed in the discourse of medical history, and where it is, it is rather bleak, prejudiced, and stereotyped. As Pietikainen wrote in his 2015 book, 'the Middle Ages meant a regression to a mythical-religious thinking that denied the primacy of reason and natural explanations and instead looked at natural and social phenomena in supernatural and superstitious terms'.[202] He adds

> [a]n important influence on the medieval understanding of madness in Christendom was St Augustine (354-430). He divided illnesses into two groups, those that have natural causes and those that are caused by demonic possession. No prizes for guessing to which category the venerable Church Father placed mental illnesses? … The typical Christian method of treatment was to cast out demons by exorcism or by such robust physical means as whipping.[203]

Nevertheless, he does not give a quotation or a location where Augustine says this; nor does he give any source where whipping was utilised for curing madness. Luckily, scholars have recently been taken the trouble to dig deeper into the question. In the 2017 *Routledge History of Madness and Mental Health*, Trenery and Horder draws a more realistic picture: they describe both the demonic aetiology of the condition, and the somatic-humoral. In fact, the concept of mental disorders in the Middle Ages was heavily influenced by the antique medical authors. There was a strong continuation with classical medicine, sometimes imbued with Christian and folkloric elements. Medical texts in this era were by and large translations, treatises, and commentaries of earlier classical writings; hence, terminology, theory, and

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[199] E.g. Augustine's works were cited and referred to by Bede and Aldhelm; Gregory's *Dialogi* survive in MSS with Anglo-Saxon prevalence, while Isidore's *Etymologiae* or parts of it are extant in nineteen Anglo-Saxon MSS (see Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, pp. 216–225. for details).
[200] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, pp. 215–224.
[201] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, pp. 225–227.
[202] Pietikainen, *Madness*, p. 25.
[203] Pietikainen, *Madness*, p. 29.

treatment of the conditions in the Middle Ages markedly resemble those we have discussed in the previous section regarding the antique world.

By the fifth and sixth centuries, translations of Greek medical texts into Latin had already begun; thus, works of Hippocrates, Galen or Soranus could spread in the forms of books and lectures.[204] The majority of the treatises, commentaries and synopses spurting from these works link mental functions and the soul to the brain, but they do have some inconsistencies: as Lockett points out, they 'juxtapose cephalocentric doctrines with a wide array of cardocentric teachings'.[205] For instance, Vindicianus, whose *Epitome Altera* might have been available to Anglo-Saxon physicians according to Cameron,[206] displays his cephalocentric views; nevertheless, he also states that the heart has two lobes 'where the *mens* and *animus* of humans dwell'.[207]

For the patristic authors regarding the medieval conceptions of mind and soul, there is a strong connection between being intellectual and 'being human', as will be expounded in this chapter. For these authors, the mind, which is the conscious rational part of the soul, comes from God and makes humans emerge from animals. As Neaman says, '[r]eason is the single most important philosophical principle in the cosmology of the Middle Ages … it was the foundation of all the moral and theological explanations of man's physical and spiritual being which, when healthy, were called his "sanity"'.[208] Neaman explains that reason is not to be interpreted as 'the mere faculty of cerebration', but as 'order, stability and a quality of the soul inherent in that instinctive kind of wisdom which attracts men to goodness and repels them from evil'.[209] Consequently, for medieval people loss of mind, loss of rationality and of the intellectual faculties could mean deprivation of God and of being a human: 'irrationality, the extreme form of which is insanity, is a turning away from God or reason and is, for that reason, impious'.[210] Thus, as these statements indicate, it would be tempting to conclude that mental disorders were thought to be punishments for sins; however, we do not have any evidence for this idea – at least in medical or natural philosophical texts. Conditions with symptoms of mental disorders are explained either by the materialistic-organic theories we have discussed or, rarely, by invasion of hostile spirits.

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[204] Siraisi, *Medieval*, p. 6.
[205] Lockett, 'The Limited Role', p. 40.
[206] Cameron, 'The sources of medical knowledge', p. 139.
[207] Lockett, 'The Limited Role', p. 40n21.
[208] Neaman, *Suggestion*, p. 40.
[209] Neaman, *Suggestion*, p. 41.
[210] Neaman, *Suggestion*, pp. 43–4.

Hence, on the one hand, there was a strong materialistic-organic trend in scientific texts that was bequeathed by the classical authors; on the other hand, there was a strong Christian spiritual aspect of the soul and mind. This aspect allowed for the option that mental disorders were seen in the context of the supernatural. There are no examples of mental disorders inflicted by God as punishment in scientific texts; however, there are indeed instances of it in non-scientific context; furthermore, Anglo-Saxon scientific texts also exhibit the phenomenon of the supernatural as cause of mental disorder.

3.1 NEMESIUS

The ventricular theory mentioned above prevailed for over a thousand years. According to the theory, the brain contained three ventricles filled with pneuma, and each three had their respective responsibilities. The theory was established by Nemesius, Bishop of Emesa (ca. AD 340), present-day Syria, in his book *On the Nature of Man*. It may have originated from Herophilus, Erasistratus, and the Byzantine Poseidonius, 'who considered localization of function, and thought that memory was sited in the back of the brain, reason in the middle ventricle, and imagination in the anterior portion of the brain'.[211] Nemesius stated that 'the soul itself could not be localized, but functions of the mind could'; and thus, '*all* faculties of the soul are located in the ventricles, and *each* of the latter is responsible for one kind of faculty'.[212] Similarly to Poseidonius, Nemesius allocated 'the middle cerebral ventricle to cognition and reason, the anterior to sensation and the posterior ventricle to memory'.[213] The ventricular theory was embraced by many in the following millenium, including Augustine and Isidore. Augustine expounded his version in his *De Genesi ad Litteram*, which can be found in four extant Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, all four dated around the eleventh century: Durham, Cathedral Library, A. IV. 16, fols. 66–109; Lincoln, Cathedral Library, 13 (A. 1. 26); Salisbury, Cathedral Library, 114, fols. 6–122 and Salisbury, Cathedral Library, 128, fols. 1-4. According to Augustine, 'ideo tres tamquam ventriculi cerebri demonstrantur: unus anterior ad faciem, a quo sensus omnis; alter posterior ad cervicem, a quo motus omnis; tertius inter utrumque, in

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[211] Clifford, 'European neurology', p. 36.
[212] Pagel, Medieval and renaissance contributions', pp. 98–99.
[213] Pagel, Medieval and renaissance contributions', p. 98.

quo memoriam vigere demonstrant, ne cum sensum sequitur motus, non connectat homo quod faciendum est, si fuerit quod fecit oblitus'. [214]

As McIlwain proposed, the idea of the 'threefold brain' might be reflected in the following lines of *Lorica* in *Lacnunga*,:

helm hælo beo ðo westo heafde

galea salutis esto capite,

heafolan eagum ond exon þære ðryfealdan

fronte, oculis, et cerebro triforme[215]

McIlwain believes that 'cerebro triforme' echoes Nemesius' concept of the three ventricles which might have been transmitted to the Anglo-Saxons through the Practica Petrocelli.[216] Nevertheless, since Lockett believes that 'cephalocentric doctrines were actively rejected' she doubts that *exon þære ðryfealdan* refers to the theory of the three ventricles; she rather believes that the expression is only a 'structural tripartition, much like the phrase "three-forked liver" (Latin *trifidum iacor*, Old English *þriofealdan libre*), which appears later in the poem'.[217] While Lockett's point is highly plausible, it cannot be ruled out that *exon þære ðryfealdan* indeed indicates awareness of the ventricular theory, considering the fact that Augustine's and Isidore's texts could convey the idea to the Anglo-Saxons.

3.2 AUGUSTINE

The tradition of the threefold division of the soul with the 'noblest' part as the intellect is an idea whose thread stretches throughout centuries, at least from Plato on till the Anglo-Saxons (and even further). Augustine also embraced the manifold division of the soul. He says that the mind (*mens, ratio*) is a part of the soul, namely its 'best part': '[q]uis, inquam,

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[214] Augustine, *De Genesi* vii.13–14 (ed. Zycha, p. 215). 'There are three ventricles in the brain. One of these, which is in the front near the face, is the one from which all sensation comes; the second, which is in the back of the brain near the neck, is the one from which all motion comes; the third, which is in between the first two, is where the medical writers place the seat of memory. Since movement follows sensation, a man without this seat of memory would be unable to know what he ought to do if he should forget what he has done' (transl. Taylor 18–19).

[215] *Lacnunga* LXV (ed. Pettit, p. 46) 'be a helmet of safety to my head, / forehead, eyes, and triform brain' (transl. Pettit, p. 47).

[216] McIlwain, 'Brain and Mind', p. 106.

[217] Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 42.

dubitaverit, nihil aliud esse hominis optimum, quam eam partem animi, cui dominanti obtemperare convenit caetera quaeque in homine sunt? Haec autem, ne aliam postules definitionem, mens aut ratio dici potest'.[218] *Animus* can, however, also mean 'mind'.[219] Augustine distinguishes between *anima rationalis*, the seat of mind and will; *anima irrationalis,* 'whose powers of appetite, sense-perception and memory are common to men and animals', and a 'vegetable soul [*sic*]', although he uses it rather in the sense of life, i.e. non-sentient life, rather than 'soul'.[220] The vegetative soul is present in trees, bones, nails, etc; the *anima irrationalis,* whose main function is perception, is present in animals; while the 'highest level of soul [is] present in man as intelligence'.[221] Human soul, according to Augustine, can be divided into rational and irrational parts: rational are mind, understanding and will; whereas memory, sense-perception and appetite belong to the irrational part.[222] In *De Genesi ad Litteram*, which had been cited by Bede and Ælfric,[223] he further emphasises the importance of intelligence by calling the brain 'the heaven of the body': 'subuolare ostendunt in excelsum cerebri locum, tamquam in caelium corporis nostri',[224] but stresses that it is the soul which acts on the brain: '[s]ed anima in istis tamquam in organis agit, nihil horum est ipsa; sed uiuificat et regit omnia et per haec corpori consulit et huic uitae, in qua actus est homo in animam uiuam'.[225] Nevertheless, it is the mind, the senses and brain through which soul can function: 'de cuius medio uelut centro quodam non solum ad oculos, sed etiam ad sensus ceteros tenues fistulae deducuntur, ad aures … Cum igitur his quasi nuntiis accipiat anima quidquid eam corporalium non latet'.[226]

Augustine also identifies hierarchical functions of the soul:

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[218] Augustine, *Contra Academicos* I.ii.5 (Green, W. M., and K. D. Daur eds., p. 6). '"Who," said I, "would think that anything else is best in man but that part of his [*animus*] whose commands whatever else there is in man must obey? And this part, lest you ask for another definition, can be termed 'mind' or 'reason' …"' (transl. O'Meara, p. 41)

[219] O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy*, p. 7.

[220] O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy*, p. 7.

[221] O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy*, p. 11.

[222] O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy*, p. 12.

[223] For details see Lapidge, The Anglo-Saxon Library, pp. 199 and 252.

[224] Augustine, *De Genesi* vii.13 (ed. Zycha, p. 215). 'flow and rise up to the highest place, namely, the brain, which is, as it were, the heaven of the body' (transl. Taylor, p. 15).

[225] Augustine, *De Genesi* vii.13–14 (ed. Zycha, p. 215). 'it acts on [the three faculties] of the brain as on its organs. [Soul] is not the same thing as they are, but it vivifies and rules all parts, and through them it provides for the body and for this life in virtue of which man was made a living being' (transl. Taylor p. 19).

[226] Augustine, *De Genesi* vii.13–14 (ed. Zycha, p. 215). 'from this center slender ducts go out not only to the eyes but also to the other senses … It is by these messengers, therefore, that the soul perceives whatever comes to its notice in the world of bodies'. (transl. Taylor pp. 15–16).

The first and lowest *gradus* or function of soul (I) is found in vegetative and all higher forms of life: it is the life-giving power, the power of growth and organic cohesion, of self-nourishment and the conservation of the appropriate balance and measure peculiar to individual organisms (in this last connection one can also speak of their beauty, *quant. an.* 70). The second function of soul (II) is restricted to animals and men: it comprises the powers of sense-perception, movement, concentration, and awareness, appetition and avoidance, the instincts of sex and care for offspring, the ability to dream and to judge, the possession of habitual dispositions and, lastly, of memory.[227]

There is also a third *gradus* of the soul which has further degrees: (i) discursive reason concerning arts, sciences, social behaviour, language, speculation; (ii) an ethical facet concerning moral struggle and progress; (iii) moral progress, which purifies the soul; (iv) the desire to know the highest truths; and (v) knowledge of the highest truths, their contemplation and 'the understanding that God, the highest truth, is the cause and principle of all things'.[228] Traces of Augustine's ideas resonate in Alcuin's and Ælfric's views: they too consider the *anima* the 'protagonist' as opposed to the *mens*, and they also identify various natures of the soul.[229]

As for mental disorders, Augustine mentions in *De Genesi ad Litteram* that a rational human soul can become irrational, thereby becoming the soul of a beast, and that even the Scripture and 'history proclaim ... [that] men by their way of life can become like the beasts of the field'.[230] This recalls e.g. the biblical story of Nebuchadnezzar, who became 'like the beast of the field' because he lost his reason due to his pride. The same motif re-occurs in Ælfric's homilies: drifting away from God results in irrationality as intellect comes from God and if intellect is lost, man is a mere beast. A somewhat different aspect of irrationality can be observed in *De Genesi* XII: ruminating over the nature of visions and spirits, Augustine tells the story of a man who was possessed by an unclean spirit. The man 'had fever and spoke as if in delirium;' and 'his madness or possession did not yield even to the priest until he was cured of his fever, as delirious people are normally cured'.[231] A strong association between possession

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[227] O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy*, p. 13.
[228] O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy*, p. 14.
[229] See next section for details.
[230] Augustine, *De Genesi* VII.9 (ed. Zycha, p. 208). 'Sic enim fiet, ut si haec in melius commutata, erit hominis; illa quoque in deterius commutata, sit pectoris … Fieri sane homines vitae genere pecoribus similes, et ipsae res humanae clamant, et Scriptura testatur'. (transl. Taylor, pp. 11–12)
[231] Augustine, *De Genesi* XII.17 (ed. Zycha, p. 404). 'Erat autem iste febriens, et tamquam in phrenesi ista dicebat.' (transl. Taylor, pp. 201–02)

and mental disorder in the form of *phrenesis* can be witnessed here and also an emphasis on physicality: the text stresses the similarity between demon possession and *phrenesis*, while it also acknowledges that physical factors are influential on mental states.

3.3 ISIDORE

Isidore's works, especially the *Etymologiae* were some of the most frequently used books in the Middle Ages across Europe and were also works of great authority. Statements in the *Etymologiae* were treated as starting points in many fields of knowledge. Isidore's popularity in Anglo-Saxon England is well evidenced by the fact that he had been cited by several Anglo-Saxon medieval authors and copies of his works survived in monasteries all around England. Isidore's *Etymologiae* and other works are alluded to in, for example, Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Computus* and *Enchiridion*;[232] Aldhelm of Malmesbury's *Enigmata*;[233] Bede's *De natura rerum*, *De temporum ratione* and *De arte metrica*.[234] Even the so-called *Leiden Glossary* contains references to Isidore. Lapidge states that the *Etymologiae* was part of the core texts that constituted a typical Anglo-Saxon library.[235] Isidore's authority clearly prevailed in a wide geographical range throughout many centuries: *Etymologiae* was copied in manuscripts ranging from eighth century Northumbria through tenth century Canterbury to eleventh century Salisbury.[236] Lapidge lists no less than 19 manuscripts with English provenance that contain the *Etymologiae*.[237] Thus, its vocabulary and its concepts could easily be incorporated in the medieval literary corpus. As it was so popular and widely used in monasteries, Isidore's work could provide a basis for learning and knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England, and glossaries derived from it became the foundation for many other Latin translations in several knowledge domains. One example of how Isidore was integrated into Anglo-Saxon texts might be the *Vita S. Guthlaci*: as Di Sciacca demonstrated, a borrowing from Isidore's *Synonyma* (i. 28) appears almost word for word in chapter xxx when two demons try to tempt

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[232] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 271.
[233] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 181.
[234] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 212–13.
[235] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 127.
[236] For more on the prevalence of Isidore's works see Lapidge: *The Anglo-Saxon Library*.
[237] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 311.

Guthlac into fasting excessively:[238] '[q]uanto enim in hoc saeculo frangeris, tanto in perpetuum solidaris: et quanto in praesenti adfligeris, tanto in futuro gaudebis'.[239]

A complex and somewhat controversial picture of human psychology unfolds in the writings of Isidore. In the *Etymologiae,* Isidore identifies four agents: *anima, animus, spiritus* and *mens*. *Anima* is life: '[s]ed anima dicta propter quod vivit';[240] '[i]tem animum idem esse quod animam; sed anima vitae est'.[241] *Anima*-soul seems to be a driving force of life, the instinct to survive so to speak. *Anima* makes creatures alive, it 'enlivens the body'[242] but it is mind (*mens*) that renders humans the 'image of God'.[243] Mind is also the superior part of the soul: '[q]uapropter non anima, sed quod excellit in anima mens vocatur, tamquam caput eius vel oculus';[244] and it 'emineat in anima'.[245] Furthermore, the mind is responsible for various cognitive processes as part of the soul: '[p]ro efficientiis enim causarum diversa nomina sortita est anima. Nam et memoria mens est, unde et inmemores amentes. Dum ergo vivificat corpus, anima est: dum vult, animus est: dum scit, mens est: dum recolit, memoria est: dum rectum iudicat, ratio est: dum spirat, spiritus est: dum aliquid sentit, sensus est'.[246] Therefore, life is possible without mind only with soul: as Isidore says 'sine mente animam durare',[247] hence comes the term so often met in Anglo-Saxon glossaries concerning mental disorders: *amens*, meaning mindless. *Animus* and *spiritus* might be a bit more difficult to understand. However, as it unfolds in the texts, *animus* seems to be intention and deliberate thought,[248] while *spiritus* breathes,[249] 'inspires' the body and it has a 'spiritual' nature.[250]

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[238] Di Sciacca, 'Isidore of Seville', p. 142.

[239] Felix, *VG* xxx (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 98–99). 'For in so far as you are broken down in this world, you shall be made whole and firm in eternity; and to the degree that you are afflicted in this present life, so much shall you rejoice in the future'.

[240] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.10 (ed. Lindsay). 'for soul (*anima*) is so called because it is alive' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[241] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.11 (ed. Lindsay). 'some people say that the will (*animus*) and the soul (*anima*) are the same, even though soul is characteristic of life' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[242] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.13 (ed. Lindsay). 'Dum ergo vivificat corpus, anima est' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[243] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.12 (ed. Lindsay). 'Unde et ipse homo secundum mentem imago Dei dicitur' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[244] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.12 (ed. Lindsay). 'Because of this, "mind" is not the word we use for the soul, but for that which is the superior part in the soul, as if the mind were its head or its eye' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[245] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.12 (ed. Lindsay). 'eminent in the soul' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[246] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.12–3 (ed. Lindsay). 'Different terms have been allotted to the soul according to the effects of its causes. Indeed, memory is mind, whence forgetful people are called mindless. Therefore, it is soul when it enlivens the body, will when it wills, mind when it knows, memory (*memoria*) when it recollects, reason (*ratio*) when it judges correctly, spirit when it breathes forth, sense (*sensus*) when it senses something' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[247] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.11 (ed. Lindsay). 'the soul can endure without the mind' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[248] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.11 (ed. Lindsay). 'animus consilii [est]'; Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.13 (ed. Lindsay). 'dum vult, animus est' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[249] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.13 (ed. Lindsay). 'dum spirat, spiritus est' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

[250] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.10 (ed. Lindsay). 'spiritus autem vel pro spiritali natura, vel pro eo quod inspiret in corpore' (transl. Barney, p. 231).

As for the location of these agents, we can see the millennium-long debate echoing in Isidore's works. He states that the 'primary part' of the body is the head, as 'all senses and nerves originate' from there, 'every source of activity arises from [there],' 'all sensations become evident' in it, and it plays the role of the soul.[251] He also cites Augustine regarding the ventricular theory in *Liber Differentiarum.* There is no extant Anglo-Saxon manuscript of *Liber Differentiarum*, but it possibly could have been an item in a list of donated books from the tenth century.[252] In book II.17, Isidore notes beside the ventricular theory that '[i]am uero in capitis arce mens collocate est, tamquam in caelo Deus, ut ab alto speculetur omnia atque regat'.[253] In contrast, he places the soul in the *viscera;* sense perception and deliberating thought in the *praecordia;* and the origin of knowledge, wisdom and life in the heart. *Viscera* are the 'vital organs' that surround the heart, and Isidore claims that 'life, that is, the soul' is contained there.[254] About the heart, he says that 'in eo enim omnis sollicitudo et scientiae causa manet',[255] and 'in eo sit et vita omnis et sapientia'.[256] Therefore, Isidore places the seat of soul and mind in the chest but relates it to the head, too. His writing also resonates with the classical theory of the tripartite soul, where the various faculties of the soul were located in various organs directing carnal desire, desire for power and intellect: he reports that liver is said to be the 'seat of pleasure and desire', heart is the seat of knowledge, the gall bladder is the seat of anger and the spleen of laughter.[257]

As we can see, Isidore's explanations of the mind and soul are somewhat ambiguous. Lockett therefore questions their influence on Anglo-Saxon ideas:

> Discerning Isidore's influence on Anglo-Saxon concepts of mind is challenging … because of their internal contradictions. As encyclopedic works, their purpose was rather to amass information than to promote consistent and correct doctrine … It is difficult to discern how Anglo-Saxon readers may have reacted to Isidore's conflicting depictions of

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[251] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.25 (ed. Lindsay). 'Prima pars corporis caput; datumque illi hoc nomen eo quod sensus omnes et nervi inde initium capiant, atque ex eo omnis vigendi causa oriatur. Ibi enim omnes sensus apparent. Vnde ipsius animae, quae consulit corpori, quodammodo personam gerit' (transl. Barney, p. 232).

[252] Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, pp. 135–136.

[253] *Differentiarum* II.17 (ed. Sanz and Adelaida, p. 35). '[i]n the citadel of the head is located the mind, like God in heaven, so that it looks at and rules all things from on high' (transl. Throop, p. 222).

[254] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.116 (ed. Lindsay). 'Item viscera vitalia, id est circumfusa cordis loca, quasi viscora, eo quod ibi vita, id est anima, continetur' (transl. Barney, p. 238).

[255] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.118 (ed. Lindsay). 'in it resides all solicitude and the origin of knowledge' (transl. Barney, p. 238).

[256] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.143 (ed. Lindsay). 'it is the seat of all life and wisdom' (transl. Barney, p. 240).

[257] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.i.125, 127 (ed. Lindsay). 'in iectore autem consistit voluptas et concupiscientia' and 'nam splene ridemus, felle irascimur, corde sapimus' (transl. Barney, p. 239).

the mind, but most likely, neither the *Etymologiae* nor the *Differentiae uerborum* was capable of converting [them] from a heart-centred to a brain-centred view of the *mod*.[258]

It is indeed difficult to discern how much Isidore influenced Anglo-Saxon readers in the localisation of mind: texts produced by the learned Anglo-Saxons are apparently not concerned with the locus of mind. This topic is dodged by the authors as their primary focus was rather on explaining the structure and function of the mind and soul – perhaps precisely because they had so many contradictions at hand.

Isidore's descriptions of mental disorders were also significantly influential on Anglo-Saxons. In *Differentiarum II*, Isidore quotes Lactantius to explain the difference between soul and spirit and mentions that mental disorders can occur when the spirit perishes: '"Quidam, inquit, aiunt aliud esse animam qua uiuimius, aliud animum quo sentimus et sapimus." Vnde et ualente in corpore anima, nonnumquam animus perit, sicut accidere dementibus solet'.[259] For 'people who lose their mind', Isidore uses the expression *demens,* a term widely used in the Middle Ages denoting people having mental disorders. Thus, the state of being *demens* can arise due to the demise of the *animus*; however, in *Differentiarum I,* Isidore explains *dementem* with 'lack of mind', using the word *mens*.[260] The idea of mental disorders related to diminished *mens* is reflected, for instance, in Bede's writings: a demoniac is described as 'prae insania mentis nec se ipsum quis esset uel ubi esset poterat agnoscere' in the *Vita Cuthberti*.[261] The demoniac is amnesic due to an insane *mens*. A similar perception can be witnessed in Ælfric's writings: for him, the soul (in his text *sawol* and *anima*) is the intellectual entity connected to God and its demise leads to madness and doom.[262] Isidore's most important text on mental disorders, however, is book IV of *Etymologiae*.

Book IV is fully dedicated to the theory of medicine: it discusses humourism, the classification of diseases, medications, instruments of physicians and so on. Isidore states here that 'morbi omnes ex quattuor nascuntur humoribus, id est ex sanguine et felle, melancholia et phlegmate'; and parallels the humours with the four elements: blood with air, bile with fire,

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[258] Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 40.

[259] Isidore, *Differentiarum* II.27 (ed. Sanz and Adelaida*,* pp. 59–60). '"… the soul is one thing, by which we live, and … the spirit is another thing, by which we feel and know". Whence, while the soul is strong in the body, the spirit sometimes perishes, as happens in people who lose their mind' (transl. Throop, p. 235).

[260] Isidore, *Differentiarum* I.D 140. 'Demens est eujuscunque aetatis amens, et [*F*., id est] sine mente' (transl. Throop, p. 112).

[261] Bede, *VC* xli (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 290–91). 'on account of his insanity, he did not know who he was or where he was'.

[262] Ælfric's views are discussed in detail in the next section '1.2 Medieval Theories'.

black bile with earth, and phlegm with water.[263] Isidore's way of classification of internal diseases rests on the duality of the acute/chronic feature which is dependent on the humour responsible for the condition: ʻex sanguine autem et felle acutae passiones nascuntur, quas Graeci οξέα vocant. Ex phlegmate vero et melancholia veteres causae procedunt, quas Graeci χρονια dicunt'.[264] The dichotomy of acute/chronic diseases was already present in Caelius Aurelius's works which Isidore heavily relies upon.[265] The third huge group of ʻillnesses that appear on the surface of the body' is now irrelevant to us. There are no subcategories under acute or chronic diseases; Isidore lists ailments in the classical head-to-toe pattern. On these two lists, there are five conditions that may arouse our suspicion: *frenesis, lethargia, epilemsia (sic), mania* and *melancholia*. As we will see, all these conditions are attributed to the malfunction of the brain (*cerebum*) or mind (*mens*).

Frenesis and *lethargia* are acute illnesses according to Isidore, so they are caused by blood and/or bile and both affect the mind or the brain: ʻfrenesis appellata sive ab inpedimento mentis; Graeci enim mentem φρένες vocant; seu quod dentibus infrendant. Nam frendere est dentes concutere. Est autem perturbatio cum exagitatione et dementia ex cholerica vi effecta'.[266] Meanwhile, lethargy ʻa somno vocata. Est enim oppressio cerebri cum oblivione et somno iugi, veluti stertentis'.[267] Both conditions name the mind or the brain as the afflicted area and the unusual behaviour (agitation, dementia, forgetfulness, and incessant sleep) is the production of the ill brain or mind.

In the group of chronic diseases, there are three conditions that refer to abnormalities of the mind or brain: *mania, melancholia* and *epilemsia* (sic). Isidore parallels *mania* with insanity (*insania*) and madness (*furore*) and originates the word from ʻunbalanced state' or ʻdivination'.[268] He does not, however, expound the symptoms of *mania*, nor does he name the locus of this condition as the mind or the brain. Nevertheless, we include it in our analysis due

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[263] Isidore, *Etymologiae* IV.v.3 (ed. Lindsay). ʻAll diseases come from the four humors, that is, from blood, bile, black bile, and phlegm' (transl. Barney, p. 109).

[264] Isidore, *Etymologiae* IV.v.7 (ed. Lindsay). ʻAcute sufferings, which the Greeks call οξέα arise from blood and bile, whereas from phlegm and black bile come longstanding conditions, which the Greeks call χρονια' (transl. Barney, p. 110).

[265] Barney, *Etymologies*, p. 15.

[266] Isidore, *Etymologiae* IV.vi.3 (ed. Lindsay). ʻfrenzy (*frenesis*) is named either from an impediment of mind – for the Greeks call the mind φρένες – or from the sufferers' gnashing their teeth, since *frendere* is grinding of teeth. It is a disturbed state, accompanied by agitation and dementia, caused by an onslaught of bile' (transl. Barney, p. 110).

[267] Isidore, *Etymologiae* IV.vi.5 (ed. Lindsay). ʻlethargy (*lethargia*) is named after the word for sleep (cf. ληθαργία "drowsiness"). It is an overpowering of the brain, accompanied by forgetfulness and incessant sleep like that of one who is snoring' (tranls. Barney, p. 110).

[268] Isidore, *Etymologiae* IV.vii.8 (ed. Lindsay). ʻMania ab insania vel furore vocata. Nam Graecorum vetustas furorem μανικήν appellabant, sive ab iniquitate, quam Graeci +manie+ vocaverunt, sive a divinatione, quia divinare Graece μανειν dicitur' (transl. Barney, p. 111).

to its obvious relationship with mental disorders and also due to a statement made by Isidore that hints at the ventricular theory: 'mania [arises] in the memory', which reveals that *mania* was indeed thought to be located in the brain.[269] Melancholy is another condition that Isidore does not dwell on for long: he explains its name by the Greek name of black bile.[270] Again, there are no symptoms or mention of mind or brain. There is a curious statement that closes the paragraph of *melancholia*: '[n]ow epilepsy arises in the imagination, melancholy in the reason, and mania in the memory'.[271] As mentioned earlier, these phenomena are all part of the entity of soul and mind, and as Barney explains, 'Isidore here alludes to the front, middle, and back of the brain as traditionally conceived' in the ventricular theory mentioned earlier.[272]

The third chronic disease which is translated as epilepsy serves as basis for several Anglo-Saxon texts, both medical and non-medical, that discuss mental disorders. As Temkin points out, the phenomenon of *epilemsia* may or may not designate modern day epilepsy. From Isidore's account we can highlight important points that help us understand how the phenomenon of *epilemsia* was regarded and what ideas took root in the vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.

> Epilemsia vocabulum sumsit, quod mentem adpendens pariter etiam corpus possideat. Graeci enim adpensionem επιληψιαν appellant. Fit autem ex melancholico humore, quotiens exuberaverit et ad cerebrum conversus fuerit. Haec passio et caduca vocatur, eo quod cadens aeger spasmos patiatur. Hos etiam vulgus lunaticos vocant, quod per lunae cursum comitetur eos insidia daemonum. Item et larvatici. Ipse est et morbus comitialis, id est maior et divinus, quo caduci tenentur. Cui tanta vis est ut homo valens concidat spumetque. Comitialis autem dictus, quod apud gentiles cum comitiorum die cuiquam accidisset, comitia dimittebantur. Erat autem apud Romanos comitiorum dies sollennis in kalendis Ianuarii.[273]

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[269] Isidore, *Etymologiae* IV.vii.9 (ed. Lindsay). 'mania in memoria [fit]'. 'mania [arises] in the memory' (transl. Barney, p. 111).

[270] Isidore, *Etymologiae* IV.vii.9 (ed. Lindsay). 'Melancholia dicta est a nigro felle. Graeci enim nigrum μελαν vocant, fel autem χολήν appellant'. 'Melancholy (melancholia) is so called from black bile, for the Greeks call black, μελαν, and bile, χολή' (transl. Barney, p. 111).

[271] Isidore, *Etymologiae* IV.vii.9 (ed. Lindsay). 'Epilemsia autem in phantasia fit; melancholia in ratione; mania in memoria'. 'Now epilepsy arises in the imagination, melancholy in the reason, and mania in the memory' (transl. Barney, p. 111).

[272] Barney, *Etymologies*, 111n4.

[273] Isidore, *Etymologiae*, IV.vii. 5-7. (ed. Lindsay) 'Epilepsy (epilemsia) took its name because it hangs over the mind as much as it possesses the body, and the Greeks call "hanging over" επιληψια. It arises from the melancholy humor, whenever it has been excessive and has moved into the brain. This ailment is also called "falling sickness" (caduca), because the person ill with it falls (cadere) down and suffers spasms. 6. Common people call epileptics

From the first sentence, we learn that *epilemsia* seizes both the mind and the body; indeed, epilepsy exhibits both bodily and mental symptoms. Isidore offers a somatic explanation first: he believes it is induced by excessive black bile moving to the brain. The *epilemsia*-stricken person falls down with spasms and the Latin word for falling will serve as a synonym of *epilemsia*: *caduca*. Apart from the terms *epilemsia* and *caduca*, Isidore mentions three other names for this conditon: *lunaticus* as being influenced by 'forces of demons in accordance with the moon' and *larvaticus* as 'possessed by a spirit', both of which were used and believed by 'common people'. The third expression for *epilemsia* is *morbus comitialis*, a term that resonates with Serenus Sammonicus' text mentioned earlier. The authority of the *Etymologiae* and its influence on Anglo-Saxon medicine is significant: its vocabulary is used in Anglo-Saxon texts, Old English words apparently were coined based on it, glossators made use of it, and traces of it can be found integrated in various texts – which will all be discussed in the following chapters.

3.4 GREGORY THE GREAT

According to Lockett, Gregory's *Dialogi* were those texts that had the strongest influence on Anglo-Saxon thought apart from Isidore's works: 'the ideas about the soul and the mind that were most widely disseminated at all levels of literate culture were those contained in the *Dialogi*'.[274] The *Dialogi* were translated by Bishop Wærferth of Worcester into Old English by the end of the ninth century which is the earliest western vernacular translation.[275] Nevertheless, it has been estimated that the *Dialogi* had been studied in England for more than 220 years before they were translated, and evidence suggests that they were read in the Canterbury school of Theodore and Hadrian.[276]

"lunatics" (lunaticus), because they think that the insidious forces of demons follow them in accordance with the course of the moon (luna). They are also called "possessed by spirits" (larvaticus, cf. larva, "an evil spirit"). It is also called the "comitial disease", that is, a major and divine illness by which epileptics are possessed. Its force is such that a strong person suffering from it falls down and froths at the mouth. 7. It is called comitial because among the pagans, when it occurred on any day of assembly (comitium), the assembly was dismissed. Among the Romans there was a regular day of assembly on the first day of January' (transl. Barney, p. 111).

[274] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 14.

[275] Gretsch, *Ælfric*, p. 136.

[276] Gretsch, *Ælfric*, p. 136.

The *Dialogi* reveal a concept of the soul that is 'spatially distributed and able to travel spatially outside the body; it is invisible under normal conditions, but in miraculous visions the soul is frequently revealed to be an anthropomorphic shade of the individual', while the mind and the intellect are connected to the head.[277] For instance, a woman who lost her mind is recovered from her insanity by sleeping a night in Benedict's cave: 'ita sanato sensu egressa est, ac si eam numquam insania capitis vlla tenuisset'.[278] The Old English translation has *andgyt* where the Latin has *sensus*, and *insania capitis* is rendered as *ungewit oððe unhæle heafod*: 'heo uteode mid swa halum 7 gesundum 7gyte, swylce heo næfre ænig ungewit oððe unhæle hire heafodes næfde'.[279] *Andgyt*, as Low puts it, is 'an abstract quality like wisdom, an ideal virtue which mortal minds must strive to cultivate'; it is a mental faculty akin to Modern English *intellect*.[280] As shown in Isidore's *Etymologies*, the Latin word *sensus* denotes sense and perception, and indeed this meaning has survived in Ælfric's *Nativity*. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, *unhæl* means unhealthy[281] and *ungewit* in the Old English corpus is used both in the sense of stupidity, irrational deeds, and actual insanity. The Old English translation implies the idea originally found in the *Dialogi*, i.e. that both intellect and perception are connected to the head and their impairment results in mental disorder – conclusively, also a disease of the head.

In Gregory's texts, people are subject to demon possession and madness alike, but he distinguishes between the two concepts and is aware of the medical aspects of madness. In Book II dedicated to Saint Benedict, he tells the story of a monk whom an evil spirit entered and 'hine to earðan awearp 7 hine swiðlice geswæncte'.[282] This passage is translated from the Latin phrase 'in terram proiecit et vehementissime vexauit'.[283] Benedict drives out the evil spirit simply by slapping the monk's face. What is interesting to note here is the symptom of the demon possession: the afflicted person falls down like an epileptic and probably has some sort of a seizure, much like epileptics were described. Benedict is as confident in assuming demon possession as Isidore is in regarding a *caduceus* only a 'somatic epileptic', although the symptoms are strikingly similar. The sight of the collapsing and probably convulsing monk is undoubtedly demon possession for Gregory and undoubtedly somatic epilepsy for Isidore. The

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[277] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 200.
[278] Gregory II (ed. Vogüé, *Dialogues*, p. 246). 'she came out with her senses cured, as if she had never had any insanity of the head' (my translation).
[279] Gregory II (ed. Hecht, *Dialoge*, p. 176). 'she came out with such whole and healthy intellect as if she had never had an *ungewit* or unhealthy head' (my translation).
[280] Low, 'The Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 13.
[281] 'unhælu', *Bosworth-Toller*, p. 1117.
[282] Gregory II (ed. Hecht, *Dialoge*, p. 161). 'threw him to the ground and tormented him terribly' (my translation).
[283] Gregory II (ed. Vogüé, *Dialogues*, p. 220).

vast difference between the two is that beforehand Benedict meets the evil spirit going to the monastery disguised as a physician and he promptly realises that the seizure must be due to this demon. However, in Book III, Gregory tells the story of a *phreneticus* in an infirmary who was soothed and cured by Amantius, a priest with the power of working miracles:

Þa witodlice læg þær sum man on his mode gefangen mid ungewittignesse betwyh þam oðrum seocum mannum. þone swylcne seocne læcas nemniað gewitleasne. se sumre nihte, þa þa he ypte 7 forþ brohte swa wedenheort mycle stefne 7 hlude, he gedrefde ealle þa seocan men mid þam unmætum cyrmum, swa þæt nan heora ne mihte slæp niman … se ylca arwyrða mæssepreost aras of his ræste 7 eode swigende to þæs gewitleasan mannes ræste, 7 asettum his handum ofer hine he gebæd for hine, 7 him wæs sona sel … se þa fullfremedlice onfeng his agnum mode 7 gewitte.[284]

Ibi autem quidam inter aegros alios mente captus jacebat, quem medici Graeco vocabulo phreneticum appellant. Qui nocte quadam cum magnas voces, scilicet ut insanus, ederet, cunctosque aegros immensis clamoribus perturbaret, ita ut nulli illic capere somnum liceret … venerabilis presbyter de proprio stratu surgens, ad lectum phrenetici silenter accessit, et super eum positis manibus oravit … nec jam aegritudinem auxit alienam, qui perfecte receperat mentem suam.[285]

It is worth observing the respective Old English and Latin phrases in parallel:

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[284] Gregory III (ed. Hecht, *Dialoge*, p. 247–48). 'Indeed amongst the sick there lay a man whose *mod* was taken over by *ungewittigness*. Physicians call this sickness *gewitleas*. One night, when he in such *wedenheort* cried and shouted loudly, he disturbed all the other patients with the immense clamour so much so, that nobody could get any sleep … that reverend priest rose from his bed and went to the *gewitleas* man's bed, and with his hands over him, prayed for him, and the man became sound … thus he completely recovered his *mod* and *gewit*' (my translation).

[285] Gregory III (ed. Vogüé, *Dialogues*, p. 406). 'And there lay among the sick one whose mind was seized, whom the physicians call *phreneticus* in Greek. One night, being insane, he shouted very loudly and disturbed all the other sick with the immense clamor; thus, nobody there could get any sleep … The venerable priest got up from his bed, silently approached the bed of the *phreneticus*, and placing his hands over him started praying … he no longer bothered the other patients as he perfectly regained his mind' (my translation).

his mode gefangen mid ungewittignesse	mente captus jacebat
nemniað gewitleasne	phreneticum appellant
swa wedenheort	ut insanus
gewitleasan mannes	phrenetici
onfeng his agnum mode 7 gewitte	receperat mentem

Table 3.1. Terminology in *Dialogi*

What we can first notice is that the locus of madness is the *mens* in Latin, while its Old English equivalent is the *mod* as well as the *gewit.* The word *gewit* plays a key role in this paragraph: it is the stem of the expression for 'generic madness' *ungewittigness*, and of the more specific and 'more medical' phrenesis *gewitleas*, as well as for the healthy, recovered intellect. Secondly, Gregory uses the medical term *phreneticus*, and does not ascribe demon possession to this case, although the symptoms (agitated, insane shouting) might as well point to that direction. This, nonetheless, demonstrates that the Church acknowledged somatic mental disorders. Thirdly, if someone is raging with madness, he does that in a state that can be expressed in Old English as *wedenheort*.

We learn from this passage that the state of being a *phreneticus* is equal to being *insanus*, and that it inflicts the *mens*. For the Anglo-Saxons, this text carries several messages. Firstly, that insanity affects the mind; to be more precise the part of the mind that is called *mens* in Latin. Secondly, insanity is treated in infirmaries, i.e. in institution-like places established for medical treatments. Lastly, conditions appearing as insanity might not always come directly from supernatural forces and demons; however, servants of God can still wield them with heavenly power. The Old English text uses the word *gewitleas* for *phreneticus*, and the raging-shouting episode is called *wedenheort*. *Wedenheort* here is used as an adverb, but it can also function as a noun. It is a compound made up of *heorte* as the locus of the *mod* and of *wod*, the most common word for madness. Interestingly, although the opening sentence of the passage contains only the term *mod*, in the closing sentence the translator felt the need to supplement *mod* with *gewit* in connection with the complete healing of the *mens* of the *phreneticus*, implying that a complete insanity afflicts both the *mod* and the *gewit*.

3.5 THE OLD TESTAMENT

When thinking about mental disorders in the Old Testament, the first things to pop into mind are probably the famous madmen of the Bible: Nebuchadnezzar[286] and Saul.[287] They serve as archetypes for madness in a Christian context. Indeed, there are two major types of mental disorders in the Bible: one induced by God as a punishment or a test, and one induced by demons; although madness in this latter case is also indirectly sent by God as He allows the demons to invade the body. Demon possession too can be either a punishment, a test, or can happen due to no apparent reason. Turner identifies two other groups, that of internal and external causes. Internal causes can be evil spirits or 'the collapse of internal rationality [that] could lead to spiritual and rational poverty (Nebuchadnezzar), fury (Magdalene), anxiety (King Saul), or illness (the epileptic demoniac)'; while external causes can be e.g. sources of torment.[288] Nevertheless, these appear to be rather sub-groups of the two major ones above. Turner also argues that these Biblical archetypes were strongly influential on medieval views of madness. She states that

> medieval persons perceived the mentally incapacitated as either already in a state of punishment from God, or as innocents tormented by demons and in need of an exorcist and a prayer. These two conflicting concepts of punished sinner and afflicted innocent left medieval English communities unable to fully reject or fully embrace the mentally incapacitated; therefore, communities protected the mentally impaired and disabled from harming themselves or others and beyond this did little to help or hinder them in society.[289]

The Old Testament indeed was a major influence on Old English Literature. It served as a source 'for about a third of the extant poetry and for a large part of the prose, as well as influencing other writings'.[290] Complete Bibles were a rarity in the Middle Ages; the earliest surviving complete Vulgate is the Codex Amiatinus, written in Anglo-Saxon England and

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[286] 4 Daniel
[287] 1 Samuel
[288] Turner, *Care and Custody*, p. 21.
[289] Turner, *Care and Custody*, p. 28.
[290] Godden, 'Biblical literature', p. 206.

brought to Italy as a gift by Abbot Ceolfrith.[291] Nevertheless, part-Bibles were overwhelmingly common in Anglo-Saxon England. Marsden estimates the number of biblical volumes to 'some 1000, but perhaps nearer 1500' up until the middle of the ninth century only.[292] There is evidence both for imported Bibles coming from Italy and Ireland and for Bibles copied in England; and part-Bibles were already translated to Old English as early as the time of Bede.[293] In fact, one Old English Hexateuch, MS Cotton Claudius B IV contains the earliest known illustration of the Horned Moses:

'Horned Moses' MS Cotton Claudius B. IV 136v[294]

Even if biblical volumes might not have been produced for the use of the laity, Old Testament stories in a new metric and heroic form could spread amongst common people, and thus, biblical ideologies could also be conveyed and made popular. We need only to think of Bede's famous story of Cædmon, a lay brother, who tended to the animals of the monastery of Whitby and miraculously started to sing songs of biblical themes. The popularity of the Bible is also attested by the Exeter Book, in which poetic riddles are concerned with biblical topics, e.g. the answer for *Riddle* 46 is Lot's challenging family relations. The poem of Daniel in the Junius manuscript is yet another example for heroic biblical poetry tailored to suit pugnacious Anglo-Saxon tastes. It dresses the biblical story in a heroic metric poem, thus bringing it closer to the Anglo-Saxon audience. *Daniel* also bears witness to the Old English rendering of Nebuchadnezzar's madness. In the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar was punished because of his pride,

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[291] Marsden, 'Biblical manuscripts', p. 406.
[292] Marsden, 'Biblical manuscripts', p. 433.
[293] Marsden, 'Biblical manuscripts', p. 428.
[294] http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_claudius_b_iv_fs001r accessed: 04/12/2017

but the punishment was more like a benevolent rebuking. His insanity was sent directly by God due to his sin: as soon as his thoughts of pride formed in his mind and his mouth, he lost his sanity in line with his dream. The Anglo-Saxon poet expresses this with the lines, 'his mod astah, / heah fram heortan'[295] thence having 'wodan gewitt'[296]. North notes that 'the rising *mod* inhibits the faculty of rational perception: … too much *mod* overwhelms the man whom, in smaller doses, it helps'.[297] And as soon as Nebuchadnezzar repented of his sin after 7 years, his mind cleared. As Turner put it, due to his sin, Nebuchadnezzar 'is actually stripped of his humanness, a defect that places him in the category of being human in form but not in substance – a mental incompetent'.[298]

The other famous archetype is Saul's insanity, which is sent indirectly by God by means of an evil spirit. The reason was his disobedience, and the madness was as much a punishment from God as an event obeying the 'law of nature'. By Saul's anointment, the 'Spirit of the Lord' filled him, but it departed from him due to his misbehaviour and along came a tormenting spirit instead. In Biblical times, prophets were thought to be possessed and even insane to a certain extent due to their odd behaviour.[299] Saul was seen prophesying at least twice prior to his possession, and as such, his personality was already prone to altered states of consciousness and possession. From time to time, when Saul had negative and sinful thoughts, the Lord sent this evil spirit to aggravate Saul's situation. The evil spirit kept torturing him by twisting his sanity into insanity. In his adaptation of the biblical story, Ælfric describes it as 'se yfela gast hine drehte mid deofollicum sticelsum and on ungewitte his mod awende'.[300] Saul's insanity is echoed in Bede's account of king Eadbald's madness in Book II.v of the *HE*, where a tormenting spirit drives the king crazy on Saul's analogy.[301] The two archetypes of Saul and Nebuchadnezzar indicate that certain behaviours, and especially disobedience to God, can result in demon possession and madness.

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[295] *Daniel* (ed. Krapp, p. 128). 'his *mod* ascended / high from his heart' (my translation)
[296] *Daniel* (ed. Krapp, p. 128). 'crazed thought' (my translation)
[297] North, Pagan Words, p. 69.
[298] Turner, *Care and Custody*, p. 22.
[299] Rosen, *Madness*, p. 36.
[300] Ælfric, 'Sermo excerptus de Libro Regum' 10–11 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.xviii, 384–413, at 384). 'and the evil Spirit troubled him with diabolic instigations and turned his reason into madness'.
[301] See Chapter 4.2

3.6 THE GOSPELS

The most copied and disseminated part of the Bible were the Gospels.[302] Although there is no evidence that the Gospels were available in the vernacular earlier than the second half of the tenth century, their vocabulary and imagery might have been a huge impact on Anglo-Saxon culture conveyed by homilies and preachers. The idea of demon possession permeating the Gospels, though not entirely alien to the Anglo-Saxon mind, was a significant factor in forming the Anglo-Saxon perception of mental disorders. A hostile supernatural force that invades victims' bodies and produces mental symptoms is a uniform and ubiquitous notion in the whole world (or at least was in certain points of time); it is well documented in medieval sources across Europe; and it was inherent in Anglo-Saxon culture as well. Nevertheless, the hostile nature of the intruder is not so obvious: spirit possession can also be divine, and there are also present-day possessions that are not diabolic or demonic, but come instead from the 'lighter side' of the supernatural. As we shall see in the next chapter, some[303] argue that this could have been the case originally amongst pre-Conversion Anglo-Saxons, and it was the Christian teachings, especially the Gospels that painted the possessing agents black.

The Gospels, including the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the *Vindicta Salvatoris* mention demon possession cases more than 30 times and other mental disorders three times. The most common Latin expression for demon possession is *daemonium habens*, which is translated to Old English as *deofol-seocnys* in most of the texts and as *diowl hæbbende* in the Lindisfarne Gospels. The term is used both as noun and adjective, as 'having *the devil-sickness*' and as 'being *devil-sick*'; but terms such as *mid deofle gedreht* 'tormented by devil' (e.g. Matthew XV.22) or *deofol sticað on* 'devil sticks to him/her' (John VII.20) also occur. Descriptions of demoniacs in the Gospels could provide material both for detailed imagery and further vocabulary for Anglo-Saxons. Descriptions of the behaviour of demoniacs could also serve as identifying symptoms in a medical context. Characteristic signs were raging fury, extreme strength, falling down in convulsions, foaming at the mouth and gnashing teeth:

þa wæron swiðe reðe, swa þæt nan man ne mihte faran þurh þone weg[304]

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[302] Marsden, 'The biblical manuscripts', p. 408.

[303] See e.g. Jolly, *Popular Religion*

[304] Matthew VIII.28 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 17) 'they were so violent that no one could pass that way'

… and he wæs mid racenteagum gebunden and mid fotcopsum gehealden: and toborstenum bendum he wæs fram deofle on westen gelædd[305]

se, swa hwær swa he hine gelæcð, forgnit hine, and toþum gristbitað and forscrincð[306]

In fact, descriptions like these could help Anglo-Saxons discern the difference between demon possession and 'native' mental afflictions like *ælf*-sickness. The way devil-sickness and *ælf*-sickness was handled in leechbooks implies that their nature was thought to be similar, but the two conditions themselves were undoubtedly distinguished because remedies for them in the leechbooks are often grouped together, but they have separate treatments.

There is one instance where the Latin *daemonium habens* is not translated with the devil-sickness term but with *wod* in the Corpus Christi Gospel: John VIII.48-49:

Witodlice þa iudeas andswaredon and cwædon to him; Hwi ne cweþe we wel þæt ðu eart samaritanisc and eart wod. Se hælend andswarude and cwæð. ne eom ic wod ac ic arwurþige minne fæder. and ge unarwurðedon me[307]

responderunt igitur Iudaei et dixerunt ei nonne bene dicimus nos quia Samaritanus es tu et daemonium habes respondit Iesus ego daemonium non habeo sed honorifico Patrem meum et vos inhonoratis me[308]

However, the Lindisfarne and Rushworth texts faithfully translate the respective parts as 'samaritanisc arð ðu 7 diuul / diowlum hæfes … ic diuul / diowol ne hafo'.[309] A member of the *wod*-lexemes also turns up in John X.20 as a translation of *insanit*:

manega hyra cwædon. deofol is on him and he [wet] hwi hlyste ge him[310]

dicebant autem multi ex ipsis daemonium habet et insanit quid eum auditis[311]

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[305] Luke VIII.29 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 117) 'and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness'

[306] Mark IX.17 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 80) 'and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away'.

[307] John VIII.48–49 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 176).

[308] John VIII.48–49 'then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me'.

[309] John VIII.48–49 (ed. Tamoto, *Rushworth*, p. 290; Skeat, *Gospels* IV, 85).

[310] John X.20 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 179).

[311] John X.20 'And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?'.

These two sections of John show evidence of the strong connection that was formed in Anglo-Saxons' minds between the state of devil-possession and the state of *wodnys*. In the first instance, the state of being *wod* is used as a synonym of demon-possession, and the second instance shows being *wod/wet* and *insanit* as a cause of being demon-possessed.

The Latin word *lunaticus* also occurs in the Gospels which is translated as epilepsy in modern editions of the Bible. Epilepsy-like conditions have long been ascribed to the moon: the belief has been well attested already since early Hellenic times.[312] In the Gospels, references to *lunatics* are somewhat deluding: on the one hand, they are mentioned as a different category beside demoniacs (e.g. Matthew IV.24); on the other hand, a lunatic boy is cured by expelling a demon (Matthew XVII.15). As already discussed previously, epilepsy was by and large identified in Hellenic times and was considered to have natural causes,[313] but 'confusion of epilepsy with mental disorders became marked during the long transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages';[314] and this might be imputed to the Gospel's enormous influence on all aspects of culture. Similarly to the twofold representation in the Gospels, epilepsy was thought to have natural and supernatural causes in the Middle Ages: e.g. as we have already seen at Isidore and Origen, the causes might have been the courses of the moon or demons using the courses of the moon. Origen resorts to a materialistic-humoral theory, but he conflates it with the explanation of demons, thus producing a hybrid approach to the question of lunacy and at the same time encouraging the blurring together of epilepsy, mental disorder, and demon possession, following the pattern of the Gospels. Whether the moon was originally believed by Anglo-Saxons too to cause mental disorders or epilepsy is hard to say. Still, the Cambridge commentator also explains lunacy by a hybrid theory that resembles Origen's: '*Lunaticus* est cuius minuente luna minuatur uel mutatur cerebrum et, intrante daemone per narem, dementem facit. Aliter lunatici dicuntur qui incipiente lune uel in medio siue in fine cadunt et prosternuntur'.[315] In this explanation, different approaches are neatly merged: the materialistic-organic aetiology of epilepsy represented by the connection of the moon and falling down; the materialistic-organic aetiology of a malfunction of the brain again due to the moon; and demonic possession as cause of mental disorder or *dementia*. But let us pause for a minute at

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[312] See e.g. Temkin, *The Falling Sickness*, Chapters 1–2.

[313] Nevertheless, it has to be noted that epilepsy-like symptoms did not always represent the condition that is diagnosed as epilepsy by modern medicine.

[314] Temkin, *The Falling Sickness*, p. 96.

[315] Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, p. 404–5. '*Lunatic* [XVII. 14] is someone whose brain diminishes or changes as the moon wanes and, with a demon entering through his nostrils, makes him demented. Otherwise lunatics are said to be those who, with the moon waxing, full or waning, fall down and prostrate themselves'.

this explanation. Firstly, the waning of the moon changes the brain. Then, or at the same time, a demon enters through the nostrils and makes the person demented. Becoming demented does not necessarily follow the change in the brain caused by the moon. It is the demon that causes dementia, and the moon only modifies the brain making it susceptible to the demon-induced dementia. It seems that the moon is an important factor in letting a demon into one's head. The second sentence reveals the belief that there was, in fact, a non-demonic version of lunacy. Perhaps those paroxysms that resulted only in syncope and did not display any 'fancy' mental symptoms were recognised as natural.

The *lunaticus* of the Anglo-Saxon Gospel texts is translated by various terms in different manuscripts: *monoðseoc*, *fylle-seoc*, *bræc-sec* and *monsek*:

	Lindisfarne Gospels London, British Library Cotton MS Nero D. IV	Rushworth Gospels Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auctarium D. 2. 19	Gospel in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 140	Gospel in Cambridge, University Library, Ii. 2. 11
(Mt) heading 61	Bræcceic	-	-	-
Mt IV.24	bræc-sec	mon-sekae	Monoðseoce	monaðseoce
Mt XVII.15	bræccec	monsek	Fylleseoc	Fylleseoc

Table 3.2. Translations of *lunaticus* in the Gospels

Monoðseoc, *fylleseoc* and *bræc-sec* also occur in Old English medical texts, however, *monsek*, the term whose literal meaning stands closest to *lunaticus*, with *mona* meaning the moon, does not appear in any other extant text and thus appears to be a calque.[316] The choice of *monsek* and *monoðseoc* raises many questions. What is the reason behind the different choices if such a perfectly fitting calque as *monsek* was at hand? What is the background of the word formation of *monoðseoc*? Is it based on the calque, or did it develop independently? Did either *monsek* or *monoðseoc* have any roots in pre-Conversion Old English or are they both the by-products of

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[316] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', p. 241n59.

continental learning? If the latter, did either of them spread in popular language and culture or did they remain stuck between the manuscript bindings? While it is probably impossible to answer all these questions, some tentative suppositions can be made.

According to the Bosworth-Toller dictionary, *mon* and *mona* mean moon and *monaþ* means month.[317] Although primarily meaning month, *monaþ* is closely related to the moon. In fact, *monaþ* and *mona* are so closely related etymologically that *mona* is sometimes used as an adverb signifying time. Still, the dictionary does not list any word that suggests that the word *monaþ* tended to be shortened as *mon*, thus we can reject the idea that *monsek* is a shorter variant of *monoðseoc*. The words *monaðadl* and *monaðseoc* both occur in various texts in relation to menstruation – so to a 'monthly' malady, although allegedly in connection with the *moon* but apparently in a much tighter connection to the *months* considering that the word *monað* is used. *Monaðadl* as menstruation occurs in prohibitive Christian texts in the corpus, thus, we do not know for sure whether menstruation was conceived of as a 'monthly disease' or a condition in relation with the moon in pre-Conversion Old English. Unfortunately, a gynaecological section that would have been extremely valuable in dealing with the matter is subject to a hiatus in *Bald's Leechbook*. In addition to menstruation, several antique and medieval texts attest to the recognition of periodically recurring mental diseases that turn up monthly, but are not necessarily dependent on the moon. Hence, whether *monoðseoc* was chosen based on the relationship with the moon or with regularly and monthly recurring maladies remains a puzzle. It is also possible that the word *monoðseoc* was more versatile, more familiar to the everyday Anglo-Saxon and it conquered the space of *monsek*. Moreover, the lack of surviving examples of *monsek* and the fact that *lunaticus* is translated with several different terms in other texts implies that there was no straightforward idea rooted deep in Anglo-Saxon minds that involved mental disorders connected to the moon. Possibly, the calque did not turn out to be too popular as it did not have any native predecessor, and the more supple *monoðseoc* was formed on the shoe-last of *monsek*.

Bræcsec and *fylleseoc* are also important elements in the Old English vocabulary of mental disorders. Both terms are used in leechbooks as well. According to the *DOE*, *bræcseoc* is a 'term describing abnormal behaviour, probably epilepsy (regarded as a form of lunacy or possession by the devil): epileptic, lunatic, possessed'.[318] The etymology of *bræcsec* or *bræcseoc* is debated: on the one hand, *bræc-* can be interpreted as falling, breaking down. *Bræc*

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[317] 'mon' and 'monaþ', *Bosworth-Toller.*
[318] 'bræcseoc', *DOE.*

is the 'action of breaking'[319] and it is also the past tense of *brecan*, 'to break, burst'.[320] It also means phlegm, 'rheum, catarrh', and according to the *DOE* it glosses the Latin *rheuma* in British Museum, MS Additional 32246. Thus, it is believed that the term *bræcseoc* refers to the role of humours in the condition. McGowan states that the *bræc-* compound 'seem[s] rather likely to refer to physical symptoms of epilepsy, the frothing, coughing, and respiratory difficulty associated with epileptic seizure'.[321] As opposed to this, Hall originates the term in Isidore's concepts about epilepsy: '*bræccoþu* and *(ge)bræcseoc* probably reflect Isidore's association of *epilepsia* with *melancholia*, an excess of phlegm'.[322] However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the theory of corrupt humours as the cause of epilepsy was a widespread notion permeating all antique and medieval medical texts, thus Anglo-Saxons had ample source to embrace the idea and recycle in their vocabulary. Nevertheless, many other diseases were thought to have been caused by the excess of phlegm apart from epilepsy, hence it is a puzzle why this particular condition would receive the sole privilege of being called phlegm-sickness.

Fylleseoc seems to reflect the falling nature of epilepsy: *fyll* means falling, destruction, a collapse[323] and Hall believes it to be a calque translated from *morbus caducus* that we have mentioned in the previous chapter.[324] Although it is self-explanatory and descriptive enough to be a native Old English expression as well.

Considering the highly diverse contexts of *daemonia habens* and *lunaticus*, the Gospels must have been confusing for Anglo-Saxons, to say the least, if they wanted to grasp what phenomena *daemonia habens* and *lunaticus* encompassed; probably this is reflected by the different translations. The first instance of *lunaticus* appears beside *paralyticus* and *daemonia habens* in Matthew IV.24:

and ða ferde hys hlisa into ealle syriam; and hi brohton him ealle yfel hæbbende missenlicum adlum. and on tintregum gegripene; And þa ðe deofolseocnyssa hæfdon; and monoðseoce, and laman and he þa gehælde.[325]

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[319] 'bræc', *DOE*.
[320] 'brecan', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[321] McGowan, 'Elves', p. 117.
[322] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', 241 n59.
[323] 'fyll', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[324] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', 241 n59.
[325] Matthew IV.24 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 8).

Et abiit opinio ejus in totam Syriam, et obtulerunt ei omnes male habentes, variis languoribus, et tormentis comprehensos, et qui daemonia habebant, et lunaticos, et paralyticos, et curavit eos[326]

This passage suggests that a devil-sick person and a moon-sick person are inflicted with two different maladies; *lunaticus* and *daemonia habens* are two separate categories. The fact that they are listed as separate entities indicate that a moon-sick person was different from a devil-sick person and *vice versa*, thus, a moon-sick person is not to be afflicted by devils. Yet, the next instance in Matthew XVII.14-17 speaks of a moon-sick boy who needs to have a demon expelled and the Latin text uses the term *lunaticus*. The Old English translation is *fylleseoc*:

And þa he com to þære menegu. him to genealæhte sum mann gebigendum cneowum toforan him, and cwæþ; Drihten, gemiltsa minum suna forþam þe he ys fylleseoc. and yfel þolað; oft he fylþ on fyr. and gelomlice on wæter. and ic brohte hyne to þinum leorningcnihtum; and hig ne mihton hyne gehælan; Ða andswarode he hym; Eala ge ungeleaffulle and þwyre cneores, hu lange beo ic mid eow. hu lange forbere ic eow; bringaþ hyne to me hider and þa þreade se hælend hyne. and se deofol hyne forlet; and se cnapa wæa of þære tide gehæled;[327]

The Lord also adds that this type of demon can only be expelled by strict fasting and prayer. Thus, this section connects moon-sickness with demons. It also provides a detailed description of what symptoms someone with this condition has: he or she falls into fire and water. The Anglo-Saxons apparently concentrated on the falling part: many manuscripts use the term *fylleseoc* here. This passage thus not only connects demons to moon-sickness, but also to falling-sickness.

The last term that needs mention is *dysig*. *Dysig* might have been used for what is called 'intellectual disability' in modern scholarship,[328] but it also had the broader sense of acting

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[326] Matthew IV.24 'And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them'.

[327] Matthew XVII.14–17 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 36). 'And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour'.

[328] e.g. Irina Metzler, *Fools and Idiots?: Intellectual Disability in the Middle Ages* or the WHO

stupid. The Gospels only have instances of this latter meaning. For example, in Matthew VII:26, the story of the *dysigan men* that builds his house on sand instead of rock; this *dysig* man most probably was not intellectually disabled, but only someone who was plainly stupid. The threshold between an ID *dysig* and a plain *dysig* must have been a broad and obscure one for Anglo-Saxons – but probably for modern day common people too, for that matter.

The vocabulary used in the Gospels does not make a sharp and obvious distinction between demon possessions and somatic mental disorders. Hence, the Old English translations of the Gospels do not exhibit a consistent use of expressions either. The message the Gospel translations convey to Anglo-Saxon readers is that demon possession and somatic mental disorders may or may not be distinguished: terms that are used for somatic mental disorders in medical texts (*brǣcseoc*, *fylleseoc*) are applied to cases of demon possession, and somatic mental disorders may be induced by demons.

The general conceptions about mind, soul, and consciousness, are both homogeneous and contradictory in the patristic authors' texts. On the one hand, ignoring the subtle divergences,[329] we can conclude that in these sources, the soul is incorporeal, the mind is its main part that bears the most likeness to God and also bears rationality, thus placing humans above animals. On the other hand, there was no consensus over the location of soul and its main part the mind. How much of these theories has been embraced by Anglo-Saxons at certain periods of time is uncertain; nevertheless, Lockett believes that '[Anglo-Saxon] authors' grasp of patristic philosophies of mind cannot be considered representative of that of ordinary Anglo-Saxons, or even of the men and women of various levels of learning who recorded most of the OE and Anglo-Latin references to the mind that have come down to us'.[330] Lockett argues that the absence of cephalocentric features in vernacular Old English literature means that Anglo-Saxons rejected cephalocentrism and these authors' ideas altogether. However, the texts were at the monks' disposal in certain monasteries, and we have no reason to doubt that they were read, that their grains were sown in the ground of the readers' minds and that their ideas were conveyed to ordinary Anglo-Saxons quite successfully. In fact, as Blair points out, there was a very lively interaction between monasteries and the lay population: they functioned as 'estate and production centres, markets, protected zones, shrines, mausolea of the great and sources of charity' for the laity.[331] As Bethell summarises the role of minsters, '[the monastery] was a craft

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[329] For a detailed description of Christian theories of mind and soul that could be relevant for Anglo-Saxons see Lockett's *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies* chapter 4.

[330] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 14.

[331] Blair, *The Church*, p. 261.

centre where metal-workers, painters, musicians were trained … [monasteries] were educational centres where there were learned men who could explain the movements of the stars, the workings of the universe, the course, reason and nature of human history, the purpose and ends of man'.[332] Hence, monasteries could be favourable ground for spreading these ideas amongst the 'ordinary' Anglo-Saxons. Whether the laity and the clergy discussed metaphysical matters and to what extent these theories infiltrated Anglo-Saxon medical culture is debatable. In addition, as Lockett puts it, even though the texts themselves were available, we must not assume that they were 'the "default" opinion for any early medieval individual who had enough education to copy a manuscript'.[333] Nevertheless, the reason for the lack of cephalocentric ideas in vernacular Old English literature might as well be ascribed to the internal contradictions of the theories: on the one hand, Anglo-Saxons might have welcomed the contradictory elements with suspicion and did not embed them in their literature; on the other hand, they might have embraced only those parts that were in line with their native ideas and ignored the dubious parts.

As regards mental disorders in the patristic authors' works, we can state that the somatic approach to mental disorders had a long tradition in medieval Christianity. The medieval medical and scientific approach to mental disorders is closely related to the antique theories. The somatic-organic perception was bequeathed by classical authors, and it continues to be the prevailing line of thought, with Christian ideas possibly only adding a slight flavouring: in natural philosophical texts, certain Christian elements might occur, but the overall approach remains somatic. The Latin sources available to the Anglo-Saxons link mental functions to the brain. However, as Lockett says, 'it does not necessarily follow that these cephalocentric doctrines were accessible throughout the Anglo-Saxon period; nor that they were assimilated into Anglo-Saxon thought even if they were accessible; nor that the localization of the *anima* or of a few specific mental faculties in the brain was tantamount to the localization of the *mod* in the brain'.[334]

In the Old Testament, stories of madmen imply that insanity can inflict a person as a punishment from God, or it can come obeying a 'natural law' if someone opposes God. It is not a punishment in a strict sense, but more like a consequence if God's will is violated, so a consequence if the right order of things is offended. Bede utilises this idea in his narration of Eadbald on Saul's analogy. In the Old English versions of the Gospels, there is already a hint of the distinction between 'supernatural' madness and 'profane' madness with natural-somatic

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[332] Bethell, 'The Originality', p. 44.
[333] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 214.
[334] Lockett, 'The Limited Role', p. 40.

causes, at least vocabulary-wise: terms expressing mental disorders with a somatic aetiology occur; however, the condition they denote is unclear and might be of supernatural origin. The threshold between supernatural and profane madness is not clearly defined, the descriptions of the conditions seem to be inconsequent and might be confusing for the medieval reader. The distinction is also reflected in Old English writings and translations, but the confusion also percolates. The Gospels paint a more vivid and detailed picture of the 'form' of insanity and demon possession, which gives a firm base both for religious purposes, like describing possession in hagiographies, but also for natural scientific purposes, like recognising a demoniac in an infirmary and thus applying the right cure. In the Gospels, as opposed to the Old Testament, the reason for insanity and possession shifts from punishment to random accident and to various reasons that fit in God's plan. Victims of demon possession can be innocent, as Christ introduced the idea in the case of the man born blind. This haphazard way of demons choosing victims is best illustrated in the hagiographies. Gregory's writings demonstrate a further step of the evolution of the idea of insanity: the difference between profane and supernatural madness is acknowledged and highlighted, reflecting the time's medical advancements. It is also revealed that madness affects the *mens*. Thus, the metaphysical location of madness was pinned down in Gregory's writings and the Old English word *mod* was used as a translation.

The forthcoming chapters reveal how much of these ideas have been embedded in Old English texts. Nevertheless, if we suppose that the texts discussed above were roughly the only available sources to Anglo-Saxons regarding mental disorders, then we can conclude that a clear 'clinical picture' of madness was not presented to them. Since most plausibly the major medical works were not present in Anglo-Saxon libraries, they only had vague, confusing definitions, laconic descriptions, and biblical topoi. Therefore, they had to build up their ideas from scratch including native elements.

CHAPTER 4: ANGLO-SAXON AUTHORS ON THE THEORIES OF MIND, SOUL AND MENTAL DISORDERS

In this chapter I analyse those texts that were written by Anglo-Saxon authors to see their perspectives on mind, soul, and mental disorders. Analysis of their works reveals how much of the Graeco-Roman medical and the patristic-biblical ideas infiltrated the written culture. The main traits outlined in the previous chapters are echoed in the Anglo-Saxon authors' works which shows the dynamic interaction between the three different cultures.

4.1 ALCUIN

The bridge that spans Augustine, Isidore, Gregory and the Anglo-Saxons both geographically and chronologically is Alcuin. Living in the eighth century Carolingian Empire but never fully seceding from his homeland,[335] he writes 'as a moral counselor imparting doctrinal ideas as well as moral-ethical standards [and] combines ideas from several sources, most notably Augustine's *De Trinitate* and *De Genesi ad Litteram Libri XII*, but other Augustinian works, Isidore and Lactantius are sources too'.[336] His treatise *De Animae Ratione* is often considered as the beginning of psychological literature in the Middle Ages,[337] and it is extant in three Old English manuscripts ranging from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. In *De Animae Ratione*, he follows the

> traditional view, passed down to him through Augustine, that the soul embraces intellect, passion, and desire … [and] goes on to say that the principal part of the soul is the mind (mens) and is soon equating the soul with the rational mind … [Thus] Alcuin takes the soul as more or less identical with the conscious, rational mind.[338]

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[335] Besides his return to England, he also had vigorous correspondence from the Continent with the British Isles throughout his entire lifetime; see details e.g. in Bullough, Donald A. *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
[336] Szarmach, 'A Preface', p. 397.
[337] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', p. 271.
[338] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', p. 272.

De Animae Ratione was written as a letter to 'Eulalia', the alias of abbot of Corbie's sister.[339] The purpose of the letter is to teach Eulalia about the nature of the soul, because learning the nature of the soul teaches about the nature of God and '[n]ec aliquid magis homini in hac mortalitate vivente necessarium est nosse quam Deum et animam'.[340] Alcuin describes the soul as having a tripartite nature one of which is the rational mind; in addition, the soul is divine, hence it is the better part of man and it should control the body's deeds:

> Et haec sola anima nobilis est si illum amat a quo est quod est, qui illa talem creavit ut in se sui ipsius imaginem et similitudinem haberet impressam et digna Dei esset habitatione secundum modum quem quaelibet creatura in se creatorem habere possit; sic ordinate ut id quod sibi excellentius est, id est Deus, tota amaret intentione et id quod sibi inferius est, id est carnem, toto regeret studio. Proinde igitur quia melior pars est hominis anima decet eam dominam esse et quasi de sede regalis culminis imperare quid, per quae, vel quando, vel ubi, vel quomodo faciat membra.[341]

We can see here similar ideas to what have previously been discussed: Alcuin too states that the soul is the 'better part of man', and the reason is that the soul bears the image of its Creator, God can dwell in the soul, hence the soul has a leading role. But it remains divine only if it obeys God's rules and controls the body's deeds – and the part of the soul that helps in this is *mens*. Alcuin says that the structure of the soul is threefold and one part of it is the rational *mens*: 'Triplex est enim animae ut philosophi volunt natura. Est in ea quaedam pars concupiscibilis alia rationabilis tertia irascibilis … Sed his duobus (id est concupiscentia et ira) ratio quae mentis propria est imperare debet'.[342] Thus, it is the rational *mens* that must rule the other two appetitive and passionate parts of the soul and it also has to rule the actions of the body. He emphasises that it is only the rational *mens* that raises humans above animals: '[s]icut enim loquela praecellit in carne ceteris animantibus ita et in anima ratione sola nobilior est eis;

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[339] Lockett, Anglo-Saxon Psychologies, p. 281.

[340] Alcuin, *De Animae Ratione* (ed. and transl. Curry, 'Alcuin' pp. 39–40, 73). 'nothing in this mortal life is more important for man to know than God and his own soul'

[341] Alcuin, *De Animae Ratione* (ed. and transl. Curry, 'Alcuin' pp. 40–41, 74). 'And only that soul is noble which loves the source of its essence, Who made it such that it might have in itself the impress of His own image and likeness and be a fit dwelling-place of God, insofar as any created being may have its creator in itself; and only that soul is noble which is disciplined to love what is above it – namely God – with all its power, and to control what is beneath it – the body – with all effort. Accordingly therefore, since the soul is the better part of man, it befits the soul to hold sway and as if from a throne of royal power to command what, through what, when, where, and how it shall do with the body'.

[342] Alcuin, *De Animae Ratione* (ed. and transl. Curry, 'Alcuin' pp. 41–2, 74–5). 'The structure of the soul, then, is threefold, as the philosophers maintain. One part of it is appetitive, a second rational, and a third passionate ... But over these two - appetite and passion - reason must reign, being the special characteristic of the mind.'

quae omnes carnales concupiscentias et animi motis quasi domina et regina de sublimi aequitatis sede regere et temperare debet'.[343] It is only the rational mind that can recognise if the subject of desire of the appetitive or passionate part of soul is sinful, and it should be the rational mind that decides how to act on it so as not to stray away from God. The inherent message of this teaching is what can be seen e.g. in Ælfric's homilies: rationality is what can and should keep humans away from sins, without it humans would be like beasts, therefore, choosing sin over rationality also makes humans beasts.

Alcuin draws further parallels between *mens* and God: the faculties of memory, understanding and will mirror the Holy Trinity. 'Habet igitur anima in sua natura ut diximus imaginem sanctae trinitatis in eo quod intellegentiam voluntatem et memoriam habet.'[344] He further explains '[a]tque secundum officium operis sui variis nuncupatur nominibus: anima est dum vivificat, dum contemplator spiritus est, dum sentit sensus est, dum sapit animus est, dum intellegit mens est, dum discernit ratio est, dum consentit voluntas est, dum recordatur memoria est'.[345] As Lockett noted, this list is a combination of Isidore's *Liber Differentiarum* 2.27 and *Etymologiae* XI.i.12-13, and this catalogue 'associates the term *anima* with the animating principle', at the same time it asserts that 'the animating principle is of one substance with the rational faculties of the human soul … [the list] is, first and foremost, a catalogue of names'.[346] Apart from being a catalogue, in Alcuin's text the list probably bears a didactic purpose as well: it shows what psychological phenomena can be attributed to the realm of the soul. As it will be demonstrated later, Ælfric uses the same list in his homily on *Nativity* when explaining the nature of the soul to the audience. As Godden summarises Alcuin's text, '[f]or Alcuin, then, there is a unitary inner self identified both with the conscious rational mind and the immortal life-spirit and God-like in its power, including (indeed especially) the creative and poetic powers of imagination and dream'.[347]

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[343] Alcuin, *De Animae Ratione* (ed. and transl. Curry, 'Alcuin' pp. 54, 83). 'For just as in bodily faculties man excels animals because of the power of speech, so too in the soul he is superior to them only because of reason, which, like a sovereign queen on the high throne of justice, ought to rule and restrain all fleshly lusts and torments of the spirit'.

[344] Alcuin, *De Animae Ratione* (ed. and transl. Curry, 'Alcuin' pp. 47, 78). 'The soul, then, as we have said, contains in its nature a reflection of the Holy Trinity in that it comprises understanding, will, and memory'.

[345] Alcuin, *De Animae Ratione* (ed. and transl. Curry, 'Alcuin' pp. 55-6, 84-5). 'According to its functions it receives various names: soul, as giving life; spirit, when contemplating; sensation, when perceiving; intellect, as knowing; mind, as comprehending; reason, when examining; will, when determining; and memory, when recalling'.

[346] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 287.

[347] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', p. 274.

4.2 BEDE AND FELIX

4.2.1 HAGIOGRAPHY

The hagiographies analysed here were written in the eighth century: the lives of Cuthbert and Guthlac. We have two Latin versions of *Life of Cuthbert*, one of them written by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne, the other by Bede; but we also have Ælfric's version at hand to compare Old English renderings of relevant Latin passages. The source of *Life of Cuthbert* was the 'floating tradition, … the saga which grew up around the name of the saint, much of it probably during his lifetime or very soon after his death'.[348] It was most plausibly written between 699 and 705; while Bede's version around 721.[349] The Latin *Life of Guthlac* was written between 730 and 740 at the request of King Ælfwald in East Anglia by a certain Felix of whom not much is known.[350] According to Colgrave, Felix was familiar with Bede's and Aldhelm's writings and 'with those lives of saints which had much influence on all writers of saints' lives of the seventh, eighth and later centuries'.[351] The *Life* was translated to Old English by the beginning of the eleventh century and two poems on him were also in existence, but later periods saw even more translations.[352]

In these hagiographies, it is always an 'unclean spirit' that causes insanity. Although the cases are clearly demon possessions, the vocabulary that is being used is that of somatic madness both in the Latin and in the Old English versions. The perpetrator is usually a demon, a *spiritus inmundi*, a *nequam spiritus,* an *awyrgeda gast* in Old English versions. The possessed person has various horrible symptoms, physical and mental alike, even gets to the verge of death, and the saint saves him or her by putting the demon to flight.

The reasons for the demons' attacks are not specified, the texts usually give the impression that the unclean spirits choose their victims in a haphazard way. For instance, in Bede's *Life of Cuthbert* we learn of a lady who was distinctly bountiful and yet a demon seized her: 'Cuius uxor cum elemosinis et caeteris uirtutum fructibus esset intenta, subito correpta a

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[348] Colgrave, *Cuthbert*, p. 11.
[349] Colgrave, *Cuthbert*, pp. 13–6.
[350] Colgrave, *Guthlac*, pp. 15–9.
[351] Colgrave, *Guthlac*, p. 16. These are Sulpicius Severus' Vita Martini, Jerome's Vita Pauli, Athanasius's Vita Antonii and Gregory the Great's Life of St Benedict.
[352] Colgrave, *Guthlac*, p. 9.

demone acerrime coepit uexari'.[353] Or in the *Life of Guthlac*, a man was suddenly attacked when just sitting at home: 'quadam die domi sedens, subito illum nequam spiritus grassari coepit'.[354] In another chapter of Guthlac, a man 'ab inmundi spiritus validissima vexatione miserabiliter grassetur', where *miserabiliter* conveys sadness and almost a feeling of injustice about the possession to the audience.[355] The arbitrary nature of demon possessions must have left Anglo-Saxons perplexed and needed to be expounded by authors writing about the topic. Like every personal disaster, demon possessions must have raised the question in the sufferers' mind: 'why me?' Especially if the infliction was so fraught with a religious meaning. Disasters are often experienced as punishments, and punishments are usually thought to come with a reason. With demon possession too, Anglo-Saxons might have thought that there was a reason for it, and that reason must have been an offence against God. In the *Life of Cuthbert*, a man whose wife was possessed was ashamed of her and only asked Cuthbert to send a priest so 'that she might find peace in the grave' but did not reveal that her malady was possession.[356] In the anonymous *Life*, it is stressed that the object of the shame is the *physical* condition of the wife:

> non quae calamitas esset insaniae reuelauit. Iam enim erubescabat illam olim religiosam, tamen a demonio uexatam indicare. Nesciebat etiam nec intellegens, quod talis temptatio frequenter christianis accidere solet … et uidens socium suum flentem et lacrimantem duobus causis, hoc est pro moriente uxore sibi deserto, et orbanis relictis, et maxime pro ignominiosa insaniae, in qua horribiliter redactam et inpudenter confractem et saliua pollutam.[357]

It is mentioned that possession can inflict the innocent; nevertheless, the material aspects of the situation feature more prominently, like the spittle and the family left behind. Interestingly, Bede felt that this topic had to be dwelt upon. In his version of the story, the stress from the physical and mundane facet of the condition is shifted to the spiritual. Here too, the

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[353] Bede, *VC* xv (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 204–5). 'His wife, though given works of charity and other fruits of virtue, was suddenly seized upon by a demon and most cruelly afflicted'.

[354] Felix, *VG* xli (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 126–27). 'on a certain day when he was sitting at home, suddenly an evil spirit began to attack him'.

[355] Felix, *VG* xlii (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 130–31). 'was miserably attacked by the extreme violence of an unclean spirit'.

[356] *VCA* II.viii (ed. and transl. Colgrave, p. 93).

[357] *VCA* II.viii (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 92–3). 'He did not reveal that she was afflicted with madness, for he was ashamed to declare that a woman once so religious was oppressed by a devil, neither knowing nor understanding that such a trial is wont to fall frequently upon Christians … his companion was weeping and mourning for two reasons, because his wife was dying and he was bereaved and his children left desolate, and more especially because of the disgraceful insane condition in which he knew that she was about to be seen by the man of God, whereby she was horribly degraded and shamelessly destroyed and polluted with spittle'.

husband does not reveal first that her wife is insane and possessed, but then broke down and cried '[t]imebat enim ne cum eam demoniosam inueniret, arbitrari inciperet, quia non integra Domino, sed ficta fide seruisset'.[358] The fear of the husband can mean two things. On the one hand, madness and possession can strike people as a punishment for a 'feigned faith': they try to deceive God and the people, and hence He punishes them. On the other hand, a 'feigned faith' primarily means that the person is an unbeliever, is still a pagan, and thus is 'justly' more prone to demonic attacks. To disperse any doubts, Bede explains that this is not so, pious Christians can innocently suffer the attacks of demons: '[n]eque enim tali tormento soli subiciuntur mali, sed occulto Dei iudicio aliquotiens etiam innocentes in hoc saeculo non tantum corpore sed et mente captiuantur a diabolo'.[359]

The symptoms of a demon-afflicted madness run the gamut from mental breakdown through aggression to loss of control of basic bodily functions. The symptoms in the hagiographies are classic examples built on previous scriptural literature. Victims often exhibit signs of self-destruction and attack others accompanied by inarticulate shouting and groaning and have inordinate strength. A demoniac boy who 'uociferantem et lacrimantem, lacerantemque corpus suum' was cured by water consecrated by Cuthbert's body.[360] Bede describes the same demoniac boy as 'sensu rationis funditus amisso clamaret, eiularet, et uel sua membra uel quicquid attingere posset, morsibus dilaniare niteretur'.[361] Another boy cured by Guthlac not only displayed self-destructive tendencies and supernatural strength but also fiercely attacked people:

> In tantum autem inmensa dementia vexabatur ita ut membra sua propria ligno, ferro, unguibus dentibusque, prout potuit, laniaret; non solum enim se ipsum crudeli vesania decerpebat, quin etiam omnes, quoscumque tangere potuisset, inprobi oris morsibus lacerabat. Eo autem modo insanire coepit, ut eum prohiberi aut adligari nullius ausibus inpetraretur … Nam quodam tempore, congregata multitudine, cum alii illum ligare

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[358] Bede, *VC* xv (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 204–5). 'For he feared that when Cuthbert found her possessed of a devil, he would begin to think that she had served the Lord with a feigned and not a real faith'.

[359] Bede, *VC* xv (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 206–7). 'for it is not only the wicked who are subjected to such torments, but sometimes also in this world, be the inscrutable judgement of God, the innocent are taken captive by the devil, not only in body but also in mind'.

[360] *VCA* IV.xv (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 132–33). 'he was shouting and weeping and tearing his body'.

[361] Bede, *VC* xli (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 288–89). 'he had completely lost his reason, and cried out, howled, and tried to tear in pieces with his teeth both his own limbs and whatever he could reach'.

temtarent, arrepto limali bipenne tria virorum corpora letabundis ictibus humo sternens mori coegit.[362]

Fury was a distinctive feature of madness and possession. It was one of their main denominators, one of their most common characteristics, and one of their most common expressions too. On the one hand, it had striking physical manifestations like aggressivity. On the other hand, it had a mental aspect too: even though people struck with this kind of madness did not have the impaired mental capacity as that of the congenital fool, their reasoning appeared to be deteriorated, for example, due to their exaggerated reactions. Hence, one or more of their three mental faculties were regarded afflicted.

Other bodily symptoms of possession are reminiscent of seizures, taking Scripture as an analogy: the victims groan, grind their teeth, have abnormal motor functions, their limbs jerk and their saliva is flowing. They are described as ʽfrendens dentibus gemitum lacrimabilem emittebat';[363] ʽinpudenter confractam et saliua pollutam';[364] and ʽstridendo dentibus, uoces miserabiles emittendo, brachia uel caetera sui corporis membra in diuersa raptando'.[365]

Mental symptoms other than fury are less prominent and less common in our Old English sources than the physical ones, but they undoubtedly prove the mental impact possession was thought to have. For instance, Bede says of a demoniac that he ʽsensu rationis funditus amisso',[366] clearly an expression used in relation to mental disorders. In addition, the demoniac was described as an amnesiac, unaware of his identity: ʽprae insania mentis nec se ipsum quis esset uel ubi esset poterat agnoscere'.[367] The *Life of Guthlac* also tells of a man who is in a state of confusion and does not know who he is: ʽab inmundi spiritus validissima vexatione miserabiliter grassetur, ita ut quid esset vel quo sederet vel quid parabat facere nesciret'.[368] The Old English version describes the state as ʽfram þam awyrgedan gaste unstille;

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[362] Felix, *VG* xli (ed. Colgrave, pp. 126–29). ʽHe was affected with so great madness that he tore his own limbs, so far as he could, with wood and iron, with his nails and his teeth; and indeed, not only did he wound himself with cruel madness, but all whom he could reach he fiercely bit and tore. He began to be so mad that no one could succeed by any efforts in checking him or binding him … On one occasion, indeed, a great number gathered together while some attempted to bind him, but he seized a well-filed double-winged axe and with deadly blows he felled three men to the ground and slew them'.

[363] *VCA* II.viii (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 90–91). ʽgrinding her teeth and uttering tearful groans'.

[364] *VCA* II.viii (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 90–91). ʽshamelessly destroyed and polluted with spittle'.

[365] Bede, *VC* xv (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 204–5). ʽshe gnashed her teeth and uttered piteous cries, flinging her arms and limbs about in agitation'.

[366] Bede, *VC* xli (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 288–89). ʽhe had completely lost his reason'.

[367] Bede, *VC* xli (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 290–91). ʽon account of his insanity, he did not know who he was or where he was'.

[368] Felix, *VG* xlii (ed. Colgrave, pp. 130–31). ʽ[a *gesith*] was miserably attacked by the extreme violence of an unclean spirit, so that he did not know what he was or where dwelt or what he was about to do'.

and swa swyþe he hine drehte þæt he his sylfes nænig gemynd ne hæfde'.[369] Elsewhere, a demon-inflicted mental disorder is described as 'se awyrgeda gast him oneode þæt he of his gewitte wearð'.[370] The text further explains that his bodily strength was unaffected, however, his cognitive faculties were impaired as his 'facultas vero loquendi, disputandi intelligendique penitus defuit'.[371] The belief that possession impacted the mind is further bolstered by such expressions as 'habenas sanissima mente',[372] 'ad integrum recepto uigore mentis et corporis eum',[373] and 'sensu rationis funditus amisso'.[374] When the demon is driven away and the spell is over, the victims are often described as if awaking from sleep, thus emphasising that the possession kept the mind in an altered state of consciousness. These hagiographies thus indicate that apart from the obvious and very visible physical changes, demons could cause mental malfunctions as well: they had power over people's mental faculties.

If malfunctioning of the mind is madness, then possession can also be madness – at least this is what the hagiographies suggest. Thus, possession cases are referred to with vocabulary of somatic madness throughout the texts. The most common term is *insania*, however, *dementia*, *vesania* and *amentia* are also used. These terms are typically used in relation to somatic mental disorders in medical texts. In most of the instances, *wodnys* is used in the Old English versions. Usage of somatic expressions is not an Anglo-Saxon invention. Anglo-Saxons had ample Latin sources of demon possessions where this kind of vocabulary was used. What is visible from the Old English hagiographies, nonetheless, is that the learned Anglo-Saxons embraced this approach and reproduced it themselves when narrating the stories of their domestic saints. The hagiographies establish that unusual mental and behavioural symptoms can be caused by malevolent supernatural beings without any specific reason; the result is madness that affects the *gemynd* and the *gewit*. But this madness is a special category: a supernatural madness, which can be cured by supernatural means.

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[369] *OE Guth* xiii (ed. Goodwin, pp. 60–1). 'disquieted by the accursed spirit. And he plagued him so severely that he had no recollection of himself'.

[370] *OE Guth* xiii (ed. Goodwin, pp. 56–7). 'the accursed spirit entered into him, so that he went out of his wits'.

[371] Felix, *VG* xlii (ed. Colgrave, pp. 130–31). 'yet his powers of speech, discussion, and understanding failed him entirely'.

[372] Bede, *VC* xv (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 206–7). 'sound in mind'.

[373] Bede, *VC* xv (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 206–7). 'wholly recovered her strength both of mind and body'.

[374] Bede, *VC* xli (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 288–89). 'completely lost his reason'

Harley Roll Y.6, Roundel 10: Guthlac heals Ecga. (12th century)[375]

4.2.2 HISTORIOGRAPHY

Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* was very popular in Anglo-Saxon England and all over western Europe already shortly after its completion. He finished it in 731; around 780 a copy was already at Mainz; by 793 King Offa of Mercia also had one; and by the end of the next century it was already translated to Old English.[376] It was copied throughout the Middle Ages and 'almost everyone writing about the history of the English people' borrowed from it.[377] The earliest Old English versions are dated to the period of 890x930 and while it is preserved only in five extant manuscripts, Lemke believes that 'an important and prestigious work such as the *OEHE* would have been copied and disseminated on a large scale, maybe on a level par to the distribution of the OE *Pastoral Care*'.[378] Its cultural inheritance is undoubtedly enormous among the learned, and considering its omnipresence, it is hard not to believe that ideas in it did not take root in popular culture. All the more so, as Bede himself articulated his

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[375] https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=26448
[376] Colgrave and Mynors, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. xvii.
[377] Colgrave and Mynors, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. xviii.
[378] Lemke, *Bede's* Historia Ecclesiastica, p. 49.

didactic aim and King Ceolwulf's wish to distribute the knowledge contained in the HE in his prologue:

> Siue enim historia de bonis bona referat, ad imitandum bonum auditor sollicitus instigatur; seu mala commemoret de prauis, nihilomnius religiosus ac pius auditor siue lector deuitando quod noxium est ac peruersum, ipse sollertius ad exsequenda ea quae bona ac Deo digna esse cognouerit, accenditur. Quod ipsum tu quoque uigilantissime deprehendens, historiam memoratam in notitiam tibi simul et eis, quibus te regendis diuina praefecit auctoritas, ob generalis curam salutis latius propalari desideras.[379]

In the *HE*, various phenomena are expressed through terms of insanity. There are instances of insanity as figure of speech, as medical condition and as influence of the devil. As in many other cases (e.g. in homilies), expressions of madness are used for denoting heresy and ruthlessness – in the eyes of Christian writers these were irrational behaviours, but not necessarily medical conditions. Whether they are the workings of the devil is another question; from a medieval Christian point of view, they must have been the workings of the devil as both heresy and mercilessness are obviously diabolical. But their supernatural dimension is not chosen to be emphasised. In Chapter III.i, Bede describes how the Bernician kings 'abjured and betrayed the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom', and how Cædwalla killed them around the middle of the seventh century.[380] As Bede says, although Cædwalla was 'a Christian by name and profession', he was a 'barbarian at heart' and killed 'with bestial cruelty'.[381] His tyranny is described by Bede with the word *vesania*, which, in this case, can refer to both his irrational bloodthirst and raging mercilessness, and the fact that he, formally a Christian, lives as a barbarian: '[i]nfaustus ille annus et omnibus bonis exosus usque hodie permanet, tam propter apostasiam regum Anglorum, qua se fidei sacramentis exuerant, quam propter uaesanam

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[379] Bede, *HE Praefatio* (ed. and transl. Colgrave and Mynors, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 2–3). 'Should history tell of good men and their good estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good; should it record the evil ends of wicked men, no less effectually the devout and earnest listener or reader is kindled to eschew what is harmful and perverse, and himself with greater care pursue those things which he has learned to be good and pleasing in the sight of God. This you perceive, and clearsighted as you are; and therefore, in your zeal for the spiritual well–being of us all, you wish to see my *History* more widely known, for the instruction of yourself and those over whom divine authority has appointed you to rule'.

[380] Bede, *HE* III.i (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 212–13).

[381] Bede, *HE* II.xx (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 202–3). 'Caedualla, quamuis nomen et professionem haberet Christiani, adeo tamen erat animo ac moribus barbarus, ut ne sexui quidem muliebri uel innocuae paruulorum parceret aetati, quin uniuersos atrocitate ferina morti per tormenta contraderet, multo tempore totas eorum prouincias debachando peruagatus, ac totum genus Anglorum Brittaniae finibus erasurum se esse deliberans'.

Brettonici regis tyrannidem'.[382] Thus, Cædwalla's *vesania* has a threefold dimension: aggression, irrationality and an almost diabolic-like absence of Christianity. The Old English translator uses the word *wedenheortnys* for *vesania* which as mentioned earlier was applied elsewhere in the Old English corpus to express a raging spell of madness (e.g. in Gregory's *Dialogi*). The king was obviously not considered and displayed in the text as a medical case of insanity, but the irrationally cruel and heathen behaviour deserves the expression of raging madness.

The other instance where madness appears to be applied as a figure of speech is the heresy of the Arian Macedonius and Eudoxius. Bede calls 'uaesania Macedonii et Eudoxii' which the synod in Constantinople agreed to condemn.[383] Although it is *gedwola* that is usually used in relation to heresy, the Old English version of the *HE* uses *wedenheortnys* here as well.[384] Aggression is not necessarily inherent in heresy, but the irrationality and lack of proper Christianity is indeed present.

Bede's text also exhibits a certain distinction in profane and supernatural madness which is reflected in the Old English version too. In Book IV.iii, he writes about a madman who was wandering about, finally entered the church of St. Peter, spent the night there, and came out cured. The details of his insanity are not discussed, and it is described overall as a natural phenomenon: '[d]enique nuper freneticus quidam, dum per cuncta errando discurreret, deuenit ibi uespere … mane sanato sensu egressus'.[385] Here, *freneticus*, the term with the medical resonance is chosen, which is then rendered to *bræcseoc* in the Old English text.[386] This demonstrates that Bede felt a certain difference between madness induced directly by demons and madness with somatic causes, and the translator's choice also conveys the same meaning.

There are three other instances of mental disorder in Bede's text and those are all connected to demons. The most laconic instance is in Book IV.xix: after her death, abbess Æthelthryth's clothes drove out devils and healed other maladies upon touching them: '[c]ontigit autem tactu indumentorum eorundem et daemonia ab obsessis effugata corporibus et

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[382] Bede, *HE* III.i (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 214–15). 'To this day that year is still held to have been ill-omened and hateful to all good men, not only on account of the apostasy of the English kings who cast aside the mysteries of their faith, but also because of the outrageous tyranny of the British King'.
[383] Bede, *HE* IV.xvii (ed. and transl. Colgrave, p. 386).
[384] *OEHE* IV.xix (ed. and transl. Miller, p. 312).
[385] Bede, *HE* IV.iii (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 344–45). 'For example, quite recently a madman, who had been wandering from one place to another, came there one evening … the next morning he came out in his right mind'.
[386] *OEHE* IV.iii (ed. and transl. Miller, p. 270).

infirmitates alias aliquoties esse curatas'.[387] *Daemonia* is translated as *deofulseoce men* in the Old English version.[388]

A more didactic and detailed case is described in Book II.v, king Eadbald's madness: he rejected Christianity and took his deceased father's wife as his wife, which was acceptable in the Germanic tradition, but not in the Christian. With this act, he not only trespassed a moral law but confirmed his paganism. As a result, he was pestered by an unclean spirit and fits of madness: 'Nec supernae flagella districtionis perfido regi castigando et corrigendo defuere, nam crebra mentis uaesania, et spiritus immundi inuasione premebatur'.[389] It is obvious here that the unclean spirit and the madness are direct consequences, punishments in Bede's view. The condition resembles Saul's: punishment in the form of a possessing spirit and madness. Unfortunately, symptoms of Eadbald's condition are not described; nevertheless, it is an interesting detail that the fits of madness and the unclean spirit are treated as two distinct manifestations of the punishment. Usually, in similar possession cases (e.g. in the previously discussed hagiographies), the madness is spoken of as being identical with the possession itself, they are in a synonym-like relation, and their relationship is not expressed with an *and* relation. However, here possession and fits of madness are apparently considered as two separate symptoms, possibly with distinguishable signs and at different intervals – at least this is what the sentence structure suggests. The Old English text has 'forðon he gelomlice mid wedenheortnesse modes 7 þæs unclænan gastes inswogennisse þrycced wæs',[390] which would suggest that the 'fits of madness' as *wedenheortnys* might have been understood as a raging episode, while the possession might have been a somewhat calmer psychotic episode. Nonetheless, in the absence of anything more detailed, it is impossible to be sure whether structuring the texts so was deliberate at all. Dendle doubts the king's impaired mental condition altogether: '[i]t is hard to know, in fact, whether Bede is reporting the king's final mental condition as it has been recorded elsewhere or otherwise handed down to him, or whether Bede himself has added the detail to ensure that the king comes across as having properly suffered

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[387] Bede, *HE* IV.xix (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 396–97). 'It happened also that, by the touch of the linen clothes, devils were expelled from the bodies of those who were possessed by them, and other diseases were healed from time to time'.

[388] *OEHE* IV.xix (ed. and transl. Miller, p. 322).

[389] Bede, *HE* II.v (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 150–51). 'The apostate king, however, did not escape the scourge of divine punishment in chastisement and correction; for he was afflicted by frequent fits of madness and possessed by an unclean spirit'.

[390] *OEHE* II.v (ed. and transl. Miller, p. 110–11). 'for he often was afflicted with insanity and with attacks of the unclean spirit'.

for his apostasy'.[391] With this story, Bede passes down the notion that possession, madness and sin can be connected in certain cases.

The most detailed demon possession is in Book III.ix, where a visitor is cured of his possession by St. Oswald's relics in the monastery of Æthelhild: '[t]ransacto autem tempore aliquanto, cum esset in suo monasterio, uenit illic quidam hospes qui solebat nocturnis sæpius horis repente ab immundo spiritu gravissime vexari. Qui cum benigne susceptus post coenam in lecto membra posuisset, subito a diabolo arreptus clamare, dentibus frendere, spumare, et diversis motibus coepit membra torquere'.[392]

The visitations of the unclean spirit are regular and occur in the night, while the symptoms are classic seizure-like characteristics, so it is tempting to think that this was a case of nocturnal epilepsy in modern terms. The visitor's seizure is violent, people try to hold him down in vain and a priest also attempts to exorcise the demon without any success: '[v]bi cum uenientes uiderent multos adfuisse, qui vexatum tenere et motus ejus insanos comprimere conati nequaquam ualebant, dicebat presbyter exorcismos, et quaequae poterat pro sedando miseri furore agebat; sed nec ipse, quamuis multis laborans, proficere aliquid ualebat'.[393] After the unsuccessful exorcism, some dirt is being brought in a casket that soaked up water when St. Oswald's bones were washed. As soon as the dirt arrives and reaches the threshold of the demoniac's dwelling place, he is relieved from his suffering, the demon leaves him forever and his consciousness returns: '[c]umque nil salutis furenti supresse uideretur … in cuius interioribus daemoniosus torquebatur, conticuit ille subito, et quasi in somnum laxatus deposuit caput, membra in quietem omnia conposuit … "Modo," inquit, "sanum sapio, recepi enim sensum animi mei" … "discessere omnes qui me premebant spiritus maligni"'.[394] As we can see, the demoniac is described with words like *insanos*, *furenti* and *furore*, which are basically terms of profane insanity; but he is also referred to as *feondseoca*, which is clearly a term of the supernatural realm. The symptoms are very typical possession characteristics: gnashing of

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[391] Dendle, *Demon Possesion*, p. 156.

[392] Bede, *HE* III.ix (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 248–49). 'Some time afterwards, when she was in her monastery, there came a guest who used very often to be greatly troubled in the night, without warning, by an unclean spirit. This guest was hospitably received and, after supper, had lain down on his bed, when he was suddenly possessed by the devil and began to gnash his teeth and foam at the mouth, while his limbs were twisted by convulsive movements'.

[393] Bede, *HE* III.ix (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 248–49). 'When they reached the place they found a crowd there, all trying in vain to hold the possessed man down and to restrain his convulsive movements. The priest pronounced exorcisms and did all he could to soothe the madness of the wretched man but, though he toiled hard, he effected nothing'.

[394] Bede, *HE* III.ix (ed. and transl. Colgrave, pp. 248–49). 'When there seemed to be no means of overcoming his madness … [inside the house] in which the demoniac was lying in his cortortions, than he was suddenly silent and laid his head down as if he were in a relaxed sleep, while his limbs became quiet and composed … "Now I feel that I am well and have been restored to my senses" … "all the evil spirits which were oppressing me left me"'.

teeth, foaming mouth and limbs in convulsion are the almost cliché-like hallmarks of a heavy possession, while the word *furenti* adds a certain amount of aggressivity too. When the possession is over, the visitor goes through a transformation: from violent possession through sleep-like unconsciousness to a sound mind. Like in the hagiographies, emerging from possession is likened to that of waking from sleep, thus expressing that the mental faculties are clouded during possession states. The reason of the visitor's possession remains in obscurity – clearly the point of the story is demonstrating the power of Oswald's relics. Bede shows that demon possession can occur for no apparent reason, or at least not as a punishment. Possessed people are not always inflicted for punishment, but as in John IX.3 'so that the works of God might be displayed in him'.

4.3 ÆLFRIC

Ælfric is a perfect example to demonstrate both the vernacular and the classical tradition of mind and soul. On the one hand, his writings show traces of the vernacular tradition; however, being a learned Christian, he also exhibits influence of the antique authors. Ælfric's views on the nature of the human soul and mind are expounded in *The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ* in the sermon compilation *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*.[395] Ælfric sees the soul primarily as an intellectual entity: 'seo sawul is gesceadwis gast'[396] and says that the soul has three functions or 'natures' which are capable of desire, anger and reason.[397] Following in the footsteps of Plato, Augustine, Isidore and Alcuin, he says that of these three functions, it is reason that raises humans above animals: 'Ðuruh þæt gescead ana we synd sælran þonne þa ungesceadwysan nytenu.'[398] He also emphasises the similarity of the soul to the Holy Trinity in that it has memory, understanding and will,[399] and explains that it is the soul that is

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[395] Ælfric, 'Nativity', pp. 10–25 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i)

[396] Ælfric, 'Nativity', pp. 20–21 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i). 'the soul is a rational spirit'.

[397] Ælfric, 'Nativity', pp. 16–17 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i). 'Uþwytan sæcgað þæt þære sawle gecynd is ðryfeald. An dæl is on hire gewylnigendlic, oðer yrsigendlic, þrydde gesceadwislic'. 'Philosophers say that the soul's nature is threefold: the first part in her is capable of desire, the second of anger, the third of reason.'

[398] Ælfric, 'Nativity', pp. 18–19 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i). 'through reason alone are we better than the irrational beasts'.

[399] Ælfric, 'Nativity', pp. 16–17 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i). 'Seo sawul hæfð heo hæfð swa swa we ær cwædon on hire gecynde þære halgan þrynnysse anlicnysse on þan þe heo hæfð gemynd and andgit and wyllan'. 'The soul hath (as we before said) in its nature a likeness to the Holy Trinity, in that it hath memory, understanding, and will.'

responsible both for life and for the intellectual faculties, and thus for placing humans closer to angels than animals:

> Hyre nama is anima þæt is sawul and seo nama gelympð to hire life. And spiritus gast belimpð to hire ymbwlatunge. Heo is sensus þæt is andgit oððe felnyss þonne heo gefret. Heo is animus þæt is mod þonne heo wat. Heo is mens þæt is mod þonne heo understent. Heo is memoria þæt is gemynd þonne heo gemanð. Heo is ratio þæt is gescead þonne heo toscæt. Heo is uoluntas þæt is wylle þonne heo hwæt wyle. Ac swa þeah ealle þas naman syndon sawul. [400]

Ælfric draws heavily on Isidore's *Etymologiae* XI.i.12–13 in this passage, which Lockett describes as a 'landmark in the history of Anglo-Saxon thought, because he presents this material in a work that could potentially reach a significant and diverse audience, for whom the attribution of appetite, passion, and reason to the *sawol* was a striking departure from their everyday idiom.'[401] In Old English poetry and the vernacular tradition, as already discussed, all these faculties are attributed to *mod*, and *mod* incorporates both intellect and emotion: mind and soul. *Sawol* only played a role in the afterlife; hence, to declare that all these faculties were in the purview of the *sawol* instead of the *mod* was a novel idea compared to the vernacular tradition. Here Ælfric does not highlight the mind and intellect as the most important part of soul which makes humans distinct. Rather, he believes that soul unifies certain faculties and that this is what makes humans prominent. This idea of a unified soul reflects the vernacular notion of the unified mind-soul, where cognition and emotion are regarded as the same faculty. But because Ælfric is educated in and influenced by Christian discourses, he stresses that it is intellect that is the most important and divine faculty. As Godden puts it, according to Ælfric, the soul is 'the intellectual, rational self, [and] its possession distinguishes man from the beasts'.[402] The soul was also created by God as Ælfric says, therefore, the soul and God are connected: '[s]eo sawul soðlice is þæs lichoman lif and þære sawle lif is god'.[403] Therefore,

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[400] Ælfric, 'Nativity', pp. 20–23 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i). '[Soul] is called by various names in books, according to its offices. Its name is Anima, that is, Soul, and the name befitteth its life; and Spiritus, that is Spirit, which appertaineth to its contemplation. It is Sensus, that is, perception or sensation, when it perceiveth. It is Animus, that is, intellect, when it knoweth. It is Mens, that is, mind, when it understandeth. It is Memoria, that is, Memory, when it remembereth: It is Ratio, that is, Reason, when it reasoneth. It is Voluntas, that is Will, when it willeth anything; nevertheless all these names are one soul'.

[401] Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 415.

[402] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the mind', p. 279.

[403] Ælfric, 'Nativity', pp. 18–19 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i). 'the life of the body is the soul, and the life of the soul is God.'

disruption of the soul has effect on various dimensions: '[g]if seo sawul forlæt þonne lichoman þonne swælt seo lichoma and gif god forlæt þa sawle for ormættum synnum þonne swælt heo on þam sælran dæle swa þæt heo bið forloren þam ecan life'.[404] Thus, God's departure from the soul results in the 'death' of the soul. In other words, God's absence in the soul results in the loss of its 'better part', which is also reason; sins could thus extinguish intellect and sink humans to the rank of beasts. Hence, in Ælfric's world, sin could cause loss of mental faculties, that is, mental disorders. This is exactly the idea we will see in his homilies.[405]

Despite the obvious influence Christian authors had upon him, Ælfric was aware of the cultural difference Anglo-Saxons and Christianity had in terms of locating the mind. In his sermon for the second Sunday of Advent, Ælfric explains 'lifting up the head' in Luke 21:25-31 to the audience thus: 'On halgum gewrite bið gelomlice heafod geset for þæs mannes mode, for þan ðe þæt heafod gewissað þam oþrum limum, swa swa ðæt mod gediht ða geðohtas. We ahebbað ure heafda þonne we ure mod ærærað to gefean þæs heofonlican eðles'.[406] As Low expounds,

> Ælfric felt compelled to explain this … and the nature of his explanation suggest that for him, the relationship between the head and the mind was not one of physiology, but one of analogy … In such a thing as the location of the mind, Anglo-Saxon authors were aware enough of their own beliefs that when encountering an association between *mens* and *caput* in Latin writings, they conceived of the disparity as a cultural difference and explained it to their readers accordingly.[407]

Ælfric's view on madness can best be observed in his homilies. Homilies were probably the most influential of all the texts on the everyday Anglo-Saxon, because they were delivered to the masses. While Gospels were not preached in the vernacular and thus were not likely to have direct impact on lay people, homilies were communicated in their mother tongues. The bulk of the Old English homilies that came down to us can be attributed to Ælfric and Wulfstan, and their primary purpose was to teach: '[Ælfric] takes seriously the dictum that those who are

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[404] Ælfric, 'Nativity', pp. 18–19 (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i). '[i]f the soul leave the body, then the body dieth; and if God leave the soul because of very grievous sins, then dieth it in its better part, so that it is lost to eternal life'.

[405] see Chapter 3

[406] Ælfric, 'Dominica II. in Aduentum Domini' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* I, 612–13). 'In holy writ head is very frequently put for the mind of man, because the head directs the other members, as the mind devises the thoughts. We lift up our heads when we raise our minds to the joys of the heavenly country'.

[407] Low, 'Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 32.

able to correct the unrighteous, and yet who do not, will be held accountable to God for the souls of the damned … the duty of the educated to instruct the ignorant is not simply a matter of translating Latin sources for a monoglot audience but of interpreting those sources'.[408] It is also argued that the homilies Ælfric left to us were intended to be read during masses to the laity instead of monastic use,[409] thus we can safely conclude that Ælfric's homilies did reach the masses. The notions he mediated about mental disorders could easily become part of the culture of everyday Anglo-Saxons.

As noted earlier, members of the Church, in general, were aware of the theoretical difference between 'medical' mental disorder and demonic mental disorder. This approach, however, is not reflected in the vocabulary of the Old English homilies. In Ælfric's homilies, the word *wod* and its lexemes are used predominantly, and they function as generic terms for all types of mental disorders irrespective of the cause. *Wod*-lexemes are used in the sense of absurdity and nonsense, as in 'ac se man wet þe wyle habban ænig þincg ær anginne';[410] in the sense of raging fury as in '[h]e wet nu swiðe and wynð on ða Cristenan';[411] mirroring lists of the Bible as in 'gehælde manega untruman from mislicum coðum, and wodum mannum gewitt forgeaf, and blindum gesihðe';[412] expressing unspecified madness as in 'aras ðæs on merigen swa gewittig swilce heo næfre on nanre wodnysse nære';[413] and possession 'sum wod mann ðurh deofles gast'.[414] The fact that he used *wod* for this wide range of meanings can be ascribed to Ælfric's aim to educate the ignorant and to purposefully 'avoid obscure vocabulary'.[415]

At first sight, this conflation might seem as if Ælfric and his audiences had not acknowledged any difference between medical madness and demonic madness. However, it can be imputed rather to two factors: to Ælfric's educational purpose and to the audience's way of seeing the mind-soul paradigm. The monochrome nature of Ælfric's terms expressing mental disorders can be ascribed to his caution not to confuse the audience, as noted above. This would suggest that terms other than *deofolseoc* and *wod* were uncommon for the Anglo-Saxon audience. However, the reason seems to be thematic rather than vocabular: the texts are highly

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[408] Cain and Fulk, '*History*', p. 122.

[409] Cain and Fulk, '*History*', p. 123.

[410] Ælfric, 'Nativitas Domini nostri Iesu Christi' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.i, 12–13). 'But the man is mad who wishes to have anything before a beginning'.

[411] Ælfric, 'Sermo de memoria Sanctorum' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.xvi, 352–53). 'Now he rageth furiously, and warreth on Christians'.

[412] Ælfric, 'Decollatio S. Iohannis Baptistæ' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* I.xxxii, 480–81). '[Jesus] was healing many sick from divers diseases, and giving reason to insane men, and sight to the blind'.

[413] Ælfric, 'Dominica in Media Quadragesimæ Secunda Sententia de hoc ipso' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* II.xii, 188–89). 'she arose the morning after as sensible as if she had never been in a state of madness'.

[414] Ælfric, 'Passio S. Bartholomæi Apostoli' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* I.xxxi, 458–59). 'some madman … through the devil's spirit'.

[415] Cain and Fulk, '*History*', p. 120.

educational as well as parabolic, and it is easier to convey complex meanings with simple examples. As explained earlier, mind and soul, *mod*, for Anglo-Saxons represented a more unified entity and the homilies were tailored to suit this conception: *wod* does not imply any sort of aetiology, does not imply any locus of madness or locus of mind, hence it fits the purpose for an inclusive madness-term that can entail both the patristic mind and soul, and the Anglo-Saxon mind-soul *mod*. *Wod* is also the most common, most neutral, and most simple expression for madness, a chameleon term that fits all sort of madness-types which the Anglo-Saxon ears are most used to.

As mentioned earlier, the use of *wod* in Ælfric's texts runs the gamut from expressing madness as 'balderdash, nonsense' through madness as 'fury' to madness as medical condition. The first type does not concern us; it is enough to note that *wod* does have this kind of function as well. In these cases, the sense of madness is used figuratively. Another characteristic usage is the analogy of the Biblical collocation of diverse diseases, for instance, in Matthew IV.24: 'and ða ferde hys hlisa into ealle syriam: and hi brohton him ealle yfel hæbbende missenlicum adlum. and on tintregum gegripene: And þa ðe deofelseocnyssa hæfdon: and monoðseoce and laman and he þa gehælde'.[416] In the 'Sermo de memoria sanctorum', Ælfric uses a very similar example to the glossator of the Gospel: 'His hlisa asprang þa to syrian lande and man ferode untrume feorran and nean myslice geuntrumode and monað-seoce and wode and eac swilce beddrydan and brohton to ðam hælende'.[417] Yet, while he used *monaðseoc* for *lunaticus* like the glossator, he changed *deofol-seocnys* to *wod* translating *dæmonia habens*. Collocations like this also appear in e.g. 'De Sancta Trinitate et de festis diebus per annum' and 'Dominica xii Post Octavas Pentecosten' with variations on mental disorders: 'blinde he gehælde ⁊ þa beddridan, healte ⁊ hreoflige to fulre hæle, þa *wodan* ⁊ þa *gewittleasan* he gebrohte on gewitte, ⁊ þa deofla afligde þe hi gedrehton ær';[418] and '⁊ him man gebrohte þa to fela bedridan menn, ⁊ þa *monaðseocan*, ⁊ þa sylfan *wodan*, ⁊ on manegum adlum mislice geswencte' (italics mine).[419] It is interesting to note the use of *wodan / gewittleasan / deofla gedrehton / monaðseocan*: whereas these terms tend to be conflated in other homilies, Ælfric appears to

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[416] Matthew IV.24 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 8). 'And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them'.

[417] Ælfric, 'Sermo de memoria Sanctorum' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.xvi, 346–47). 'His fame spread then to the land of Syria, and they brought the sick from far and near, diversely afflicted, and lunatics, and men possessed, and likewise the bedridden, and brought [them] to the Saviour'.

[418] Ælfric, 'De Sancta Trinitate et de festis diebus per annum' (ed. Pope, pp. 467–68). 'He healed the blind and the bedridden, / he healed fully the lame and leprous, / the *wodan* and the *witleasan* he brought to their senses / and drove out devils from those who were possessed' (my translation).

[419] Ælfric, 'Dominica xii Post Octavas Pentecosten' (ed. Pope, p. 567). 'and they brought to him many bedridden, / and *monaðseocan*, and the *wodan*, / and those afflicted by many diverse diseases' (my translation).

treat *wod*, *gewittleast* and *deofelseocnys* as different categories in 'De Sancta Trinitate et de Festis Diebus per Annum'. This might be ascribed to the fact that these categories were indeed in reality distinct; however, cumulating the terms might as well be purely a poetic device on Ælfric's side, mirroring the re-occurring Biblical lists.

Elsewhere, *wodnys* appears conspicuously to be caused by devils. In the 'Passio Sancti Bartholomæi Apostoli', a madman becomes sane by means of exorcism: 'Þa betwux ðisum hrymde sum wod mann ðurh deofles gast, and cwæð, "Eala ðu Godes apostol, Bartholomee, ðine gebedu geanesumniað me, and ontendað." Se apostol ða cwæð, "Adumba, ðu unclæna deofol, and gewit of ðam menn." And ðærrihte wearð se mann gecleænsod fram ðam fulan gaste, and gewittiglice spræc, seðe for manegum gearum awedde'.[420] The motifs are very similar to Biblical exorcisms: the unclean spirit recognises and identifies the holy man, declares its knowledge of the saint's identity and objects to the torment the holy man inflicts upon it. This is an often-recurring pattern both in homilies and in the New Testament exorcisms, e.g. in Mark I.23-26: 'and on heora gesamnunge wæs sum man. on unclænum gaste and he hrymde and cwæð eala nazarenisca hælend hwæt is us and þe. com ðu us to forspillanne. ic wat þu eart godes halga; Ða cidde se hælend him and cwæð adumba. and ga of þisum men. and se unclæna gast hine slitende and mycelre stefne clypende him of eode'.[421] In the previously cited text, Bartholomew, like Jesus, rebukes the demon, silences, and expels it. The madman is then cleansed and healed.

The terms *gewitleas* and *gewitseoc* are also used in the same manner: expressing an abnormal mental state caused by an invading spirit. In the 'Vita S. Martini Episcopi', *gewitleas* and *wod* are used as synonyms describing a man who is possessed: 'and Martinus sona siðode to þam wodan and his hand him on asette and gescynde þone deofol fram þam gewitleasum men and he wearð sona hal'.[422] This text also provides some guidance of what devil-possessed madmen look like: 'he wundorlice wedde mid þam muþe and elcne wolde teran þe him in to-

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[420] Ælfric, 'Passio Sancti Bartholomei Apostoli' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* I.xxxi, 458–59). 'Then in the meanwhile some madman cried through the devil's spirit, and said, "O thou apostle of God, Bartholomew, thy prayers torment and exasperate me." The apostle then said, "Be dumb, thou unclean devil, and depart from the man." And straightways the man was cleansed from the foul spirit, and spake rationally, who had been mad for many years'.

[421] Mark I.23–26 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 64). 'And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him'.

[422] Ælfric, 'Vita S. Martini Episcopi et Confessoris Anglicae' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* II.xxxi, 252–53). 'And Martin at once went to the madman and laid his hand on him and quickly drove the devil from the witless man; and he became immediately whole'.

eode'.[423] The text further intensifies the connection between madness and devils by saying 'forhtodon þa deofla on gewitseocum mannum',[424] as it pronounces that devils reside in *gewitseoc* people. In fact, Ælfric says it explicitly in 'Dominica v in Quadragesima' 'he deofol on him hæfde. þæt we cweðað on englisc be wodum menn. þu eart wod': apparently the adequate rendering of the state of having a devil is *wod* in Old English.[425] Furthermore, the text of 'Dominica iii in Quadragesima' shows how the devil can make people blind and mute:

> þa wearð him gebroht to
>
> sum witseoc man, wundorlice gedreht;
>
> him wæs soðlice benæmed his gesihð and spræc,
>
> and he swa dumb and ablend deoflice wedde[426]

Gedreccan means 'to vex, afflict, torment, oppress',[427] thus, *wundorlice gedreht* can mean 'wonderfully tormented/afflicted [by a disease]'; however, the term *gedreht* is frequently used in case of demon possessions (e.g. Mark V.15-18, Matthew XV.22 etc.). The *witseoc* man's sight and ability to speak is 'taken', and at this point, it is only hinted at that this is a case of possession; while mention of the 'devilish madness' upon him makes it clearer. Subsequent lines reveal that his madness, muteness, and dumbness were the result of a bond bound by the devil:

> Ure Drihten gehælde þa þurh his heofonlican mihte
>
> þone earmann wodan fram his wodnysse,
>
> and framhis dumbnysse þæs deoflican bendas,
>
> and fram þæræ blindnysse þe hine ablende se deofol[428]

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[423] Ælfric, 'Vita S. Martini Episcopi et Confessoris Anglicae' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* II.xxxi, 252–53). 'he wondrously foamed at the mouth and attempted to tear everyone who went in to him'.

[424] Ælfric, 'Vita S. Martini Episcopi et Confessoris Anglicae' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* II.xxxi, 292–95).'the devils in possessed men feared'.

[425] Ælfric, ' Dominica v in Quadragesima' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* II.xiii, 229–30). 'he had devil in him. which we say in English of mad people: you are mad' (my translation).

[426] Ælfric, 'Dominica iii in Quadragesima' (ed. Pope, p. 264). 'some *witseoc* man was brought to him who was wonderfully oppressed/tormented/possessed he was indeed deprived of his sight and speech and thus he was dumb and blinded and devilishly mad' (my translation).

[427] 'gedreccan', *Bosworth-Toller*.

[428] Ælfric, 'Dominica iii in Quadragesima' (ed. Pope, pp. 267–68). 'Our Lord healed through His heavenly might that poor madman from his madness, and from his dumbness of devilish bond, and from the blindness with what the devil blinded him' (my translation).

Witseoc and *wod* are used here interchangeably expressing demon possession. Thus, we can conclude that in Ælfric's homilies, demon possession and various forms of mental disorders are treated as equals: they are unified.

The explanation for Ælfric's unifying approach can be found in 'Dominica Secunda In Quadragesima' in the exegesis of the story of the possessed girl's mother in Matthew XV.22. Here, the state of mental sickness, the state of being a heathen and of being possessed are intricately interwoven:

> Þæt wif … hælend gesohte. to biddenne hire wodan dehter gesundfulnysse;
>
> Heo clypode; Dauides bearn. gemiltsa me. min dohtor is yfele fram deofle gedreht … ac seo dohtor þe on wodum dreame læg dweligende. getacnode þæra hæðenra manna sawle. ðe wæron yfele þurh deofol gedrehte. ða ða hi ne cuðon heora scyppend. ac gelyfdon on deofolgyldum …
>
> Æfter ðeawlicum andgite se ðe leahtras begæð deofle to gecwemednysse his scyppende on teonan. his dohtor is untwylice awedd. for ðan ðe his sawul is ðearle ðurh deofol gedreht. ac him is neod þæt he his agene wodnysse tocnawe. and mid geleafan æt godes halgum þingunge bidde. and mid micelre anrædnysse drihtnes fet gesece. biddende þæt he his sawle fram ðam wodan dreame ahredde. swa swa he dyde þæt chananeisce mæden.[429]

The first thing to note here is the use of *wodum dreame* and *dweligende*. The word *dream* is a form of ecstasy: it can mean an overwhelming, often heavenly, joy,[430] but *woden dream* is undoubtedly a negative ecstasy. In the Harley Glossary there is a gloss that says 'Furor enim animi cito finitur . Uel grauius est quam ira . Furor enim incipiens ira est . Et feruens in animo indignatio est . Sicuit affricus uentus in pelago . Ita furor in corde uiri . *rethnes . *wodendream'.[431] Thus, *furor* is glossed with the word *wodendream*, which not only means fury and rage, but it is also the term that is often used for raging madness. We can thus infer

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[429] Ælfric, 'Dominica Secunda In Quadragesima' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* II.viii, 110–11). 'That woman sought the Saviour to pray for the health of her wod daughter.
She cried "David's Son, have mercy on me. My daughter is terribly tormented by the devil." … For her daughter lay in delirium, having the soul of a heathen, which was awfully tormented by the devil, when they did not know their Creator but believed in idols.
In the figurative sense, that who commits sin to satisfy the devil, hurts his Creator. His daughter is undoubtedly mad, because his soul is awfully tormented by the devil. But it is necessary for him to recognize his own madness and to pray with faith for God's holy intercession; and to seek the Lord's feet with eagerness praying that He save his soul from the delirium as He did with the Canaanite maiden' (my translation).
[430] 'dream', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[431] Harley Glossary F 904 (ed. Oliphant, p. 204).

that the girl is suffering from some form of a delirious state. *Dweligende*, on the other hand, has a somewhat more general meaning. *Dwelian/dwolian* means 'to be led in error, to err, to mislead, to deceive', 'to go astray, to lead astray' in a figurative, moral, and physical sense.[432] However, this is the term that is very frequently used in the sense of heretics and non-Christians in general, as for instance, in 'De Septem Dormientibus':

> asprang gehwær on godes folce mycel *gedwyld* … and cristene men on *gedwylde* brohton sædon þæt se geleafa naht nære þe ealle geleaffulle men buton tweonunge gelfað þæt is þæt ealle men on domes dæg sceolon arisan mid þam ylcan lichaman þe gehea ær her on life leofode … ðisne geleafan woldon *gedwolmen* aidlian … hi godes gelaðunge swiðost drehton and mid heora *gedwolspræce* eall folc amyrdon.[433]

The girl in delirium is most probably not wandering around physically in her room, although this cannot be excluded. It is more plausible that *dweligende* is used here in a figurative sense: it is a description of her *mod,* which is both sick with madness and heathenism. This figurative sense of *dweligende* is further bolstered by the next phrase that points out that the maiden's soul, unlike her believer mother's, is still in the state of heathenism and ignorance. Moreover, according to the next sentence, the souls of the heathen are 'awfully tormented by the devil' because they know not their Creator. Again, the terminology in this phrase (*þurh deofol gedreht*) is echoed in other possession cases e.g. in the New Testament. As a consequence, this paragraph implies that being a heathen is almost equal to being possessed by the devil, which in turn is equal to a state of mental disease, to being *wod*. The souls of heathens are led and owned by the devil. In addition, in the next paragraph, committing sin is again pronounced as a form of madness: the soul of those who choose to commit a sin is tormented by a devil and this in turn is *wodnys*. In this sense, committing sin as a Christian is practically the same as being heathen. Kazutomo Karasawa came to the same conclusion analysing *wod dream* in this passage: he says that the term refers to 'a seemingly sane but in some way bewitched, hypnotized, or deluded condition … [where the person] actually lose[s] his right mind by being deluded or controlled in some extremely unfavorable way by some (supernatural) power or

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[432] 'dwelian', 'dwolian', *Boswoth-Toller* and *Bosworth-Toller Suppl.*
[433] Ælfric, 'De Septem Dormientibus' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.xxiii, 508–11). 'there sprang up everywhere among God's people great heresy … and brought Christian men into heresy and said that the belief was naught which all faithful men believe without doubt, viz. that all men at Doomsday shall arise with the same bodies in which each one before lived here in life … Heretics desired to destroy this faith … misled all the people with their heretical speeches'.

existence'.[434] This idea of Ælfric conveys the meaning that choosing sin and the devil is madness, and it also results in the devil tormenting one's soul. Conversely, possession by the devil results in madness, but choosing sin over God is itself madness. This tripartite concept can be viewed on the following diagram where all three components are equals and results of each other at the same time:
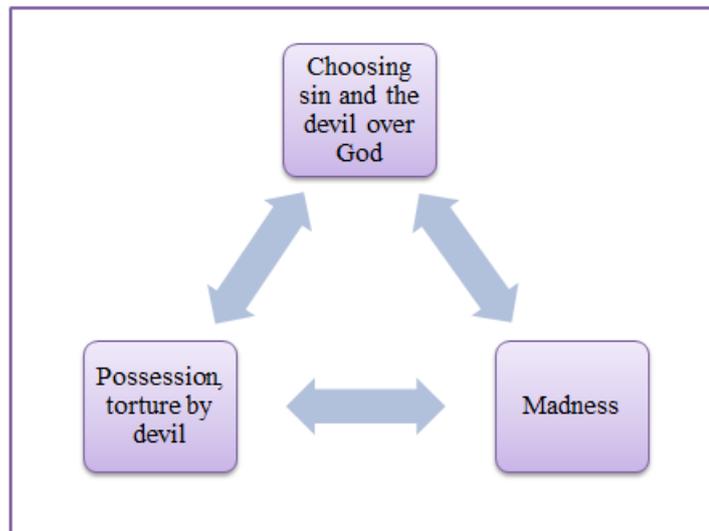
Table 4.1. System of madness, possession, and sin in Ælfric's homilies

In the second paragraph, Ælfric declares that the state of sin is a state of madness (*wodnys*) that must be recognised and prayed for; and thus God will save the sinful souls from the state of delirium (*wodan dream*).

It is this notion we must bear in mind when reading Ælfric's homilies. Cases of mental disorders are almost always demon possessions because people in the homilies have to be saved from sin, from the devil, thus purging their minds, souls and bodies. For Ælfric, a case of medical mental disorder is not far from a demonic possession, not because of his ignorance and his inability to differentiate between the two, but rather because both are states that people need to be redeemed of. Ælfric's whole life is dedicated to teaching and saving the ignorant as he stated; the state of madness causes them to drift away from God as much as sins and heathenism do – this is the message he tries to propagate to the crowds.

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[434] Karasawa, 'The negative conceptions', p. 162.

As it has been illustrated, sources like the Old Testament, the Gospels and Gregory's writings served as models for Anglo-Saxon writers; they embraced and re-cycled ideas in their own works. The 'imported' sources show a complex relation between insanity, sin, and demon possession. Insanity can be caused by demon possession but it can also occur without the demonic factor.

The hagiographies emphasise the notion found in the Gospels that demons can attack innocent people and that these attacks have similar symptoms to those of a somatic madness. The symptoms manifest in abnormal mental and physical functioning, they involve the body, the mind, and the soul. These attacks resemble the story of the evangelical man born blind: they did not happen as a punishment but to serve a higher purpose, to exhibit the divine power in the world emanating from the saints and thus they fulfil the role of Christian propaganda in a period when the future of Christianity as a religion was vague in England. In fact, Dendle believes that they never happened:

> The highly symbolic and conservative nature of hagiography encourages the perpetuation of ancient tropes, and church writers of the period cast contemporary events into the narrative molds of earlier times and places as a matter of custom. Many of the accounts of demon possession bear suspicious resemblance (not just in detail but in actual wording) to earlier miracle healings from continental writings or from the Bible, leaving room for the genuine question of whether the accounts correspond to anything really happening to Anglo-Saxon society.[435]

In any case, hagiographies confirm the notion in the readers that a wide variety of symptoms resembling madness can be caused by demon possession.

Bede's *HE* uncovers a very kaleidoscopic approach to madness and possession. His text exhibits all the ideas we have seen in the 'imported' source texts. Apparently, he acknowledges profane somatic madness with no specific supernatural cause, but also madness that comes from demon possession. He also recognizes 'random' supernatural madness, which is caused by demons but for no reason; while he implies that madness and demon possession can happen as a consequence of sinful and un-Christian behaviour.

Whether demon possessions really took place in Anglo-Saxon England remains a puzzle. Dendle points out that '[t]here is no reference in Anglo-Saxon texts as a whole to a

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[435] Dendle, *Demon Possesion*, p. 149.

personality shift, though, such that an indwelling alien entity would be speaking through the patient's mouth, for instance'.[436] Nevertheless, he leaves the possibility open that certain health conditions could be considered forms of possession and he draws a parallel between them and modern forms of psychopathology:

> some people with significant emotional damage (diagnosed as dissociation or 'multiple personality' in secular spheres of the developed world) would act with a fractured sense of self, resembling possession in certain respects … Others with purely organic conditions such as neurological or muscle-control disorders would also sometimes have been considered possessed. Such organic conditions certainly existed, and the possession paradigm was a significant model for understanding such conditions in the early Middle Ages.[437]

What we can, however, safely assume is that source texts such as the Bible or Gregory's writings were important factors in shaping the Anglo-Saxon view of mental disorders. Anglo-Saxon authors embraced the ideas and re-created them in their own works thus opening the way to a wider Anglo-Saxon audience. They established that madness and demon possession can be equal sometimes, but that profane madness also exists. In addition, they confirmed that a sinful life can lead to some state of madness, but also that not all madmen are sinful.

In Ælfric's homilies, what echoes from all this is mainly the connection between sin and madness and the rescuing nature of Christianity. As homilies were highly didactic and were meant to be understood by all layers of society, the finer nuances of the various types of mental disorders were not spelled out and the texts were straight-to-the-point. Madness was usually portrayed as a cause of demon possession, of which a saint granted relief. The vocabulary is simple and rather monochrome, not making clear distinction between profane and supernatural madness. But this can be attributed, on the one hand, to the educational purpose of the homilies; and on the other hand, to the prevailing notion that permeated Anglo-Saxon thought, namely, that the *mod* contains both soul and mind. Authors of the homilies turned these two conditions to their own benefit: they could convey the teaching that paganism and heresy are equal to choosing sin, and choosing sin over righteousness is madness and it turns people away from God; and at the same time, possession by devils which is manifested by madness can be cured by Christianity. Therefore, the cure for madness and sin is following the Lord. How much this

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[436] Dendle, *Demon Possesion*, p. 144.
[437] Dendle, *Demon Possesion*, p. 149.

was integrated into everyday people's lives is questionable; nevertheless, I will try to explore it in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: MENTAL DISORDERS IN PRACTICAL TEXTS

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Christian culture brought the notion to Anglo-Saxons that madness might be the cause of sin, of demons, but it ultimately comes from God either as a punishment or testing. But what about original native Anglo-Saxon ideas of madness? And to what extent were the Christian ideas embraced by the everyday Anglo-Saxons? How much did the ideas of madness from the ubiquitous Graeco-Roman medicine infiltrate Anglo-Saxon medicine? These are the questions this final chapter seeks to answer with the analysis of glossaries and medical texts. The main reason these two types of texts are handled together is that both were of practical use instead of spiritual use, and as I have already mentioned in the Introduction, texts of practical usage are expected to reveal a wider and more realistic picture.

5.1 GLOSSARIES

The earliest glossaries we have are the Épinal-Erfurt and the Leiden Glossaries. The Leiden Glossary (Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Voss. lat. Q. 69, fos. 20r-36r), copied around the last half of the eighth century in a monastery at St Gallen from a lost Anglo-Saxon exemplar exhibits the classroom teaching of Theodore and Hadrian in the school in Canterbury.[438] Épinal (Vosges), Bibliothéque municiplae MS. 72 (2) is also dated to the eighth century and is thought to have been written by an Englishman in England,[439] whereas Erfurt, Codex Amplonianus f. 42, was written by a scribe at the Cathedral School of Cologne in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.[440] The Erfurt MS contains three glossaries of which the first is a nearly complete copy of the Épinal Glossary.[441] There are a number of glossaries related to Épinal-Erfurt: e.g. the late eighth-ninth century Corpus Glossary (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 144), in which the second of two alphabetical glossaries incorporates most of the Épinal-Erfurt material;[442] the Cleopatra Glossaries (B. M. MS. Cotton Cleopatra A III)

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[438] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, pp. 32–33.
[439] Pheifer, *Old English Glosses*, p. xxiv.
[440] Pheifer, *Old English Glosses*, p. xxvi.
[441] Pheifer, *Old English Glosses*, p. xxv.
[442] Pheifer, *Old English Glosses*, p. xxviii.

of the mid tenth century which contains ʿa variety of material derived ultimately from Épinal-Erfurt';[443] and the Harley Glossary (B. M. MS. Harley 3376) of the late tenth or eleventh century to mention but a few.

In the Leiden Glossary, there are four lemmata that are of interest to us: *arreptitium*, *freniticus*, *manius* and *vesani*; while in Épinal-Erfurt we have three: *amentis*, *ephilenticus* and *lymphatico*.

arreptitium: demoniosum

freniticus; insanus ob dolorem capitis: ad tempus qui multum uigilat

manius: demones

uesani: insani[444]

amentis, sceptloum

ephilenticus, uuoda

lymphatico, uuoendendi / uuodenti[445]

Although the exact sources of lemmata in glossaries are sometimes hard to identify, it has been shown that the source of the *arreptitium* lemma is Jeremiah, the source of the *freniticus* lemma is Gregory's *Dialogi*, while the source of the *manius* and *uesani* lemmata is Rufinus' Latin translation of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*.[446]

Most plausibly coming from ecclesiastical themed texts, the interpretamenta for these lemmata exhibit mixed traces of notions of madness: we have instances both for profane and for supernatural notions. For instance, the *arreptitium* in Jeremiah denotes false prophets who should be incarcerated; but in the time of the Old Testament the state of the prophets was believed to be that of possession imbued with the supernatural. Hence, the *arreptitium: demoniosum* lemma is an instance of supernatural madness. Conversely, Gregory's *freniticus* seems to be a profane case of madness, as we have already demonstrated in Chapter 3. As we have shown in the first chapter, there was a strong association between phrenesis and fever; and perhaps phrenesis is the least mysterious madness-type condition, probably on the account that the term was used for accompanying conditions that were passing maladies (like fever). This

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[443] Pheifer, *Old English Glosses*, p. xxxi.

[444] Leiden Glossary, XIV.17; XXXIX.19; IV.104; XXXV.177 (ed. Hessels, *Late Eighth-Century*, pp. 15, 41, 9 and 36).

[445] Épinal-Erfurt Glossary, 106, 383, 575 (ed. Pheifer, *Old English Glosses*, pp. 8, 21 and 31).

[446] Hessels, *Late Eighth-Century*, pp. xxxvii–xl; Pheifer, *Old English Glosses*, p. xlviii.

somatic feature can perhaps be noticed in the explanation of the lemma that originates this type of madness from pain or ache in the head. While *multum uigilat* might refer to the feverish-delirious insomnia of the sick that is described by several classical medical authors. *Uesani, insani* and *amentis* are the most basic, general, and straightforward terms for expressing mental disorders, but *ephilenticus* and *lymphatico* are more nuanced and narrower. It is interesting to note that both terms are explained by the Old English word that is the most general and most common for madness: *wod*. We have discussed the connotations of *ephilenticus* in the previous chapters and we have seen that it is a special kind of 'madness'. Considering *lymphatico*, at first sight one might think of *hydrophobia* i.e. rabies, *lympha* meaning water. However, as Onians argued, the word in ancient Greece originally meant an excited state: '[t]he current explanation of *lymphatus* and *lymphaticus* is that persons who saw a nymph or water-sprite went mad. *Hydrophobia* is quoted and *lymphatus* is supposed to refer primarily to mad fear, panic. But if we examine the earliest evidence, we find that hydrophobic symptoms or fear are not implied, but the reference is to people in a state of wild excitement'.[447] Apparently Anglo-Saxons also sat on the fence regarding the meaning of *lymphatico* because in a later glossary it is translated with *wæterseoc* (water-sick) as well as with *þæne gydigan* (possessed). But then again, we must bear in mind that the two different ways of interpretation might stem from the nature of the texts they were meant to explain.

Lastly, *manius* and *arreptitium* are both related to demons in these glossaries. *Manius* obviously denotes a form of madness stemming from *mania*; while *arrepticium*, being 'seized in mind', in Jeremiah describes a state of prophecy, which, as we have seen was closely associated with madness (Jeremiah 29:26): 'Dominus dedit te sacerdotem pro Ioiadae sacerdote ut sis dux in domo Domini super omnem virum arrepticium et prophetantem ut mittas eum in nervum et in carcerem'.[448] Interestingly, the interpretamenta of both of these words are related to demons. Although the gift of prophecy is supposed to be bestowed by God, false prophets might be inspired and possessed by demons, which might be the case here. Thus, the gloss confirms the connection of demonic powers with a special type of prophecy. Nonetheless, it might also reveal the Anglo-Saxon tendency of demonising dubious prophetic powers, something which is not fully based on Christian ideas: as we will see later on, elves were possibly seen as sources of prophetic powers; however, with the advent of Christianity, elves were demonised and thus their 'gift' of prophecy was, too.

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[447] Onians, *Origins*, p. 34.

[448] The Lord hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks. (KJV)

The eighth–ninth century Corpus Glossary has even more interesting entries. Beside the generic terms, such as *amentia*, *stultitia*, *dementes*, *freniticus* and *vesanus*, whose explanations are roughly the same as in Leiden and Épinal-Erfurt, we have some new expressions. Variations of *bacchanalia* and related words are listed, where *bacchantes* is glossed as *uuoedende*, showing again the use of *wod* as a very generic term for expressing madness-like states. *Caducus* also turns up in this glossary probably demonstrating the influence of Isidore's *Etymologies*, but contrarily to Isidore's text where *caducus* has a profane overtone, the word is glossed as *demoniacus*. In addition, the words *inergumenis* and *inergumenos* are also in the glossary glossing *demonibus* and *wodan* respectively. Lemmata of interest are:

amentia: stultitia

bacchantes: uuoedende

caducus: demoniacus

dementes: amentes

epilenticus: woda

freniticus: insanus ex dolore capitis

inergumenis: demonibus

inergumenos: wodan

limphaticus: woedendi

lymphatico: woedendi

vacchatur: insanit[449]

What is remarkable in the *caducus-demoniacus* lemma is that Isidore explicitly says that the demonic association of *caducus* was popular among 'common people', who are clearly not the ones who are likely to use glossaries and stand in opposition to the 'learned' whom we might more readily picture as using glossaries. Still, the glossator felt that *demoniacus* is the most adequate word for explaining *caducus*. Whatever associations stand in the background for this, the result is that *caducus*, a relatively neutral and profane word, got connected to demonic possession. Similarly, the generic *wodan* got connected to *inergumenos*, which is in turn glossed as *demonibus*. Hence, *wodan* received a demonic-supernatural overtone. But *wodan* and *woedendi* gloss *epilenticus* and *lymphaticus* too; these neutral-looking words, on the one hand, express a form of mental disorder, and on the other, they received a demonic-supernatural layer

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[449] Corpus Glossary, C 442, B 48, C 212, D 147, E 249, F 330, I 304, I 74, L 198, L 337, U 35 (ed. Lindsay, *Corpus Glossary*, pp. 39, 25, 34, 55, 66, 80, 97, 92, 106, 109 and 181).

by being connected to the demonic *wod*. Thus, a connection is formed between neutral mental disorders, the supernatural and the demonic.

Moving on to the tenth century Harley Glossary, we can see even more evidence for associating madness with the supernatural. More and more expressions denoting mental disorders surface that are connected to the supernatural, and words denoting 'profane' madness are connected to them. Unfortunately, the Harley Glossary ends after the letter F, so we can only imagine how many other useful words might be helping us if it were complete. The lemmata we are about to analyse are as follows:

bacha graece insania . dementia . a furore dicta est

bachatic . furor . uel bachanalia . .i. furores .

bachatur . furit . insanit

bachantium . insipientium .

caducus . demoniacus . a cadendo dicitur . *braecseoca . bel inanis .

cardiacus . dicitur qui patitur laborem cordis . uel morbus cordis . *heortcotha . uel *ece . *modseocnes . uel *unmiht .

comitiales .i. garritores . uel dies mensi . uel *ylfie . uel monathseoce . uel *dagas .

demoniaticus . insanus . amens . uel *woda .

fanaticus .i. minister templi . futura praecinens . uel ylfig

freneticus .i. demoniaticus . insanus . amens . *gewitleasa .

frenesis .i. insanitas

funeste . funere pollutus . cruente . insaniente . *wedende

furor enim animi cito finitur . uel grauis est quam ira . furor enim incipiens ira est . et feruens in animo indignatio est . sicuit affricus uentus in pelago . ita furor in corde uiri . *rethnes . *wodendream .

furis .i. insanis . erras . bacharis .

furuerunt . insanierunt . *rethegadan .

furia . insania . amentia . uel dea *wodscipe . *rethnes

furias . insania . uel deas . iras . *rethscipas . uel *hatheortnessa .

furiosus . iracundus . rabidus . insanus . amens .

fura .i. dea furantium .

furens . insaniens . indignatione plenus . irascens .

furit . irascitur . *wet.[450]

The list of *bacchanalia*-related and *furia*-related terms has expanded and new words have been tied to them. Connection between *bacchanalia* and *furia* has been established. *Bacchanalia*-lexemes are glossed with the generic terms *insania* and *dementia*, but also with *furor* lexemes. The mythological dimension of *bacchanalia* does not manifest in these glosses. Conversely, *furor* is associated both with mythology and with fury. *Fur(i)a* is glossed as the goddess of fury both in Latin and in Old English. Other glosses of *furor*-lemmata are terms expressing either generic mental disorders (*amentia*, *insania*), or rage (e.g. *irascens*, *rabidus*). The *furia*-group of lemmata evidently connects raging fury with mental disorder. Old English words used to explain these terms are variants of *wod* and *reðe*, the latter meaning fierce and savage.[451] An interesting term worth noting here is *hatheortnessa*, literally hot-heartedness, which is a nice manifestation of the Anglo-Saxon mind-soul phenomenon we have already discussed.

We have a couple of new expressions that were not listed in the glossaries before. For instance, *caducus* is now glossed both with *demoniacus*, but also with *bræcseoca* and *inanis*. *Bræcseoc*, which on its own is a profane word denoting epilepsy, now stands beside *demoniacus*. *Comitiales*, which again can be traced back to the *Etymologies*, and is a profane expression for epilepsy according to Isidore, is bestowed with supernatural meaning: firstly, it is glossed as *garritores*; *garritores* is further aggravated by *ylfie*, and then by *monaþseoce*. As it has already been established (e.g. Hall, 'Elves on the brain'), this *comitiales* gloss pertains to chapter 52 of Aldhelm's *Prosa de virginitate* describing Saint Anatolia's healing and exorcising miracles. The passage lists those who have been cured by Anatolia: *laruatos*, *comitiales* and *ceteros ualitudinarios*; of which *laruatos* is glossed as *æfærede*, *inerguminos infirmos* and *deofelseoce*, while *comitiales* is glossed as *i. garritores*, *ylfie*, *lunaticos* and *wanseoce* (*ceteros ualitudinarios* is only glossed as *adlie*).[452] *Garritores* or *garritor* in the singular is the 'deverbative formation from *garrio*, "I chatter, babble prate"'.[453] As Hall points out, a further occurence in the Aldhelm text implies that this chattering did not merely mean speaking but had a prophetic or divine tone to it, presumably by possession.[454] The other gloss explaining

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[450] Harley Glossary B 4, 5, 7, 10; C 28, 348, 1211; D 158; F 151, 696, 697, 893, 904, 905, 906, 907, 912, 914, 917, 918, 922 (ed. Oliphant, pp. 23–204).

[451] 'reðe', *Bosworth-Toller*.

[452] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', p. 235.

[453] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', p. 238.

[454] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', p. 238.

comitiales is *ylfig*, which, according to Hall, denotes 'some altered state of mind', a state of divine or demonic possession accompanied by prophetic utterances, 'presumably … something like "foretelling the future"'.[455] Both *ylfig* and *gydig* are significant words: according to Hall, they both share a Common Germanic origin and were both members of the Old English common lexicon, providing as fundamental expressions for altered mental states as *wod* did.[456] The fact that *comitiales* is glossed with *ylfig* and at the same time with prophesying (*futura præcinens* meaning 'foretelling the future') might hint at a native Anglo-Saxon idea of elves bestowing prophesying power, which might be regarded either negatively or positively. Hall presumes that the interpretamenta of *comitiales* ultimately derives from Isidore's entry on *epilemsia*,[457] and hence, the fact that *monaþseoce* (in Isidore's text *lunaticos*) is used is significant: Isidore points out that *lunaticos* are thought to be mad because of demons that follow the course of the moon. Therefore, we can state that both the lemma and its glosses are heavily influenced by supernatural ideas and they all express forms of supernatural madness. The next word of interest, *demoniaticus*, up till now only a gloss, has become a lemma in itself, and it is glossed by generic and profane terms both in Latin and in Old English. *Ylfig* occurs again in another entry glossing *fanaticus* together with *minister templi* and *futura praecinens*. The interpretamenta 'server of a temple' and 'foretelling of the future' further bolster the supernatural and prophetic nature of *ylfig* and also of *fanaticus*. The next lemmata, *frenesis* and *freneticus* have expressed profane conditions so far, but they have now *demoniaticus* beside *insanus* and *amens*, along with the Old English *gewitleasa*. We can conclude that the vocabulary covering mental disorders in glossaries has significantly increased compared to previous glossaries; while the interpretamenta show a growing tendency to associate mental disorders with the supernatural.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 146 contains Aldehelm's prose *De laudibus virginitatis* with interlinear glosses. The text itself is of the late tenth or early eleventh century, while the glosses are of the eleventh.[458] Aldehlm's *De virginitate* is 'one of the most enduring works of Anglo-Saxon scholarship': it was already popular in Aldhelm's lifetime both in England and on the Continent up till the Viking invasions of the last half of the ninth century; and already in the early tenth century the interest has revived as evidenced by several new heavily glossed manuscripts.[459] The glossary contains several mental disorder related lemmata

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[455] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', pp. 238–41.
[456] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', pp. 240–41.
[457] Hall, 'Elves on the brain', p. 237.
[458] Napier, *Glosses*, p. xiii.
[459] Gwara, 'The transmission', p. 139.

with many variations, most of which have been covered in the previous glossaries. There a few that need closer inspection:

> commitiales, .i. garritores, ylfige, wanseoce
> freneticum, brægensecne
> freneticus, awoffod, brægenseoc
> limphaticum, wæterseoc
> limphaticum, *s. saul*, þæne gidigan[460]

The previously discussed *commitiales-garritores-ylfige* string is supplemented by *wanseoce*. North suggested that *wanseoc* is derived from the cognate Old Norse *vanr*, which would bolster the theory of *ælf*-possession.[461] North parallels the Old Norse group of gods called *vanir* with the elves in Old Norse mythology, and thus the possession by *vanir* would fit perfectly the Anglo-Saxon belief of *ælf*-possession: '[*w*]*an-seoc* possibly contains as its first element an Old English cognate of Norse *van-* (as in *Vanir*): thus "those made sick by the Vanir"'.[462] Hall has rejected this idea on linguistic grounds and proposed that the stem is *wann*, meaning gloomy, sad, pallid.[464] Earl meanwhile based his statement on the assumption that *wann* means 'dark', and postulated that *wanseoc* denotes a disease related to melancholy and dark humours.[465] The question of *wanseoc* remains unsolved to this day owing also to the fact that there are only two occurrences in Old English corpus, both of them as *commitiales*-glosses.

Freneticum and *freneticus* got a surprising association with *brægenseoc*, brain-sick. As it has been expounded in Chapter 1, it was not typical for the Anglo-Saxons to originate mental phenomena to the brain, yet, *brægenseoc* is used here as a gloss. In the earliest glossaries *freneticus* was glossed as pain in the head, while later it acquired a supernatural overtone. In this glossary, it received a somatic overtone again, coinciding with a much more nuanced understanding of the disease that names the brain as its epicentre. *Lymphaticum* received two separate lemmata in the Digby manuscript interpreting Aldhelm's *De laudibus virginitatis*. One is interpreted as *þæne gidigan*, the other as *wæterseoc*. We have mentioned that *gydig* resembles *ylfig* and had roughly the meaning of 'possessed by a god'. As for *wæterseoc*, it is used to translate *hydropicus* in various texts. Apparently, there was a slight ambiguity over the meaning

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[460] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 146, gloss 4937; 5001; 4668; 4667; 5009 (ed. Napier, *Glosses*, pp. 1–138).
[461] North, *Heathen Gods*, p. 52.
[462] North, *Heathen Gods*, p. 52.
[464] Hall, *Elves*, p. 27 n31.
[465] Earl, 'Necessity', p. 88.

of *hydropicus* and *wæterseocnys* for Anglo-Saxons. Firstly, these words could mean an acute swelling on the body due to fluid retention, as for instance in Luke XIV.2: 'ða wæs þar sum wæterseoc man beforan him',[466] which is translated from the Latin *hydropicus*, explained as 'abnormal swelling' and 'dropsy' in the modern versions of the Bible. Also, remedies in the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* imply that in the text, *hydropicus* (translated by *wæterseoc*) denotes an ailment where fluid should be let out from the body: 'Wið wæteradle hundes spiwþan lege 7 wrið on þam innoðe, þurh þone utgang seo wæteradl ut afloweð',[467] where *wæteradl* means literally water-sickness. Secondly, *wæterseoc* is also used to interpret *lymphaticus*, which in turn was understood as possession. The confusion might lie in the morphological similarity between *hydrophobia* as rabies and *hydropicus*. *Hydrophobia* resembles frenzy and raging madness due to its symptoms, hence its parallel to possession. Due to the similarity between *hydropicus* and *hydrophobia*, *wæterseoc* assumed the meaning both of possession and the condition of fluid retention. Hence, *lymphaticus* was bestowed with two interpretamenta: *wæterseoc*, which could mean the profane fluid retention condition; and *gydig*, the supernatural mental disorder.

Lastly, there is a thematically compiled glossary after Ælfric's Latin Grammar. In this glossary, Ælfric lumped together the vocabulary he deemed active and useful for everyday monastic life covering all sorts of diseases:[468]

lunaticus: monaðseoce

daemoniacus: deofolseoc

energuminus: gewitseoc

amens uel demens: gemyndleas

rabidus uel insanus: wod

rabies: wodnys

freneticus: se ðe ðurh slæpleaste awet

frenesis: seo untrumnys

lethargus uel letargicus: ungelimplice slapol[469]

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[466] Luke XIV.2 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 132).
[467] *MdQ* X.18 (ed. De Vriend, p. 266). 'For *wæteradl* lay and bind dog's vomit around the insides, through the egress the "sick water" flows out' (my translation).
[468] Dendle, *Demon Possesion*, p. 95.
[469] Ælfric, *Grammar* (ed. Zupitza, p. 305).

Apart from *deofolseoc*, the glosses are surprisingly profane: Ælfric left out the supernatural features of those lemmata which have previously been interpreted by supernatural meanings. For instance, as shown above, *freneticus* has been glossed by *demoniaticus*, but Ælfric does not give any hint of a supernatural origin of the condition. Dendle suggests that the omission of supernatural may be due to the fact that '[f]or him, perhaps, the connection does not need spelling out'; as he used neutral and profane expressions also in his narratives when speaking of demon possessions.[470] As we have seen in his homilies, madness for him was tightly entangled with the devil, and he probably felt no need to stress it in the glosses. This is bolstered by e.g. *energuminus*, which has hitherto both been glossed as a demoniac and has always been used with the meaning of demoniac in narratives: even though its diabolical nature is obvious, it is only *gewitseoc* in this glossary.

The extensive use of expressions of supernatural mental disorders in the glossaries point to the fact that they were a significant part of the culture that produced the glossaries themselves. Profane mental disorders tend to be explained by supernatural ones, the expressions of supernatural are conjured to aid the understanding of the profane. This might imply that the notion of supernatural mental disorders were more close to the Anglo-Saxons' hearts; the conception was more familiar to them, the associations stronger. There is a hint of the influence of a rational-somatic approach; however, the supernatural far outweighs it. The reason behind this might lie in the fact that Christians produced the glosses and mental disorders inherently inclined towards the supernatural in Christian culture: the connotations the glossators resorted to in order to explain unknown phenomena were established earlier by other well-known Christian texts, e.g. the Bible. Since the texts the glossaries were meant to accompany are religious in theme, the interpretamenta are also imbued with the supernatural, thereby providing a more precise and descriptive meaning. However, it is also possible that some of the connotations build upon a more ancient, native Anglo-Saxon view of mental disorders. Of course, most of the interpretations are thematically Christian, but it is possible that the supernatural explanations were deemed more useful by the glossators because the supernatural view was much more widespread. This is supported by glosses such as *ylfig* and *gydig*. As a general rule, mental disorders were strongly associated with violence and supernatural powers in the glossaries; terms indicative of the somatic approach were also used, but were only insignificantly represented. I will examine next how different the situation is in medical texts.

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[470] Dendle, *Demon Possesion*, pp. 96–7.

5.2 MEDICAL TEXTS

5.2.1 SOURCES

When discussing medical compendia in Anglo-Saxon England, usually there is a line drawn between two groups: those of clear-cut translations, 'imported' texts, and those of 'locally produced', Old English texts. Although determining whether a text is locally produced or imported is quite difficult in the case of medical texts and glossaries compared to those of religious-themed texts. The *Herbarium* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* are undoubtedly translations, so they are the 'imported' texts. However, the *Leechbooks* and the *Lacnunga* contain so many transmissions and digests that they make it very hard to determine what ideas are originally Anglo-Saxon. There have been attempts at identifying sources of the *Leechbooks* (see e.g. Deegan's thesis). Deegan believes that the author of the *Leechbooks* used the *Practica Alexandri*, Oribasius' *Synopsis* and *Euporistes*, Pliny's *Natural History* and many more.[471] Cameron goes further and states that '[t]here is convincing evidence that the compiler [of the *Leechbooks*] had the following works available for direct quotation: Oribasius' *Synopsis* and *Euporistes*; *Practica Alexandri* (for all extracts from the works of Philemanus, Philagrius and Alexander of Tralles); Marcellus' *De Medicamentis*; *Physica Plinii* and possibly *Medicina Plinii*'.[472]

Nonetheless, as we have already explained, we cannot be sure if these works were really used directly as there is no trace of the physical texts in Anglo-Saxon England. And even if we quite optimistically accept that these particular works were used and they are the actual sources of the *Leechbooks*, we do not know if Anglo-Saxons knew what and whose texts they were using, or if the texts were only used as anonymous or unidentified medical works. We do not know the format of the texts either: whether they were available in full or only as digests. In addition, there are so many elements in the *Leechbooks* that cannot be paralleled to any source and they are so closely intertwined by those that have putative sources that it is almost impossible to tell them apart. There are also parts which are undoubtedly original Anglo-Saxon ideas. For this reason, going forward in our discussion, we will call the *Leechbooks* as 'locally

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[471] Deegan, 'Critical Edition', pp. xviii–xxxiii.
[472] Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook', p. 154.

produced' and consider those medical works 'imported' which are undoubtedly translations, e.g. the *Herbarium*.

The compendium we call *enlarged Herbarium* consists of several texts which are dated to the fourth and fifth centuries, although they only reached England around the eighth century.[473] The Old English version is estimated to have been produced in the tenth century; nevertheless, there are also indications that it might have been made in the eighth or ninth century.[474] What is termed *enlarged Herbarium* contains the following texts: Antonius Musa, *De herba vettonica liber*; Apuleius Platonicus, *Herbarium*; and *Liber medicinae ex herbis femininis* incorrectly ascribed to Discorides; these are usually copied together with *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* which is further divided between *De taxone liber*; a treatise on the healing powers of the mulberry; and Sextus Placitus, *Liber medicinae ex animalibus*.[475] The Old English versions are copied continuously without making distinctions between the texts, the division is only between the *enlarged Herbarium* and the *MdQ*. The oldest surviving Old English manuscript is BL, Harley 585 which also hosts the *Lacnunga* and was written around 1000.[476] Although the texts chiefly refer to Mediterranean plants, there are signs that indicate that the manuscripts were used for medical purposes and were not only exercises for the scribes.[477] Since all the above listed texts were usually copied together in Old English versions, for the sake of ease, I will refer to the whole group of texts as Old English Herbarium Complex (*OEHC*) with the *MdQ* inclusive, and as Old English Herbarium (*OEH*) to the group of texts but excluding the *MdQ*.

As regards to our 'locally produced' texts, two medical books are preserved in MS London, British Library, Royal 12 D. xvii: the so-called *Bald's Leechbook* that consists of two collections of recipes and *Leechbook III*. They are assumed to have been copied from a lost exemplar in the 10th century by the same hand as the annals of 922-55 in the Parker Chronicle (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 173, ff 1-56) presumably in Winchester.[478] The first two books on ff 1r-109r are called Bald's due to the colophon at the end of Book II that says Bald ordered Cild to compile (or transcribe) it. While *Leechbook III* on ff 109r-127v was 'probably included by the scribe of the Royal manuscript because of the associated subject matter'.[479] Frequent *nota* signs and Latin notes in the marginalia indicate that the manuscript was read

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[473] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, p. 59.
[474] De Vriend, *The Old English*, p. xlii.
[475] De Vriend, *The Old English*, p. lvi.
[476] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, p. 59.
[477] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, p. 64.
[478] Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 333.
[479] Deegan, 'Critical Edition', p. viii.

even in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[480] It is argued that *Bald's Leechbook* 'shows a conscious effort to transfer to Anglo-Saxon practice what one physician considered most useful in native and Mediterranean medicine'; while *Leechbook III* exemplifies Anglo-Saxons' 'native medicine, [which is] less sophisticated than that taken from Latin sources, more prone to depend on charms and other medical treatments'.[481] Both *Leechbooks* more or less follow the classical head-to-toe pattern, and the two segments in *Bald's Leechbook* are divided by and large between external and internal maladies. Book II that treats internal diseases is 'a thoroughly scholarly work borrowing extensively from Mediterranean sources' and the compiler made use of works of Latin origin extensively.[482] Book II is also which shows the most impact of humoral theory; it is indeed scholarly, as Cameron wrote, as well as very technical.

The text called *Lacnunga* is found on fols 130r to 193r of only one manuscript: BL MS Harley 585. The manuscript also hosts an incomplete text of the enlarged *Old English Herbarium* and it is dated to the tenth and eleventh centuries. No formal illustrations enrich the text, only some 'crude decorated initials, and some more elaborate zoomorphic ones'.[483] Although the recipes look disorganized at first sight compared to *Bald's Leechbook*, and according to some scholars it can be attributed to the compilers' or scribes' incompetence or ignorance,[484] it has been argued that the *Lacnunga* should rather be regarded as a notebook, with 'no attempt made to put the remedies into logical order' due to its practical function.[485] As Cameron points out, '*Lacnunga* shows none of the organization or medical relevance of the *Leechbooks*'[486] and Pettit emphasises that it is a 'haphazard collection of miscellaneous remedies rather than a single unified medical text'.[487] In fact, Cameron believes that the *Lacnunga* was put together 'by non-medical collectors … [it is] what we may call folk medicine at its lowest level'.[488] Nevertheless, it contains invaluable folkloric and mythological elements. As Cameron sums it up, '*Leechbook III* can be taken to represent the oldest surviving strata of Anglo-Saxon medicine, *Bald's Leechbook* a sophisticated effort to incorporate the best of known medical practices into a physician's working manual, and *Lacnunga* a type of collection still being made by untrained and undiscriminating individuals'.[489]

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[480] Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 332.
[481] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, pp. 34–5.
[482] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, pp. 42–4.
[483] Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, p. 142.
[484] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, p. 47.
[485] Pettit, *Lacnunga*, p. xlvi.
[486] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, p. 31.
[487] Pettit, *Lacnunga*, p. liii.
[488] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, p. 34.
[489] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon*, p. 35.

Turning back to the aetiological classification of mental disorders outlined in the Introduction, the three previously identified categories can be recognised in the *Leechbooks* and the *Lacnunga*: somatic, neutral, and supernatural. This distinction is based on terminology only and may not faithfully reflect the belief of the Anglo-Saxons in all cases; however, it is worth establishing these categories as they show a general trend and approach that is still applicable to Anglo-Saxons. The categories by and large reflect the aetiology of the diseases and the origins of the aetiologies. Thus, employing these categories not only gives structure to the thesis thus making the problem easier to understand, but it also helps in drawing a clearer picture of Anglo-Saxon mental disorders. These categories are not applied to the *Herbarium* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*, as in those works there is no marked difference between the approach to these three categories.

5.2.2 IMPORTED TEXTS
5.2.2.1 NIHTGENGA

We will first analyse the translated works, i.e. the *Old English Herbarium* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*. The *OEHC* is of utmost importance as it shows clear translations of certain conditions, thus giving a view on Anglo-Saxon ways of interpreting certain phenomena. The *OEHC* naturally contains foreign ideas of disease, which may or may not have coincided with Anglo-Saxon ideas. It is an interesting question whether the alien ideas found in the *OEHC* were embraced or acknowledged but rejected by Anglo-Saxons, but because we know so little about the original ideas, it is impossible at this point to believe anything for certain. Nonetheless, both the foreign and the Anglo-Saxon elements jointly owe a great deal to the Biblical tradition. And since the Biblical tradition was well established and assimilated into the local culture when the *OEHC* got into England, we can assume that it was an effective vehicle that successfully transmitted the ideas into the Anglo-Saxon culture. For instance, we know that the *demoniacos* and *lunaticos* of the *OEHC* were familiar to Anglo-Saxons from the Bible: we can assume that they already had a notion of what these terms denoted thanks to the Bible and various religious texts. As for the aetiology of mental disorders, the *OEHC* contains traces of somatic origins as well as traces of supernatural origins. The aetiologies are not expounded, and we can only surmise them from the remedies; however, it is the case that there are some instances where clearly no supernatural forces are involved, but there are also other

instances where it is clearly the supernatural that is the culprit. In this respect, the *OEHC* supports the concepts which Anglo-Saxons met both in the natural philosophical and in the religious sources that we have discussed so far. In fact, the *OEHC* uses terms that would assume a somatic concept for cases of supernatural madness, so although it does provide some clarification and guidelines on mental disorders in general, it further intensifies the tendency of fusing supernatural and somatic mental disorders.

Several ailments are mentioned in the *OEHC* that we can suspect denote mental disorders, and these are expressed with the following terms: *nihtgenga*, *monoðseoc*, *deofulseocnys*, *fylleseocnys*, *ofergytulnys*, *gewitlest þæs modes*, *gewitleast*, and *scinlac*. The exact meaning of these terms is ambiguous and requires explanation, hence, we do not provide translations here but will discuss them one by one in detail.

Probably the most puzzling of these terms is *nihtgenga*. *Nihtgenga* occurs in *Leechbook III* as well and has been variously translated as e.g. nocturnal goblin[490] and night-goer;[491] according to the Bosworth and Toller dictionary, it is ʽa creature that goes at night, a goblin, an evil spiritʼ.[492] It would be tempting to think that *nihtgenga* is a special supernatural-mythological monstrous species lurking the Anglo-Saxon night, however, the evidence does not fully support the theory. In the *Herbarium*, *nihtgenga* sounds more like a broader phenomenon suggesting a hallucinatory-type condition. In order to interpret the Old English version, it is worth considering the Latin as well:

Ðeos wyrt þe man betonican nemneð … seo deah gehwæþer ge þæs mannes sawle ge his lichoman, hio hyne scyldeþ wið unhyrum nihtgengum 7 wið egeslicum gesihðum 7 swefnum; seo wyrt byþ swyþe haligu, 7 þus þu hi scealt niman on Agustes monðe butan iserne[493]

Haec herba vettonica … animas hominum et corpora custodit, nocturnas ambulationes et loca sancta et busta, etiam visus timendos et omni rei sancta…[494]

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[490] *Lch* III.lxi (ed. Cockayne p. 345).
[491] *Lch* III.lxi (ed. Olds, p. 208).
[492] ʽnihtgengaʼ, *Bosworth-Toller*.
[493] *OEH* I.1 (ed. De Vriend, p. 30). ʽThis plant, which is named betonica [betony] … it is good both for one's soul and one's body; it protects a person from dreadful nightmares and from terrifying visions and dreams. This plant is very wholesome [or holy] and so you must gather it in the month of August without using a tool made of iron' (transl. Van Arsdall, p. 211).
[494] *OEH* I.1 (ed. De Vriend, p. 31). ʽThis herb called betony protects man's soul and body, from nocturnal wanderings (sleepwalking?), protects holy places and tombs, and against horrifying visions and it is sacred for all' (my translation).

Betonica, Cotton MS Vitellius C III, f. 20r

Cockayne translated *nihtgenga* as 'monstrous nocturnal visitor(s)' in 1864; Storms interpreted it as 'spirits roaming about at night' in 1948; and Van Arsdall translated it as 'dreadful nightmares' in 2001. Hall was more cautious: he did not try to interpret the meaning, only made a literal translation of 'night-walker' with a note 'whatever this means'.[495] *Nihtgenga*'s accompanying conditions in this remedy are indeed not beings at all: visions and dreams, and visions and dreams are less likely to be paired up with corporeal hostile beings than with more abstract threats. Nevertheless, it is possible that *nihtgenga* is related to *egeslicum gesihðum* in the sense that it is, after all, a dreadful sight to see. If we suppose a conceptual connection between the three ailments (*nihtgenga*, *egeslicum gesihðum* and *swefnum*), then we can infer that *nihtgenga* has something to do with sight. It is either something whose appearance was terrifying, or something that caused or denoted a modified vision in the inflicted person. The original Latin version is not much of a help for us here: Monica Niederer, who studied the *De Herba Vettonica* text extensively, did not find any evidence as to what *nocturnas ambulationes* precisely meant. Literally, it means nightly wanderings, which, considering the flanking dreams and visions, would suggest an expression meaning somnambulation, sleepwalking. Nevertheless, Niederer believes it to mean rather 'dangerous nightly journeys' than sleepwalking, as she did not find anything convincing in her research supporting the meaning of sleepwalking.[496] There is an extended version of the sentence in Macdonald's edition of Musa's *De Herba Vettonica*: 'Animas hominum & corpora custodit, & nocturnas ambulationes a maleficiis & periculis, & loca sancta & busta etiam a visibus metuendis tuetur

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[495] Hall, *Elves*, p. 124.
[496] Niederer, *St. Galler* Botanicus, p. 152.

& defendit, & omni rei sancta est'.[497] The extension does not make our life easier. *Maleficium* at the time of Musa did not necessarily mean witchcraft. According to Peters, '*maleficus* and *maleficium* … conventinally meant "criminal" and "criminal act", and continued to do so in law until much later'; and appeared to be 'applied "by common people" especially to magicians of various kinds' from the fourth or fifth century,[498] so it is not entirely sure whether the *maleficium* the herb protects from was meant as witchcraft or any other profane ill-doing against the *noctrunas ambulationes*, or even a magician who might pose a threat to the *noctrunas ambulationes*. Whatever it means, it does not bring us closer to the meaning of *noctrunas ambulationes*.

The meaning of *nocturnas ambulationes* is an obscure question in itself; but its Old English translation to *nihtgenga* is an even greater mystery. Did the Anglo-Saxons know what *noctrunas ambulationes* meant? It is hard to tell: the Latin text is obscure and its meaning ambiguous. There is no evidence that Anglo-Saxons ever saw the extended version of the sentence. We do not know whether the use of *nihtgenga* was a conscious and deliberate choice or a tentative attempt at translating something they were uncertain of. Did they know that *nocturnas ambulationes* precisely denoted a *nihtgenga* or was the choice of *nihtgenga* a shot in the dark? If they were uncertain, is the word *nihtgenga* a calque or did they recognize something in *nocturnas ambulationes* that reminded them of their native, already existing *nihtgenga*? The fact that *nihtgenga* occurs in *Leechbook* III implies that the case is the latter. *Leechbook* III is generally viewed as a more traditional Anglo-Saxon medical book, a text that reflects Anglo-Saxon culture more faithfully and more 'uncontaminated' than *Bald's Leechbook*. Furthermore, it would be unlikely if a not-so-well-understood calque infiltered the language so well that it received a place in the band of native disease-causing agents, although we see no other evidence of *nihtgenga* in any other text. It is significant, nonetheless, that *nihtgenga* appears in no less than three remedies in *Leechbook* III, which suggests that it was, after all, an important condition that required several types of remedies. In *Leechbook* III, *nihtgenga* is usually accompanied by conditions that are produced by supernatural agents and/or have mental effects: it is treated with the same therapy as devils, elves, fever, and evil spells. We do not know either whether *nihtgenga* is the agent or the condition; however, in the *Leechbook* sentences, it appears as member of a list of agents. Hence, if we rely on the *Leechbook* evidence, we can conclude that *nihtgenga* was a supernatural agent that had harmful

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[497] Musa, *De herba vettonica* (ed. Macdonald, p. 4) 'it protects both man's soul and spirit, and *nocturnas ambulationes* from *maleficium* and danger, and it protects sacred places and tombs and also protects from seeing fearful visions and is sacred for all' (my translation).

[498] Peters, 'The Medieval Church', p. 181.

effect on people possibly causing a condition that was viewed as a disorder of the *mod*, as its supernatural companions were also disruptors of the *mod*. Whereas according to the *Herbarium*, it might be either an agent or a condition, it might be terrifying to see, and it most probably has something to do with vision. Dreams and visions were believed to be in intensive interaction with the *mod*, so the condition where *unhyrum nihtgengum*, *egeslicum gesihðum* and *swefnum* had to be remedied, it was really the *mod* that needed the cure.

5.2.2.2 LUNATICUS

The most frequently occurring terms in the *OEHC* are *demoniacos* and *lunaticos*. They are always treated separately, thus implying that in the world of the Latin *Herbarium*, *demoniacos* and *lunaticos* undoubtedly denoted different conditions. Maybe with similar aetiology and similar symptoms, still, they were considered separate ailments as such. Nevertheless, this does not mean that this distinction was also made by the Anglo-Saxons, this is only reflected in their translation. *Lunaticus* is always translated as month-sick, *monoðseoc*, while *demoniacus* or *daemonia* is usually translated as devil-sickness, *deofulseocnys*.

There are three remedies for *lunaticus* in the *OEH* and these are related to herbs *clufwyrt* (buttercup), *polion* (probably wood sage), and *peonia* (peony):

> *OEH* X. Wið monoðseoce genim þas wyrte 7 gewrið mid anum readum þræde onbutan þæs monnes swyran on wanwegendum monan on þam monþe ðe man Aprelis nemneð 7 on Octobre foreweardum, sone he bið gehæled.[499]

> *OEH* LVIII. Wið monoðseoce genim þysse wyrte seaw þe we polion nemdun, gemengc wið eced, smyra þærmid þa ðe þæt yfel þoligen toforan þam þe hyt hym to wylle, 7 þeh þu hyre leaf 7 hyre wyrttuman do on anne clænne claÐ 7 gewriðe onbutan þæs mannes swyran þe þæt yfel ðolað; hyt deþ onfundelnysse þæs sylfan þinges.[500]

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[499] *OEH* X.1 (ed. De Vriend, p. 54). 'For lunacy, take the plant and bind it around the person's neck with a piece of red thread when the moon is on the wane in the month of April and in early October; the person will be quickly healed' (transl. Van Arsdall, p. 227).

[500] *OEH* LVIII.1 (ed. De Vriend, p. 102). 'For insanity, take the juice of the plant we call polion, mix it with vinegar, and rub it on the person who is afflicted with the evil condition before it attacks them. Put its leaves and roots in a clean cloth and fasten this around the neck of the person who suffers from the ailment; it proves itself effective' (transl. Van Arsdall, pp. 255–6).

OEH LXVI. Wið monoðseocnysse gyf man þas wyrte peoniam þam monoðseocan ligcgendon ofer alegð, sona he hyne sylfne halne up ahefð, 7 gyf he hig mid him hafað næfre seo adl him eft genealæceð.[501]

Polion (*OEH* LVIII), Cotton MS Vitellius C III, f. 38r

As we can see, the remedies employ ligature-like applications for *monoðseocnys*. The position of ligatures in the Middle Ages was not exactly clear. Ligatures were a widespread method for curing certain ailments well attested from the antiquity into the Middle Ages. We have literal evidence which suggests that members of the church fabricated such ligatures. Eligius and Augustine himself reproached clerics who created amulets and ligatures and thus allured their flock to sin.[502] Still, the fact that clerics produced ligatures hints at the ambiguity and the controversy that surrounded these objects: even ecclesiastics could not decide whether it was sinful to resort to ligatures or not. Most plausibly ligatures did not hold this dubious position in the original version of the *OEH* and were used more widely at the time, similarly to pre-Conversion Anglo-Saxons. Nevertheless, in the tenth century Ælfric rebukes those who resort to such condemnable magic:

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[501] *OEH* LXVI.1 (ed. De Vriend, p. 108). 'For lunacy: if one lays the peony plant over an insane person when he is lying down, he will quickly raise himself up healthy, and if the person has it with him, the illness will never again come near' (transl. Van Arsdall, p. 259).
[502] For further reading on this topic see e.g. Flint, V. I. J. *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*. (Oxford, 1991)

unpleolic sy þeah hwa læcewyrte ðicge; ac þæt [Augustine] tælð to unalyfedlicere wiglunge, gif hwa ða wyrta on him becnitte, buton he hi to ðam dolge gelecge. Þeah hwæðere ne sceole we urne hiht on læcewyrtum besettan, ac on ðone Ælmihtigan Scyppend, þe ðam wyrtum ðone cræft forgeaf. Ne sceal man mid galdre wyrte besingan, ac mis Godes wordum hi gebletsian, and swa ðicgan.[503]

In this passage, Ælfric describes ligatures with the word *wiglung*: eating a medicinal herb is tolerated but binding it on oneself is a prohibited magical act, an '*unalyfedlicere wiglung*'. *Wiglung* has a strong connotation of banned magic and paganism in law codes,[504] and a strong sense of the supernatural. Thus, the *OEH* conclusively confirmed the supernatural aspect of *monoðseocnys*.

5.2.2.3 DEMONIACUS

The condition named *demoniacus – deofulseocnys* in the *OEH* is a complex one. In contrast to *monoðseocnys*, which stands alone in all the remedies, *deofulseocnys* is paired up or is explained in relation to other conditions in the remedies. For instance, in *OEH* XI the herb mugwort is recommended against hardship of long journey, demonic possession, the evil eye and evil medications: 'þonne hwa siðfæt onginnan wille ðonne genime he him on hand þas wyrte artemisiam 7 hæbbe mid him, ðonne ne ongyt he na mycel to geswynce þæs siðes; 7 eac heo afligð deofulseocnyssa 7 on þam huse þe he hy inne hæfð heo forbyt yfele lacnunga 7 eac heo awendeð yfelra mannan eagan'.[505] In *OEH* XX, a type of demonic condition is treated the same way as 'most violent of fevers': '[w]ið þa stiþustan feferas genim ðas sylfan wyrte 7

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[503] Ælfric, 'Passio Sancti Bartholomei Apostoli' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* I.xxxi, 476–77). 'it is not perilous, though any one eat a medicinal herb; but [Augustine] reprehends it as an unallowed charm, if any one bind those herbs on himself, unless he lay them on a sore. Nevertheless we should not set our hope in medicinal herbs, but in the Almighty Creator, who has given that virtue to those herbs. No man shall enchant a herb with magic, but with God's words shall bless it, and so eat it'.

[504] See e.g. Edward and Guthrum's law no. 11 in Liebermann, F., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903), p. 134.

[505] *OEH* XI. (ed. De Vriend, pp. 54–56). 'If someone wants to begin a journey, the person should take some artemesia [mugwort] in hand and keep it with him; then the person won't feel the hardship of the journey too much. It also expels demonic possession. In a house where it is present, it prevents bad medications and it also turns away the evil eye' (transl. Van Arsdall, pp. 227–228).

gedrige hy, smoca þonne þærmid, heo afligð nalæs þone fefer, eac swylce deofulseocnyssa'.[506] Since the two conditions (fever and *deofulseocnys*) are treated with the same remedy, some sort of a connection can be assumed between them.

It is even more interesting in *OEH* CXXXII. The Latin *epilempticos* is explained with *daemoniacos* and is supplemented with *qui spasmum patiuntur*:

Wið gewitleaste, þæt is wið deofulseocnysse, genim of þam lichoman þysse ylcan wyrte mandragore þreore penega gewihte, syle drincan on wearmum wætere swa he eaðelicost mæge, sone he byþ gehæled.[507]

Ad epilempticos, hoc est daemoniacos et qui spasmum patiuntur sic facies: Herbae mandragorae, de corpore eius tribulis scripulum i et dabis bibere in aqua calida quantum merus continet, statim mirifice sanantur.[508]

Mandragora, Cotton MS Vitellius C III, f. 57v

The Latin version explains epilepsy as being due to demon possession and applies the same remedy for convulsions. Thus, this remedy equates epileptics with demoniacs, and it also shows

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[506] *OEH* XX.2 (ed. De Vriend, p. 66). 'For the most violent of fevers, take the same plant and dry it. Fumigate the person with it; it chases away not only the fever, but also similar demon-like illnesses' (transl. Van Arsdall, p. 235).

[507] *OEH* CXXXII.4 (ed. De Vriend, p. 172). 'For insanity, that is for possession by devils, take three pennies' weight from the body of the mandrake plant and give it to drink as easily as the person is able in warm water. He will be quickly cured' (transl. Van Arsdall, 294).

[508] *OEH* CXXXII.4 (ed. De Vriend, p. 173). 'For epilepsy, that is demon possession, and for those who suffer convulsions, this should be done: take three (?) scruples from the body of the herb mandrake and give it to drink in hot water as much as possible, they will immediately be healed wondrously' (my translation).

that both the condition called epilepsy and demon possession had forms that were thought to involve convulsions. Although the remedy does suggest that there was a distinction made between those who had 'ordinary' convulsions and those who had convulsions as symptoms of epilepsy. Despite the scholarly texts (e.g. *Etymologies*) that taught that epilepsy had somatic and humoral causes, the *OEH* indicates that it is indeed a supernatural form of mental disorder, and a very serious at that, as it is caused by demons. Despite the fact that the Latin *epilempticus* had more specific Old English equivalents (e.g. *bræccoþu*, *fylleseoc*), the translator used the very generic *gewitleast*. The condition *gewitleast* might sound profane and ordinary; it might give the impression that the term expresses a simple notion that describes someone whose wits are gone for one reason or another. However, the fact that *gewitleast* in this text is equated to *deofulseocnys* opens up the possibility that the word was used for cases of madness thought be supernatural in origin. Indeed, this is the tendency that we shall see in the leechbooks, too.

The description of greater periwinkle in *OEH* CLXXIX further supports the connection between demon possession and various mental and emotional states. The herb is ostensibly useful primarily for demon possession, but also for various poisons, terror, envy, and happiness:

Ðeos wyrt þe man priapisci 7 oðrum namen uicaperuica nemneð to manegum þingon wel fremað, þæt ys þonne ærest ongean deofolseocnyssa 7 wið nædran 7 wið wildeor 7 wið attru 7 wið gehwylce behatu 7 wið andan 7 wið ogan 7 þæt ðu gife hæbbe; 7 gif ðu þas wyrte mid þe hafast ðu bist gesælig 7 symle gecweme.[509]

The herb can help with all these various conditions, it has power over them; this suggests that these conditions somehow belong to the same group – or 'a' group, whatever that group is, but the common denominator is the prevalence of the *mod*. The conditions have something in common; hence, the very same practice is thought to be effective for them, and what is common is that all these conditions are various manifestations of the *mod*.

Probably the most interesting part of the enlarged *OEH* in terms of mental disorders is *MdQ* X and it is important to compare the Old English version with the Latin.

Wið deofulseocnysse 7 wið yfelre gesihðe wulfes flæsc wel getawod 7 gesoden syle etan ðam þe þearf sy; þa scinlac þe him ær ætywdon, ne geunstillað hy hine …

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[509] *OEH* CLXXIX.1 (ed. De Vriend, p. 224). 'This plant, called *priapisci* or *uicaperuica*, is beneficial against many things, but first against the onset of being possessed, then against snakes, wild animals, poison, any threat, envy and terror. It is also beneficial so that you will obtain grace. If you have this plant with you, you are happy and always contented' (transl. Van Arsdall, p. 321).

Scinseocum men wyrc drenc of hwites hundes þoste on bitere lege, wundorlice hyt hæleþ.[510]

Ad daemoniacos vel umbrosos carnem lupi conditam qui ederit, a daemonibus vel umbris quae per fantasma apparent non tam inquietantur …
Ad caducos stercus canis albi potatum ex cinere de lexiva caducos mire sanat[511]

Let us try to decipher the Latin text first. The first question is: who is this remedy for? We know that *daemoniacos* can be interpreted as demoniacs, but what about *umbrosos*? *Umbrosus* in Latin means shady, full of shade. In the Corpus Glossary, the word *larba* is glossed as *umbra exerrans*, a wandering shadow.[512] *Larba* or *larva* is basically a ghost; it is glossed as *egisgrima* in the Corpus Glossary[513] and *egisigrima* in Épinal-Erfurt,[514] which can be rendered as spectre or ʻa creature that has assumed a horrible form'.[515] In addition, *larbatos* is glossed as *deofelseoce* in Digby 146.[516] The inflection of the word *umbrosos* in the first sentence is similar to that of *daemoniacos*, which suggests that like *daemoniacus*, *umbrosus* is a condition, or a person that suffers this particular condition. The next part of the sentence reveals the reason of the condition: as the reasons of being a *demoniacus* are the *daemones*, so are the reasons of being an *umbrosus* the *umbrae*. And these *umbrae* appear through visions. We can conclude that the remedy is for people who are either demoniacs or are tortured by fearful phantoms, and we can also infer that these two conditions were alike in some respect – although we cannot say what exactly, we can just surmise a connection as both are to be cured with the same method.

The second part of the text mentions *caducos*: ʻthose afflicted by the falling sickness', as we have already mentioned in connection with Isidore's text. The word *caducos* is an interesting one in the *OEHC*: on the one hand, based on Isidore's text it implies a somatic nature rather than a supernatural one, however, in many of the *OEHC* remedies it is used by the translator with a supernatural overtone. The word *epilepticus* is explained by the word *caducus*: in *OEH* CXLIII, the herb *coniza* is recommended ʻcum aceto data epilepticis id est caducis

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[510] *MdQ* X.1 (ed. De Vriend, pp. 262–64). ʻFor devil-sickness and evil sight: wolf's flesh well prepared and cooked should be given to that who needs it; the scinlac that appeared to him will not disturb him anymore … For the scinseoc people make a drink of white dog's dung in bitter lye, it heals miraculously' (my translation).

[511] *MdQ* X.1 (ed. De Vriend, pp. 263–65). ʻFor demoniacs and "ghost-sick" those who eat prepared wolf's flesh, the demons and ghosts that appear in visions will not disturb anymore … For the "falling sick" a drink should be made of white dog's faeces with lye ash, the "falling-sick" will miraculously be healed' (my translation).

[512] Corpus Glossary, L 69 (ed. Lindsay, p. 104).

[513] Corpus Glossary, L 11 (ed. Lindsay, p. 102)

[514] Épinal-Erfurt Glossary, 569 (ed. Pheifer, *Old English Glosses*, p. 31).

[515] ʻegisgrima', Bosworth-Toller Suppl.

[516] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 146, gloss 4936 (ed. Napier, p. 126).

subvenit'.[517] In this case, the Old English word *fylleseoc* is used only. As we have mentioned, *fylleseoc* might be a calque expressing the falling aspect of the disease, so it is self-evident to use *fylleseoc* for *caducus*. In *OEH* LXI, *caducos* is mentioned in connection with the herb *asterion*: '[w]ið fylleseocnysse (ad caducos) genim þysse wyrte bergean þe we asterion nemdon, syle etan on wanigendum monan'.[518] Again, *caducos* here is translated as *fylleseocnys*. The remedy describes the herb *asterion*, of which is said that '[ð]eos wyrt scineð on nihte swilce steorra on heofone, 7 se ðe hy [nytende] gesihð, he sagð þæt he scinlac geseo, 7 swa afæred he bið tæled fram hyrdum 7 fram swylcum mannum swylce þære wyrte miht'a' cunnun'.[519] The Old English *scinlac* is used for translating the Latin *fantasma*, which echoes with our previous remedy for *umbrosos* (*MdQ* X) as *scinlac* usually denotes apparitions. *Scin* means to shine, appear, or flickering light, but it also assumes a delusionary aspect.[520] Interestingly, Old Norse cognates of the word also have the same connotations between each other. Both the word *skí* (sorcery, jugglery) and *skrípi* (phantom) are recognised to derive from the root **skei* (appear, shine), which is present in the Old Norse verb *skína* (shine).[521] In addition, the base **skrei* is present in Old Norse *skrim* (a faint light) and *skrimsl* (spook, ghost), which has survived in modern Norwegian as *skrimsel/skrimsle* (weak light, dim, shady).[522] Thus, since both *scin* and its cognates have connotations of light, appearance, delusion and phantoms, we can be sure that the Anglo-Saxon notion of the *scin* being connected to hallucinatory states was native. In *OEH* LXI, the herb *asterion* is likened to ghost-like apparitions and delusionary light, and hence it is supposed to cure conditions caused by ghost-like apparitions and delusionary visions. In remedy *MdQ* X, a similar condition is described as *caducus*. In *MdQ* X, *caducus* stands beside *daemoniacus* and *umbrosus*, which conditions are induced by seeing terrifying, spooky visions, while in *OEH* LXI, *caducus* is implicitly paralleled with the spooky visions and ghosts. A further remedy strengthens the connection between *caducus* and frightful visions: *MdQ* VI.

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[517] *OEH* CXLIII.1 (ed. De Vriend, p. 187). 'helps epilepsy, that is *caducus*, when given in vinegar' (my translation).
[518] *OEH* LXI.1 (ed. de Vriend, p. 104) 'For epilepsy, take the berries of this plant that we call *asterion* and give them to eat when the moon is waning' (transl. Van Arsdall, p. 257).
[519] *OEH* LXI (ed. de Vriend, p. 104) 'This plant shines at night like the stars in the skies, and those who see it without knowing that, say they have seen an apparition, and, thus frightened, they are ridiculed by shepherds and those who know more about the power of the plant' (transl. Van Arsdall, p. 257).
[520] 'scin', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[521] Sturtevart, 'Some Etymologies', p. 155.
[522] Sturtevart, 'Some Etymologies', pp. 156–57.

Þy læs cild sy hreosende, þæt is fylleseoc, oþþe scinlac mete, fyregate brægen teoh þurh gyldenne hring, syle þam cilde swelgan ær þam hyt meolc onbyrge, hyt byþ gehæled.[523]

Ne infans caducus sit aut fantasma experiatur, cerebrum caprae silvaticae [per] anulum aureum traiectum, si dederis infanti gluttire antequam lac ducat, sanus erit.[524]

Fyregate. Cotton MS Vitellius C III, f. 79r

Again, *caducus* is translated as *fylleseoc* but this time also with *hreosende*. In this entry, the condition of being *caducus* is in parallel but not equal with seeing visions. These are two separate conditions, nevertheless, they are undoubtedly similar being treated with the same remedy. The word *hreosende* is derived from the verb *hreosan*, to fall down.[525] It looks like a direct translation of *caducus*, again a calque, and while *fylleseoc* has multiple instances in the Old English corpus, *hreosende*, in the sense of falling sickness does not have any, so apparently it did not stick. The *fantasma* that brings about the *caducus*-like condition is rendered to *scinlac* in Old English, and this brings us back to *MdQ* X.

We have established that *caducus* involved falling down, it probably also involved convulsions as it was paralleled with *epilepticus*; and most probably it was thought to be caused by or accompanied by seeing frightful phantoms, ghost-like apparitions, and hallucinations,

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[523] *MdQ* VI.12 (ed. De Vriend, p. 254). 'Lest a child be falling, that is having the falling sickness, or endure apparitions, a wild goat's brain is to be pulled through a golden ring, if given to the child to eat before milk, the child will be healed' (my translation).

[524] *MdQ* VI.12 (ed. De Vriend, p. 255). 'Lest a child be falling or endure apparitions, a wild she-goat's brain is to be pulled through a golden ring, if given to the child to eat before drinking milk, the child will be healed' (my translation).

[525] 'hreosan', *Boswroth-Toller*.

which are usually expressed by the Old English word *scinlac*. Thus, in *MdQ* X, the *daemonibus vel umbris* that pester the *daemoniacos* and the *umbrosos* in their visions are simply translated as *scinlac*. The *caducos*, as a consequence, are not translated as *fylleseoc* here, but as *scinseoc men*, ghost-sick people. Hence, for the Anglo-Saxons, there was a strong indication in the *OEH* according to which those who suffered hallucinations combined with convulsions were afflicted by terrifying supernatural beings. On another level, this *caducus-daemoniacus* syndrome group is heavily imbued by the notion of deluding, hence, it is very possible that the apparitions seen by the patient were dismissed as hallucinations proper by healthy people. It is also possible that they were *not* dismissed as hallucinations, the existence of the phantom-like beings was thought to be real; instead, the deluding aspect of the condition referred to the delusions that the phantoms impinged on the sufferers. Indeed, the delusionary aspect of these conditions is stark, which suggests that one of the main feature of these conditions was what we would now call hallucination. Even if we do not know whether the apparitions were regarded as the results or as the causes of the conditions, we can safely categorise these ailments as mental disorders, because they were thought to afflict the senses and the mind. Furthermore, the symptoms are very much like demon possession; hence, the notions of epilepsy, falling sickness, ghost-sickness and demon possession became even more blurred, if they were not blurred enough *ab ovo*. Reading through the *deofulseocnys*-related remedies it can dawn on us what a wide spectrum of symptoms *daemoniacus* and consequently, *deofulseocnys* was thought to have. According to the remedies, the symptoms ran the gamut from convulsions through hallucination to fever and we can understand what a supple and generic condition it was.

5.2.2.4 LETHARGIA AND FRENESIS

The *OEH* also contains two 'classical' mental disorders, so to speak: *lethargia* and *frenesis*. In *OEH* XCI, lethargy is explained in Old English as oblivion or forgetfulness: '[w]ið þa adle ðe man litargum hateð, þæt ys on ure geþeode ofergytulnys cweden'.[526] This is in line with most of the classical texts as well as with Isidore: *lethargia* is usually associated with sleepiness, dulling of the senses and forgetfulness.

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[526] *OEH* XCI.5 (ed. de Vriend, p. 134). 'For the illness that is called *lithargum*, and in our language forgetfulness' (transl. Van Arsdall, p. 273).

The Old English translation of the remedy for *frenesis* offers an explanation of the disease, which is not present in the original Latin version. This gives us an insight as to what might have been unfamiliar for the Anglo-Saxon reader as it required explanation, but also to what the Anglo-Saxon translator thought of *frenesis*. Nevertheless, the possibility must be considered that the concept of *frenesis* might not have reached a wider population; and even if it did, this explanation might not reflect the true concept what *frenesis* became to mean for them. In fact, the word turns up in glossaries quite often with various *interpretamenta*, as we have already demonstrated. However, according to the *OEH*, it is 'þa adle þe Grecas frenesis nemnað, þæt is on ure geþeode gewitlest þæs modes, þæt byþ ðonne þæt heafod aweallen byþ'.[527] The Latin version does not give any explanation for the remedy '*ad freneticos*', it only describes what should be done – the explanation is a purely Anglo-Saxon addition. The first significant word we can see is *mod*. The translator recognized that *frenesis* affects the *mod*, it is not simply a disease of the head or the brain or just fever: it is the ailment of the Anglo-Saxon mind-soul *mod*. This condition, according to the translator, is when the *mod* loses its rationality, its reasoning function, that is, when it becomes *gewitlest*. The other important term we encounter is *aweallen*. *Awellan*, according to the Bosworth and Toller dictionary, expresses when something is boiling hot and it bubbles up, breaks forth, streams and gushes forth.[528] This calls to mind the 'hydraulic model' of the Anglo-Saxon mind discussed in chapter 1 based on Lockett's researches. The text says that it is the head that is hot or boiling. As already mentioned, according to Lockett, it is not characteristic of Anglo-Saxons to attribute mental processes to the head, instead, they consider the heart and breast as the locus of these mental and emotional phenomena. We do not know where the translator got the idea from, we do not know what he based his translation on, and why he chose the head instead of the usual breast. In classical texts, it is certainly the head that is affected by *frenesis*, accompanied by fever, and this fever is what might be alluded to by *aweallen*. Early glossaries also demonstrate the role of the head in *frenesis*: both in the Leiden Glossary and in the Corpus Glossary, *frenesis* is glossed with regards to the head. The entry 'freniticus; insanus ob dolorem capitis' indicates that *frenesis* is madness that results from headache.[529] Nevertheless, the use of *aweallen* instead of the more obvious *hat* ('hot') echoes the notion of the 'hydraulic' *mod*; and later glossaries bear witness of *frenesis* being amalgamated into the supernatural view of madness. Lockett interprets *aweallen* as 'swollen up' with phlegm: 'the fact that *freneticus* is repeatedly glossed

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[527] *OEH* XCVI.2 (ed. de Vriend, p. 142). 'For the disease the Greeks call *frenesis*, which is witlessness of the mind in our language, that is, when the head becomes very hot' (transl. Van Arsdall 278).
[528] 'awellan', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[529] Leiden Glossary, XXXIX.19 (ed. Hessels, *Late Eighth-Century*, p. 41).

bræcseoc or *brægenseoc* suggests that the brain is "overflowing" or discharging with an excess of phlegm'.[530] Even though *frenesis* sounds relatively somatic and is explained in some glossaries as *brægenseoc* (brain-sick), it has to be noted that it is also glossed as demon possession e.g. in the tenth century Harley Glossary: freneticus .i. demoniaticus . insanus . amens . *gewitleasa,[531] thus showing that neutral-looking conditions might also have supernatural connotations.

In general, we can state that the translator of the *OEH* was prevailingly faithful to the profane / somatic Latin madness-expressions in translating them to Old English, and likewise to the supernatural ones: he kept the nature of the expressions and translated profane Latin terms with profane Old English terms, and supernatural Latin terms with supernatural Old English ones. The profane / somatic expressions are *caducus*, *epilempticus*, *freneticus* and *litargus*, translated mostly as *fylleseoc*, *gewitlest*, and *ofergytulnys*. In instances where these expressions are not translated with profane / somatic Old English words, supernatural agents are named as causes of the conditions. Supernatural expressions are chiefly *daemoniacus* and *umbrosus*, translated as *deofulseoc* and *yfelre gesihðe*. The fact that the translator kept the profane meaning of profane expressions and used supernatural expressions only when there was a supernatural agent involved supports the theory that there was indeed a sense of difference between the two approaches that was appreciated by Anglo-Saxons. Nevertheless, even with profane-looking insanity there was always the possibility of a lurking supernatural force that is reflected in e.g. a *caducus* being caused by *umbrae*. We shall now examine whether this distinction was present in locally produced medicine as well.

5.2.3 LOCALLY PRODUCED TEXTS

As already mentioned, it is generally agreed that *Bald's Leechbook*, especially the second part bears witness to the most influence of Graeco-Roman scholarly medicine, while *Leechbook* III and the *Lacnunga* are based more on folkloric medicine. Based on the terminology of the conditions, we can distinguish between three different groups of mental disorders in the leechbooks: those expressed by somatic terms, those expressed by neutral terms

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[530] Lockett, 'Limited Role', p. 50.
[531] Harley Glossary F 696 (ed. Oliphant, p. 197).

and those expressed by supernatural terms. Somatic terms are prevalent in *Bald's Leechbook*, while supernaturnal terms are more characteristic to *Leechbook* III and *Lacnunga*.
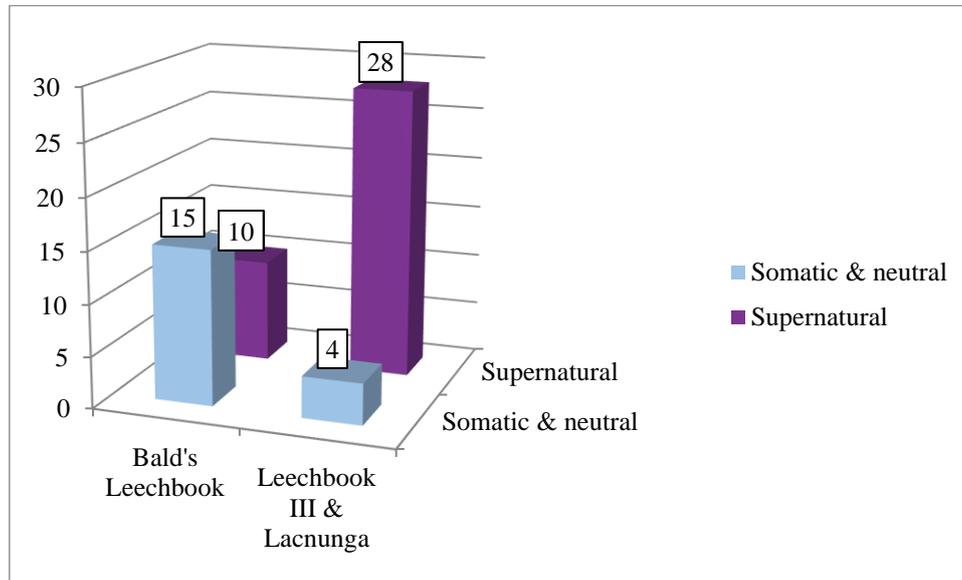
Chart 4.1 Distribution of supernatural, neutral, and somatic terms in the leechbooks

Chart 4.1 shows the types of terms in the medical sources. The numbers do not include each occurrence of a term: if there were duplicates in a recipe, only one instance was counted. Table 4.2 below displays the expressions from Chart 4.1 and their location is indicated by the numbering of the recipe that contains them.

	Supernatural	Neutral	Somatic
Leechbook I	feond seocum men (LXIII) leodrunan (LXIV) ælfsidenne (LXIV) mare ride (LXIV)	wedenheorte (LXIII) ungemynde (LXVI) dysgunge (LXVI)	bræcseocum men (LXIII)
Leechbook II	fienda adl (I) scinlac (LXIV) feondes costungum yflum (LXV) ælfe (LXV) uncuþum sidsan (LXV) drycræft (LXVI)	modes tweonung (XVI) ungewitfæstnes (XXVII) gedwolþing (LXIV) gewitte weorðe (LXIV)	fyllewærc (I) felle wærce (XVI) brægenes adl (XXVII) fyllewærc (XXX) bræcseoc (LIX)
Leechbook III	feondes costunga (I) nihtgengan (I) maran (I) wyrtforbore (I) malscra (I) yflum gealdor cræftum (I) ælcre feondes costunga (XII) monaþ seoc (XL) feondes costungum (XLI) ælfsidenne (XLI) nihtgengan (LIV) feondes costunge (LVIII) ælfcynne (LXI) nihtgengan (LXI) mannum þe deofol mid hæmð (LXI) yfel costung (LXI) ælfadle (lXII) ælfsogoþa (lXII) feondes costunga (lXII) deofle (LXIV) deofles costunga (LXIV) deofol seoce (LXVIi) deofle (LXVIi)	gemynd oncyrred (I) gewitseocne man (XLI) ungemynde (LXIV) weden heorte (LXVIII)	X
Lacnunga	ælfsidene (XXIX) feondes costungum (XXIX) malscrung (LXXVI) dweorh (LXXXVI) feondes costunge (CLXX)	X	X

Table 4.2. Locations of mental disorder expressions

It is clearly visible that terms of the supernatural are represented in all the texts. But what is striking is that there is no somatic expression in *Leechbook III* and in the *Lacnunga*, and in fact, there are no neutral terms either in *Lacnunga*; while somatic terms are only present in the texts that are said to rely heavily on transmissions. The differences between the categories

are not significant in *Bald's Leechbook* where foreign influences and borrowings form the basis of a multitude of the recipes. But in those compendia that are said to be more native, the absence of somatic terms is suggestive. The organs or faculties that are mentioned in relation to mental disorders are *brægen* and *magan* in somatic remedies; *heorte*, *gemynde* and *mod* in neutral remedies; whereas there is no particularly characteristic body part that is involved in supernatural remedies. In the next segments I will analyse the categories and their respective terms one by one.

5.2.3.1 SOMATIC MENTAL DISORDERS

As I have already mentioned, *Bald's Leechbook* is heavily influenced by humoral theory, and this is resonated in its approach to mental disorders. Terms of mental disorders we encounter in *Bald's Leechbook* I are *brægenes adl*, *brǣcseoc* and *fylleseoc*. *Brægenes adl* assumes an organic aetiology, *brǣcseoc* exhibits humoral theory, while *fylleseoc* can be traced back to Isidore's *Etymologies*, which is heavily imbued with humoral theory. Organic causes of diseases in general were not alien to the Anglo-Saxon mind and humoral theories were also encountered in various texts (e.g. in the *Etymologies*). But whether we can consider the humoral theory productive in Anglo-Saxon England is dubious. As Doyle points it out, 'the four humours are specifically named by two authors, Byrhtferth of Ramsey, and the anonymous twelfth-century translator of the *Peri didaxeon*'; nonetheless, 'there seems to be no consistent terminology with which four distinct humours are defined in Old English'.[532] This suggests that probably the notion of the four humours was not fully embraced by the Anglo-Saxons in its entirety. Doyle demonstrates that there were no specific stable translations for the four humours in the leechbooks, nevertheless, 'the broad humour term *wǣte* tends to be modified by qualitative adjectives which refine its meaning to conform to humoral aetiology' and the translators 'did their best to retain as much of the humoral information retained … as possible'.[533] We can be sure that Anglo-Saxons were familiar with the humoral theory to a certain extent, at least the layer of society that read e.g. Isidore. We might also assume that they understood it. But if we consider the vocabulary, it is doubtful whether they used it productively, as those parts of the leechbooks that resort to humoral explanations are usually

[532] Doyle, 'Anglo-Saxon Medicine I', p. 194.
[533] Doyle, 'Anglo-Saxon Medicine I', pp. 194–95.

transmissions. It also has to be noted that mental disorders are only associated with humours in *Bald's Leechbook* but the notion is missing from *Leechbook* III and *Lacnunga*. A prime example for the transmission of humoral aetiology of mental disorder is entry I of the second part of *Bald's Leechbook*.

> Eac of þæs magan adle cumað monige 7 missenlica adla geborstena wunda 7 hramma 7 fyllewærc 7 fienda adl 7 micla murnunga 7 unrotnessa butan þearfe 7 oman 7 ungemetlica mete socna 7 ungemetlice unlustas 7 cisnessa 7 sara inadle on wifes gecyndon 7 on fotum 7 blædran 7 unmode 7 ungemetwæccum 7 ungewitlico word. Se maga biþ neah þære heortan 7 þære gelodre 7 geadortenge þam brægene of þam cumað þa adla swiþost of þæs magan intingan, 7 of yflum seawum, wætan atterberendum.[534]

Both Deegan and Doyle found an almost perfect match for this in *Practica Alexandri*: '… epileptias & spasmos & casus & tristicias sine causa & timores melancolicos & alia multa … est etiam et quando insomnietates inferunt & alienationes & solicitudines nonullas & extreme partes frigescunt'.[535] Both the Latin and the Old English explanations connect the stomach, the heart, and the brain, and assume the humours arising from these organs are the main culprit of the diseases. As we have already pointed out, it is not known whether *Practica Alexandri* was available directly for Anglo-Saxons or whether they had it only in digests and intermediaries. However, the rendering of the various ailments is noteworthy. The triad of *epileptias & spasmos & casus* is translated with *hramma 7 fyllewærc 7 fienda adl*. We can pair up *spasmos* with *hramma*, *hramma* meaning literally cramp, spasm;[536] we can assume that *casus* is rendered *fyllewærc* as both grip the falling aspect; and this leaves us with *epileptias* being rendered by *fienda adl*. The translator could well have used *bræcseoc* or *wod* even, but he still chose *fienda adl*. The notion of the supernatural origin of disease turns up even in such an overwhelmingly somatic-humoral text.

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[534] *BLch* II.i (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 174–77). 'Also from the disease of the maw come many and various diseases of bursten wounds, and cramps, and *fyllewærc* and *fienda adl*, and mickle murmurings and uneasiness without occasion, and erysipelatous eruptions, and immoderate desires for meat, and immense want of appetite, and daintinesses, and sore internal diseases in … the uterus, and in the feet, and in the bladder, and despondency, and immoderately long wakings, and witless words. The maw is near the heart and the spine, and in communication with the brain, from which the diseases come most violently, from the circumstances of the maw, and from evil juices, humours venom-bearing'.

[535] Deegan, 'Critical Edition I', p. 124 and Doyle, 'Anglo-Saxon Medicine II', p. 174. 'They suffer from various symptoms: epilepsy and spasms and falling and sadness without cause and melancholic fear and many more … and also there is insomnia and alienation and some anxiety and coldness of the extremities' (my translation).

[536] 'hramma', *Bosworth-Toller*.

Remedy xvi in *Leechbook II* also connects *fyllewærc* with humours arising from the diseased stomach. The remedy that is provided for foul humours in the stomach is also said to be good against heart ache and *fyllewærc*: 'þa þiccan geurnen on 7 þa slipinga wætan on þam magan 7 þa acolodan 7 þæt ofstandene þicce slipinge horh þu scealt mid þam ær genemnedan læcedomum wyrman 7 þynnian … wiþ heort ece 7 wiþ felle wærce'.[537] Deegan found a match to this part of the remedy in *Passionarius Galeni*, where the remedy for neutralising harmful humours in the stomach is similar to the text in the Leechbook.[538] Likewise in remedy xxx, the stomach is held responsible for harmful humours that collect throughout the wintertime and if not being taken care of, spread throughout the limbs causing *fyllewærc* in the spring.[539] Here a wider aspect of humourism reveals itself: that of the four qualities. Winter corresponds to the cold and humid characters and gives rise to phlegmatic humours. Phlegm has long been associated with epilepsy: in the Hippoctratic text *On the Sacred Disease*, epilepsy is said to arise from the brain and the veins being fluxed with phlegm,[540] although not all authors agree on the ultimate role of phlegm in epilepsy.

The word *fyllewærc* expresses the collapsing nature of the disease; nevertheless, the contexts where we have seen this term overwhelmingly stress the humoral aspect and the remedies are all profane. This is not surprising if one considers the fact that the calque can be traced back to Isidore's *Etymologies*, where the humoral theory is prevailing. Hence for Anglo-Saxons who learnt the phenomenon of *fyllewærc* based on the *Etymologies*, there was a strong association between *fyllewærc* and the scholarly-humoral approach. The same applies to *bræcseoc*: the word also bears a strong humoral connotation thanks to the *Etymologies*. In *Leechbook* II it is listed amongst various ailments that are attributed to harmful humours;[541] however, in *Leechbook* I, *bræcseoc* is one among the many mental afflictions treated with supernatural means. The entry starts with a remedy against the devil-sick who are possessed and controlled by a devil, and provides various treatments for *feond-seocnys*, *bræcseoc men* and *weden heorte*. For *bræcseoc men*, the remedy recommends: 'cost, gotwoþe, eluhtre, betonice, attorlaðe, cropleac, holecersan, hofe, finul, asinge mon mæssan ofer wyrce of

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[537] *BLch* II.xvi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 194–95). 'And the thick coagulated and the viscid humours in the maw, and the chilled humours, and the intractable thick viscid foulness, thou shalt warm and thin with the afore named leechdoms … that is good for heart ache and for epilepsy *felle wærce*'.

[538] Deegan, 'Critical Edition I', p. 142.

[539] *BLch* II.xxx (ed. and transl. Cockayne, p. 228).

[540] 'Sacred Disease' VIII–X (transl. Jones, pp. 154–63).

[541] *BLch* II.lix (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 280–89).

wyliscum ealoð 7 of halig wætere. Drince þisne drenc æt æghwilcum niwe nigon morgenas 7 nane oþre wætan þæt þicce 7 stille sie. 7 ælmessan selle 7 him arena god geornlice bidde'.[542]

Thus far, the organ that was predominantly specified as the origin of mental disorders was the stomach. This was not because it was thought to function as a cognitive or emotional organ, but rather because the humours that affect the cognitive and emotional functions are affected by the humours being produced or modified in the stomach. The brain is mentioned once as being a significant factor in mental disorders in *Leechbook* II.i, and it occurs again similarly in *Leechbook* II.xxvii: 'Sio wamb sio ðe bið cealdre oððe wætre gecyndo oððe misbyrdo. Him cymð brægenes adl 7 ungewitfæstnes him bið.'[543] Elsewhere, where the brain is concerned, no matter how bad it is damaged there is no mention of any sort of mental consequence. In entry xxvii, the primary cause of the ailment is again the stomach and the malady itself is explained in terms of the four humours and qualities. *Brægenes adl* can be the consequence of a cold and moist stomach, and *brægenes adl* is accompanied by *ungewitfæstnes*. As we have already mentioned, *gewit* denotes the intellect and understanding, so the cold and moist stomach, which results in brain disease will also result in a loss of wit to some extent. *Gewit*-compounds can express a very wide array of conditions, as we shall see later, and it is hard to determine what exactly they mean in the leechdoms. At any rate, we know about *ungewitfæstnes* that it can be a symptom of demon possession. It is reported of Guthlac that 'nænig deofolseoc, þæt he eft wel gewitfæst ne wære; ne on nænigre untrumnysse, þæt he eft gehæled him fram ne ferde'.[544] Apparently, *deofolseoc* people were also *ungewitfæst* before Guthlac's help. Thus, whatever *brægen adl* meant, it had something in common with demon possession, since both featured *ungewitfæstnes*: both impacted the *gewit*. Most probably this leechdom is also a transmission, so the fact that *brægen adl* co-occurs with *ungewitfæstnes* is not an Anglo-Saxon invention: the sources do not provide any evidence that would suggest that Anglo-Saxons located the *gewit* in the brain; it is more likely that this notion was taken over from the original texts that formed the basis of *Leechbook* II. In addition, the fact that *brægen adl* occurs only once in the Old English corpus suggests that the role of the brain in mental disorders was not thought to be a prominent one.

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[542] *BLch* I.lxiii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 138–39). 'costmary, goutweed, lupin, betony, attorlothe, cropleek, field gentian, hove, fennel; let masses be sung over, let it be wrought of foreign ale and of holy water; let him drink this drink for nine mornings, at every one fresh, and no other liquid that is thick and still, and let him give alms, and earnestly pray God for his mercies'.
[543] *BLch* II.xxvii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 222–23). 'The wamb which is of a cold or moist nature or caprice; on the man cometh disease of the brain and loss of his senses'.
[544] *OE Guth* xv (ed. Goodwin, pp. 66–7). 'no possessed person that did not come to his right wits again; none afflicted with any disease that did not leave him cured'.

According to *Bald's Leechbook*, a somatic-humoral aetiology of mental disorders was available to the Anglo-Saxons, even with detailed medical explanations; the background knowledge for somatic-humoral theories was also provided by e.g. Isidore's works. Nevertheless, it is significant that the two 'most native' leechbooks do not contain somatic terms; in addition, where there are somatic theories, they are interwoven here and there with supernatural elements, as for instance *Leechbook* II.i. As Ayoub concludes, 'humoral theory played a very minor role in native medical traditions'; and while in *Bald's Leechbook* 'the use of *wæta* reveals close familiarity with Latin source materials on humoral theory … in Anglo-Saxon England [it] was specialized medical information rather than common knowledge'.[545] Somatic aetiology of madness was present; however, it was only represented in transmissions, while more native texts attest to a more supernatural approach of madness aetiology. Graeco-Roman medical texts often locate the nidus of mental disorders in the stomach and the innards because the innards produce humours that harm the function of the mind; for the Anglo-Saxons this was perfectly acceptable and easy to assimilate considering that the *mod* was thought to reside in the chest cavity and the innards.

5.2.3.2 NEUTRAL MENTAL DISORDERS

Considering the neutral mental disorders in the leechbooks, we can identify eleven expressions denoting various aspects of them.[546] The faculties and bodyparts that are involved and named are *heorte*, *gemynd*, *mod*, and *gewit*. As already established, *heorte* is, on the one hand, the location of emotional and cognitive activity, the locus where the *mod* resides; on the other, it is identical with *mod* itself. *Gemynd* first and foremost means memory;[547] however, *gemynd* is a 'complex and polysemous word', and its instances in the Old English corpus already demonstrate 'how the notions of memory and mind overlapped, so that *gemynd* eventually displaced *mod* as the superordinate "mind" term during the Middle English period'.[548] Low presents various examples for this; one is found in the Old English Machutus, where a child is possessed by the devil for five years and during this time he 'wæs of his gemynde', which Low

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[545] Ayoub, 'Old English wæta', pp. 341, 344.
[546] See Table 4.2, p. 138.
[547] 'gemynd', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[548] Low, 'The Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 16.

translates as 'out of his mind'.[549] The problem with *gemynd* in medical texts is that due to the ambiguity of its meaning, it is difficult to assess whether it means memory or mind in a particalur recipe. *Mod*, as we have already expounded, includes all the cognitive and emotional faculties of humans, it is the 'superordinate term for mind in Old English'.[550] *Gewit* denotes the intellect and understanding,[551] and *gewitan* is to know and to understand things. *Gewit* also denotes the correctly functioning mind: in instances of exorcism, the action of exorcising the demon, dispelling the madness, and restoring the 'right mind' is often expressed by 'gebrohte on gewitte', as we have seen in the previous chapter.[552] These four words are all inherently Old English; they were not produced by imported intellectual ideas.

As for the expressions themselves, the word *wedenheorte* occurs twice in the medical corpus, however, its ubiquity in other texts hints at its frequent usage in spoken language. It is used in homilies, glossaries, the Old English versions of Gregory's *Dialogi* and Bede's *HE*. Its stem *wod* and its numerous derivations seem to be the most generic and most widely used terms for expressing madness as already noted; nevertheless, they are not used in medical texts – except the two *wedenheorte* instances and some instances of *wedehunde* denoting rabid dog. As seen in the previous chapters, *weden-* and *wedenheorte* probably assume aggression: *wede-* is used in cases that most possibly involve violent spells; most probably this is why it was applied to rabies as well. *Wedenheorte* is used in *Leechbook* I and *Leechbook* III. In *Leechbook* I we can find it in entry lxiii amongst other mental afflictions. The entry provides leechdoms for fiend-sick people, for *bræcseoc* and for *wedenheorte*:

> Wiþ wedenheorte: bisceopwyrt, elehtre, banwyrt, eoforfearn, giþrife, heahhioloþe, þonne dæg scade ⁊ niht þonne sing þu on ciricean letanias þæt is þara haligra naman, ⁊ pater noster. Mid þy sange þu ga þæt þu sie æt þam wyrtum ⁊ þriwa ymb ga ⁊ þonne þu hie nime hang eft to ciricean mid þy ilcan sange ⁊ gesing xii mæssan ofer, ⁊ ofer ealle þa drencan þe to þære adle belimpaþ, on weorðmynde þara twelfa apostola.[553]

The entry in *Leechbook* III is quite similar:

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[549] Low, 'The Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 16.
[550] Low, 'The Anglo-Saxon Mind', p. 19.
[551] 'gewit', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[552] See p. 100.
[553] *BLch* I.lxiii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 138–39). 'For the phrenzied; bishopwort, lupin, bonewort, everfern, githrife, elecampane, when day and night divide, then sing thou in the church litanies, that is, the names of the hallows or saints, and the Paternoster; with the song go thou, that thou mayest be near the worts, and go thrice about them, and when thou takest them go again to church with the same song, and sing twelve masses over them, and over all the drinks which belong to the disease, in honour of the twelve apostles'.

Leoht drenc wiþ weden heorte: elehtre, bisceop wyrt, ælfþone, elene, cropleac, hind hioloþe, ontre, clate. Nim þas wyrta þonne dæg 7 niht scade. Sing ærest on ciricean letania 7 credan 7 pater noster. Gang mid þy sange to þam wyrtum ymbga hie þriwa ær þu hie nime 7 ga eft to ciricean gesing xii mæssan ofer þam wyrtum þonne þu hie ofgoten hæbbe.[554]

The differences between the two leechdoms are the ingredients and some minor details; nonetheless, the instructions and the ritual activities are almost completely the same. In both leechdoms, the herbs should be taken when 'day and night divide', and the person who takes them should go round them three times, litanies and twelve masses need to be sung in the Church. *Wedenheorte* in *Leechbook* I appears together with *feondseoc* men and *bræcseoc* men in the same remedy suggesting that *wedenheorte* was in some way related to them. Also, there are a couple of ingredients that are listed in both remedies, one of which is strikingly ubiquitous in remedies for mind-altering afflictions, and that is *elehtre*, lupine. As Dendle described, the Anglo-Saxon species of lupine was especially rich in manganese, and 'lupine administration as a dietary supplement responded to a genuine manganese depletion in chronic seizure sufferers';[555] in addition, in an experiment carried out in the 1960s, amongst several elements manganese proved to be the most potent anticonvulsant.[556] Furthermore, it has been shown that 'lupinine, sparteine, and lupine seed extract have a slight sedative action on the CNS [central nervous system]; all three were shown to delay the onset of experimentally induced seizures and increase the survival time in seizing mice'.[557] The presence of lupine in remedies thus can be indicative of seizure-like symptoms and we can infer that *wedenheorte* might have involved some form of it. Furthermore, the fact that the remedy requires rituals and that the condition is related to *feondseocnys* implies that there was a hint of the supernatural around *wedenheorte* or at least a type of it.

Ungemynd appears three times in the medical corpus, again in *Leechbook* I and III. As noted above, *gemynd* primarily means memory, but there is a strong association of the meaning

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[554] *Lch* III.lxviii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 356–57). 'A light drink for [wedenheorte]; lupin, bishopwort, enchanters nightshade, helenium, cropleek, hindheal, ontre, clote. Take these worts when day and night divide; sing first in church a litany, and a Credo, and a Pater noster, with the song go to the worts, go thrice around them, before thou touch them; and go again to church, sing twelve masses over the worts when thou hast poured … over them'.

[555] Dendle, 'Lupins', p. 92.

[556] Dendle, 'Lupins', p. 96.

[557] Dendle, 'Lupins', p. 95–96.

of mind as well. *Ungemynd* therefore primarily means forgetful as Ælfric's Glossary also demonstrates: 'inmemor ungemyndig'.[558] Nevertheless, it is always ambiguous in a medical context whether a leechdom for *ungemynd* is meant to cure forgetfulness or some other disorder affecting the mind. An *ungemynd*-leechdom that primarily treats an 'old headache', as we will see, might indeed simply involve dementedness. On the other hand, when *ungemynd* co-occurs with supernatural mental disorders, it is reasonable to think that it is not a simple case of being forgetful. Entry lxvi in *Leechbook* I offers two leechdoms to remedy *ungemynd* along with *dysgung*: 'Wiþ ungemynde 7 disgunge: do on eala cassiam 7 elehtran, bisceopwyrt, alexandrian, giþrife, feldmoran 7 haligwæter, drince þonne. Wiþ ungemynde 7 disgunge do on eala cassiam 7 elehtran bisceopwyrt alexandrian giþrife feldmoran 7 halig wæter drince þonne'.[559] *Ungemynd* being paired up with *dysgung* does not tell much. The word *dysgung* is interesting in the sense that it means primarily being unwise and acting irrationally, but since it is treated as a malady, it makes one wonder if it might conceal cases of what we nowadays call intellectual disability (ID).[560] Acting irrationally often suggests the possibility that the subject is out of their mind: the line between being sane but extraordinary or insensible and having a mental disorder is often very fine. However, there is no evidence of *dysig* in the Old English corpus that would indicate that the word was used for cases more serious than being unwise. The word *dysigan* is used, for instance, in Matthew's Gospel VII.26: 'And ælc þæra þe gehyrþ ðas mine word and þa ne wyrcð se byþ gelic þam dysigan men þe getimbrode hys hus ofer sandceosel'.[561] Or in Ælfric's 'In Caput Jejunii', where a man 'wolde drincan on lenctene þonne hine lyste. Þa sume dæg bæd he þone bisceop ælfeh blætsian his ful. He nolde. And se dysiga dranc butan bletsunge', and died of an attack of a boar.[562] The occurrences of *dysig* appear in contexts where the subject has no cognitive or intellectual malfunction in the strict sense, they are only unwise, and we found no instance that would indicate otherwise. Of course, absence can seldom be taken as evidence; nevertheless, it is important to note that *dysig* does not co-occur with what might be suspected cases of ID. But then again, it is difficult to trace ID at all in the Old English

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[558] Ælfric, *Grammar* (ed. Zupitza, p. 47).

[559] *BLch* I.lxvi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 142–43). 'Against mental vacancy and against folly; put into ale bishopwort, lupins, betony, the southern or Italian fennel, nepte, water agrimony, cockle, marche, then let the man drink. For iditcy and folly, put into ale, cassia, and lupins, bishopwort, alexanders, githrife, fieldmore, and holy water; then let him drink'.

[560] According to DSM-5, 'intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) is characterized by deficits in general mental abilities, such as reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning, and learning from experience' (p. 31).

[561] Matthew VIII.26 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 15) 'And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand'.

[562] Ælfric, 'In Caput Jejunii' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.xii, pp. 266–67). 'would drink in Lent whenever it pleased him. Then one day he prayed the bishop AElfheah to bless his cup; he would not, and the fool drank without blessing'.

corpus, as most of the expressions we have indicate paroxysm-like conditions, and those that do not (like e.g. *gewitseoc*), do not provide enough information about the circumstances. Considering the meanings of *dysig*, *ungemynd* in these leechdoms might as well mean only forgetfulness and absent-mindedness, as many scholars translated.

Nonetheless, like maladies tend to be grouped together; *ungemynd* in *Leechbook* I is preceded by mental disorders, the majority of them supernatural: *feond seoc*, *brǽcseoc* and *wedenheorte* are in entry lxiii, while *ælfsiden* and *mare* are in entry lxiv. Entry lxv is a leechdom against *lenctenadl*, which might have involved hallucinations.[563] On the other hand, none of the leechdoms following lxvi cover mental disorders. Furthermore, in *Leechbook* III.xii, one of the remedies is good for 'ælcre liman untrumnesse ⁊ wiþ heafod ece ⁊ wiþ ungemynde ⁊ wiþ eagwærce ⁊ wiþ ungehyrnesse ⁊ breost wærce ⁊ lungen adle ⁊ lenden wærce ⁊ wiþ ælcre feondes costunga'.[564] The list includes a very wide array of ailments: it is impossible to infer what *ungemynd* really means amongst them. However, *ungemynd* in *Leechbook* III.lxiv is paired up with devil-sickness, and they share the entry only with *deofles costung*: 'Wiþ deofle liþe drenc ⁊ ungemynde do on ealu cassuc, elehtran, moran, finul, ontre, betonice, hind heoloþe, merce rude, wermod, nefte, elene, ælfþone, wulfes comb. Gesing xii mæssan ofer þam drence ⁊ drince. Him biþ sona sel. Drenc wiþ deofles costunga'.[565] Entry lxiv contains two recipes: one for the 'light drink' against devil and *ungemynd*, the other is for *deofles costung*, so there is a double devil-element. In entries that tackle more than one ailment, the diseases are connected or similar in one way or another; except where the panacea is recommended for such a wide variety of diseases that there is no obvious connection between them. Yet, the case in entry lxiv is the former: devil sickness is hardly ever paired with non-mind-altering afflictions, thus *ungemynd* here is very possibly not a mere forgetfulness. In addition, the leechdom is flanked by supernatural mind-altering conditions. Storms says that '[t]he magical element is conspicuous in *ælfþone* and *bisceopwyrt*',[566] and while the topic of magic in medieval medicine has been subject of debate, it can be agreed that this entry concerns mental states altered by supernatural forces.

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[563] Hall, *Elves*, pp. 121–126.
[564] *Lch* III.xii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 314–17). 'every ailment of limb, and for head ache, and for want of memory, and for eye wark, and for dull hearing, and for breast wark, and lung disease, loin wark, and for every temptation of the fiend'.
[565] *Lch* III.lxiv (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 352–53). 'A lithe drink against a devil and dementedness. Put into ale cassuck, roots of lupin, fennel, ontre, betony, hindheal, marche, rue, workwood, nepeta, helenium, elfthone, wolfs comb; sing twelve masses over the drink, and let the man drink, it will soon be well with him. A drink against temptations of th devil'.
[566] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 260.

The first entry in *Leechbook* III sheds further light on the meaning of *ungemynd*: 'Wiþ ealdum heafod ece genim dweorge dwostlan wyl on ele oððe on butran smire mid þa þunwongan 7 bufan þam eagum on ufan þæt heafod þeah him sie gemynd oncyrred he biþ hal'.[567] Olds translated this as 'he is deranged'[568] and Cockayne as 'his intellect be deranged'. *Oncyrred* is used to express a marked change, a turn. We can see such 'turnings' in connection with Guthlac and his temptations: firstly when under the devils' siege he is uncertain and does not know where his mind should be turned to 'he sylfa nyste hwider he mid his mode cyrran wolde';[569] and when in a later temptation he is more steadfast: '[d]ryhten me is on ða swiðran healfe; for ðam ic ne beo oncyrred'.[570] The Exeter Book also uses the verb *oncyrran* with regards to Guthlac's mind:

> ne lete him eald-feond eft oncyrran
> mod from his meotude[571]

The *Legend of St Andrew* mentions a magic drink which

> onwende gewit,
> wera ingeþanc
> heortan hreðre;
> hyge wæs oncyrred
> þæt hie ne murndon
> æfter mandreame,
> hæleð heorogrædige,
> ac hie hig and gærs,
> for meteleaste
> meðe, gedrehte[572]

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[567] *Lch* III.i (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 304–307). 'For an old head ache, take pennyroyal, boil in oil, or in butter, smear therewith the temples, and over the eyes, and on the top of the head; though his intellect be deranged, he will be hale'.

[568] *Lch* III.i (ed. Olds, p. 64).

[569] Vercelli XXIII (ed. Scragg, *Vercelli*, p. 384). 'he himself did not know where he should turn to with his mod' (my translation).

[570] Vercelli XXIII (ed. Scragg, *Vercelli*, p. 389). 'The Lord is on my right side, therefore I will not turn' (my translation).

[571] *Guthlac A* 366 (ed. Roberts, *Guthlac*, p. 94). 'not letting the ancient fiend turn away his mind again from his Creator' (my translation).

[572] 'St Andreas' (ed. and transl. Kemble, *Vercellensis*, p. 3). 'turned away the wit, / the intellect of men, / the heart within the breast; / the mind was turned / so that they cared not / for the joys of human life, / the men fatally greedy, / but them hay and grass, / for want of food / weary, oppressed'.

These occurrences suggest that *oncyrred* can be used in a sense of changing one's mind, or a drastic turn in behaviour or way of thinking. Inferring what the malady is in entry i is difficult: chronic pain inflicts the head which apparently results in a drastic change in thinking and behaviour – so essentially it affects the *mod*. The same applies to *ungemynd*: it might not denote a severe case of madness, nevertheless, it captures a change of the *mod*, as it denotes both forgetfulness and a condition worthy of the same leechdom as devil-sickness.

Mod in the leechbooks is used in connection with somatic madness. In *Leechbook* II, which, as we have mentioned, is the most influenced by humoral medicine, variants of *mod* appear as consequences of disease of the stomach and the insides. We have already discussed entry i, where the stomach-heart-brain axis is affected by humours arising from the stomach thus resulting in several types of physical and mental maladies. Among *fyllewærc* and *fienda adl*, *unmod* is also in the list of symptoms, along with *ungewitlico word*. *Unmod* is translated by Cockayne as despondency,[573] but elsewhere it describes a person who is always in despair, has low self-esteem, questions their own abilities and feels inferior (e.g. in Gregory's *Pastoral Care* Chapter 32). While *ungewitlico word* is word uttered with no sense. *Unmod* may not mean a severe case of insanity, however, it rather matches the modern concept of depressive phases of mood disorders (e.g. ICD-10).

Again, in entry II.xvi, mental afflictions are attributed to the sick stomach. As discussed above, according to the entry *fellewærc* is the result of a cold stomach, while the hot, inflamed stomach causes 'þurst getenge 7 nearones 7 geswogunga 7 modes tweonung 7 unlust 7 wlætta'.[574] The symptoms again may not be strictly speaking cases of insanity, but they might denote conditions that are defined by the abnormal state of the *mod*. *Nearu* and *nearones* mean a sort of distress, confinement, strait: they can express both physical and mental anxiety.[575] In entry xxi, *nearones breosta* probably means a sort of pressing pain in the chest and is accompanied by 'stingende sar oþ þa wiþoban oð ða eaxle 7 hwosta'.[576] However, in a culture where the bodily sensations are so closely tied to the emotional ones, especially those thought to be happening in the chest, an oppressive feeling in the chest can have a double meaning: it can be the manifestation of both somatic and psychological distress at the same time. Even

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[573] *BLch* II.i (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 174–75).

[574] *BLch* II.xvi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 194–95). 'thirst is incident to the man, and oppression, and swoonings, and vacillation of mind, and loss of appetite, and nausea'.

[575] 'nearu'; 'nearuness', *Bosworth-Toller*.

[576] *BLch* II.xxi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 204–05). 'piercing soreness as far as the collar bones, and as far as the shoulder, and there is host, or cough'.

though this part of the text might be a transmission, and in that case, it is not certain that the original text bore this double meaning of chest oppression, it very well might be that for Anglo-Saxons, the psychological element was indeed present. It is further bolstered by *geswogunga* and *modes tweonung*. *Geswogunga* is most probably a sort of unconscious state: Ælfric speaks of a thane called Ymma, who was stricken down in battle and 'læg dæg and niht geswogen betwux ðam ofslegenum', after which he revived and bound his wounds.[577] *Modes tweonung* is translated as vacillation of mind by Cockayne; Deegan interpreted it as anxiety.[578] Doubting Thomas in the New Testament is described with the word *tweoung*: '[m]are us fremode his tweonung þonne ðæra oðra apostola geleaffulnys; forðan ðaða he wæs gebroht to geleafan mid ðære grapunge, þa wearð seo twynung þurh þæt us ætbroden'.[579] Moreover, the word *ambiguitatis* is glossed as '.i. dubitationis, tweonunge' in MS Digby 146.[580] Therefore, the condition could have been something similar to that of the previous *unmod*: they both describe a sort of absence of the *mod*'s strength and health. These symptoms are all akin to the complex syndrome described in *Leechbook* II.i we have discussed: 'tristicias sine causa & timores melancolicos … est etiam et quando insomnietates inferunt & alienationes & solicitudines nonullas' – anxiety and depression as the maladies of the *mod* and the products of sick insides.

The same can be seen in entries xxi and xlvi in *Leechbook* II. *Modes geswæþrung* and *modes elhygd* are both secondary conditions caused by liver disease and 'sore side', a malady speculated to be pleurisy or palsy.[581]

Gif þonne sio lifre aheardung & sio adl & sio ablawung biþ on þære lifre healcum & holocum gecenned þonne þincþ him sona on fruman þæt sio wæte swiþor niþor gewite þonne hio upstige & se mon geswogunga þrowað & modes geswæþrunga, ne mæg him se lichoma batian ac he bið blac & þynne & acolod & forþon ætfilð him wæterbolla.[582]

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[577] Ælfric, 'Hortatorius Sermo De Efficacia Scae Missae' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* II.xxiv, 356–57). 'lay day and night senseless among the slain'.

[578] Deegan, 'Critical Edition II', p. 295.

[579] Ælfric, 'Dominica Prima post Pasca' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* I.xvi, 234–35). 'Of greater benefit to us was his doubt than the faith of the other apostles; for when he was brought to belief by that touching, doubt was thereby taken from us'.

[580] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 146, gloss 677 (ed. Napier, p. 19).

[581] Cockayne says 'Alexandros of Tralles, lib. vi. chap. 1, treats of the diagnosis between pleurisy and disease of the liver' (256 n3); while the Herbarium says 'wið sidan sare þæt Grecas paralisis nemnað' (De Vriend 76).

[582] *BLch* II.xxi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 206–07). 'If moreover the liver hardening, and the disease, and the upblowing is kindled on the hulks and hollows of the liver, then it soon seems to the doctor that the humour descends downwards rather than ascends; and the man suffers swoonings and failings of the mind; his body cannot amend, but is pale, and thin, and chilled, and hence there falleth upon him dropsy.'

Biþ eac geond fingras cele & cneowa unmeht, eagan readiað reod & beoþ heow & famig utgang, micge ageolwod & lytel biþ þæs innoþes meltung & ædra clæppetung, eþung bið sarlic, gehnycned neb & þara breosta biþ deawig wætung swa swa sie geswat, modes elhygd, ceolan hristung & hreoung hlydende swiþust innan wistlað of þam dæle þe þæt sar bið, hlinunge & hligiunge wið wiþersæc.[583]

Modes geswæþrung, which is translated by Cockayne as 'failings of the mind', can describe a wide array of conditions. *Sweðrian* means to decrease, to withdraw, subside, come to an end.[584] Literally *modes geswæþrunga* means that the *mod* ceases to function, but whether this is a state of unconsciousness, or a catatonic state, or a state of conscious torpor is uncertain. It is also possible that the expression should be understood more figuratively, as other *mod*-expressions before; it should then denote conditions where it is rather the willpower and the life force that is missing. The *geswogunga* that potentially accompany the *lifre aheardung* also suggest the possibility of losing consciousness in this disease, so *modes geswæþrunga* might resemble it in a way, just as in the previous entry. The affliction of the *mod* does not necessarily result in insanity but in an abnormal behaviour or abnormal state of consciousness.

Finally, an instance of *mod* in the *Lacnunga* is worth mentioning as a sidenote but we do not consider it a mental disorder or a malfunction of the *mod* at all, we include it only for the sake of completeness. 'Wið innoðes hefignese: syle etan rædic mid sealte, ⁊ eced supan: sone bið þæt mod leohtre'.[585] This remedy is amongst a medley of various maladies: against lice, against itching belly, flying poison and so on. It is probably not a severe condition if the cure is just nibbling on radish and sipping vinegar; it is a popular 'home remedy' even today to eat radish when someone is full as it is thought to aid digestion, just as vinegar is.[586] The *mod* is most plausibly not crucially impaired in this case; however, everyone knows how sluggishly one can feel after a huge feast. Considering that the Anglo-Saxons thought the *mod* to reside in the innards, it is easy to see the correlation between the sluggish feeling coming from a loaded

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[583] *BLch* II.xlvi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 258–59). 'There is also cold all through their fingers, and powerlessness of their knees, their eyes are red, and red is their hue, and their discharge is foamy, their mie is turned yellow, and the digestion of the inwards (*sic*) is little, and hard the pulsation of the veins, the breathing is sorelike, the face twitched, and there is a dewy wetting of the breast, as if it sweated, a delirium of the mind; a spasmodic action, and roughness of the throat, sounding chiefly from within, whistleth from the part on which the sore is; the disease is unfavourable to a leaning posture and to laughing.'

[584] 'sweðrian', *Bosworth-Toller*.

[585] *Lcn* cxxiv, (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 88–89). 'For heaviness of the inwards (*sic*) [i. e. (?)indigestion]: give to eat radish with salt, and vinegar to síp; soon the spirit will enlighten.'

[586] A quick search on the internet yields thousands of articles that recommend radish for a heavy, greasy meal and vinegar (especially apple cider vinegar) for a better digestion.

digestive system, 'heavy innards' and the *mod* that needs enlightening. This leechdom probably is meant to remedy this languid state of the *mod*.

None of these *mod*-afflictions are severe cases of insanity. We have established that madness is something that affects the *mod*, hence, we would expect *mod*-compounds to express variants of insanity. However, this is not so: none of the *mod*-compounds denote conditions that could be considered madness either by us or the Anglo-Saxons. These *mod*-disorders are certainly afflictions of the *mod*, secondary conditions caused by a primary somatic disease, but not severely mad enough to 'earn' the category of madness. Underlyingly, all types of madness are inflictions of the *mod*, as *mod* is the spiritual, mental, and emotional part of man; but madness-type disorders exhibit such a strikingly abnormal behaviour or way of thinking that they cannot be mentioned on the same page as these mild *mod*-afflictions.

There is one more term we must mention in relation to *mod*-afflictions. Although it does not pertain to the medical corpus, we do mention it here as its sheer form suggests that it is a sickness: *modseoc*. Its use is ambivalent: on the one hand, it describes a state of sadness and anxiety in poetry; on the other, it is used to express discomfort due to repulsion, as well as a dubious condition in the Harley Glossary. For instance, after waiting for nine hours for Beowulf at Grendel's lake and seeing a surge of waves and blood, Hrothgar's retinue leaves thinking that Beowulf is dead; still, despite the distressing omen, Beowulf's warriors stay in hope of seeing their lord alive but with an agony of worry:

Gistas setan
modes seoce   ond on mere staredon;
wiston ond ne wendon   þæt hie heora wine-drihten
selfne gesawon[587]

Before his death, Guthlac consoled his friends saying

nelle ic lætan þe
æfre unrotne   æfter ealdorlege,
meðne, modseocne,   minre geweorðan
soden sorgwælmum[588]

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[587] Beowulf 1602–1605 (ed. and transl. Fulk, pp. 190–91). 'The visitors sat sick at heart and stared at the pool; they wished and did not expect that they would see their friend and lord himself.'

[588] Guthlac B 120 (ed. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*). 'I will not let thee / ever sad, / after my death, / faint, sick in mind / remain, / afflicted with care-burnings' (transl. Thorpe, *Codex Exoniensis*, p. 177).

Both the Guthlac text and the Beowulf text applies *modseoc* for a state of mental and emotional anguish. There is no trace of mental disorder or madness, the reaction of *modseoc* is a wholly appropriate reaction to the circumstances.

The other occurrence of *modseoc* is to be found in the Old English version of the enlarged *Rule of Chrodegang*. Chrodegang, bishop of Metz from 742 to 766 wrote the *Regula canonicorum* to reform the Frankish clergy, aiming at a ʻstrict organization of secular canons'.[589] The *Regula canonicorum* was popular throughout the Continent and there is strong evidence that suggests that it was also known in England.[590] However, the earliest manuscript evidence is of the enlarged version which is thought to have been edited around 900, imported to England during the reign of King Æthelstan in the first half of the tenth century and was translated to Old English within a few decades.[591] According to Langefeld, the *Regula canonicorum* ʻwas known in Anglo-Saxon England by the end of the eighth century … [and] its later enlarged version exerted considerable influence from the tenth century until the end of the eleventh'.[592] Chapter XII prescribing to priests what they should do upon rising from bed contains *modseoc*:

Et si alicui frequens tussis aut flegma ex pectore aut naribus excrescit, post dorsum proiciat, aut iuxta latus, caute tamen et curiose, ut infirmis mentibus non uertatur in nausiam; et semper quod proicitur pede conculcetur, ut cum ad orationem curuantur, uestimenta eorum non sordidentur

And gif heora ænegum for unhæla hraca of breoste oððe snyflung of nosa derige, hræce and snyte bæftan him oððe adun be his sidan, and þæt fortrede, þe læs hit seocmodum broþrum and cisum wyrðe to wlættan; and wærlice tredon þæt, þe læs heora reaf wurðon þærof fule, þonne hi on gebedum licgeað.[593]

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[589] Langefeld, *Enlarged Rule*, p. 3.
[590] Langefeld, *Enlarged Rule*, p. 16.
[591] Langefeld, *Enlarged Rule*, p. 18.
[592] Langefeld, *Enlarged Rule*, p. 20.
[593] *Regula canonicorum* (ed. and translt. Langefeld, p. 198–99). ʻAnd if sickness, phlegm of the chest or mucus of the nose is causing discomfort to any of them, he shall cough up and discharge his nose behind him or close by his side, and tread it down so that it will not be nauseating for feeble-minded or fastidious priests; and they shall cautiously tread it down so that they will not soil their vestments through it when lying down in prayers.' (Langefeld, p. 366)

The *seocmodum broþrum* in the text translating *infirmis mentibus* does not denote insane brothers but those whose *mod* is not strong enough to bear the rather appalling sight of snot on the floor. The sight might have even caused nausea at some brothers which might be expressed by the *seoc* stem of the word. A physical distress is induced by a mental factor (here it is disgust), similarly to Beowulf's team of warriors who are 'worried sick'.

While in the Harley Glossary, *modseocnes* glosses *cardiacus*: 'cardiacus . dicitur qui patitur laborem cordis . uel morbus cordis . *heortcoþa . uel *ece . *modseocnes . uel *unmiht'.[594] Caelius Aurelianus writes of *cardiacus* that 'sed communem dicunt eam, quae substantiam in stomacho atque ore uentris habuerit, ubi etiam mordicatio sequitur supradictarum partium … propriam autem dicunt eam, quae cum sudore fuerit atque pulsu imbecillo, de qua nunc dicere suscepimus'. [595] He adds that the condition affects the area around the heart, hence the name. Cassius Felix described cardiacus as 'cardiaca passio distensio membranae cordis, ex qua contingit exhalatio fieri animae per sudorem tetricum, tumente membrana cordis ex antecedenti perfrictione aut vomitu frequenti aut ex adustione, quod ex encauseos'.[596] There is no evidence that Anglo-Saxons had either Cassius Felix or Caelius Aurelianus at their disposal; it is not known whether they had any explanation as to what medical authors considered *cardiacus*. The two texts that they definitely did have (*Liber Tertius* and Serenus' *Liber medicinalis*) do not mention *cardiacus*; thus, we do not know the context where Anglo-Saxons met the word. What is striking in the glossary is that overtly medical terminology such as *cardiacus* and *morbus cordis* was also equated with *modseocnes* by the glossator, whereas we have seen *modseocnes* to describe a mental state rather than a somatic cardio-related disease. However, this does further bolster the theory of Anglo-Saxons' view of the *mod*: residing in the chest cavity and having a much stronger interaction with the physical world than our 'mind' in the modern sense has. As *mod* has a strong interaction with the physical world and the body, *modseocnes* can cause *morbus cordis* and *heortcoþa*. Nonetheless, despite the name and the effect on the chest

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[594] Harley Glossary C 348 (ed. Oliphant, p. 54). *Cardiacus* denotes that who suffers labor of the heart/stomach or disease of the heart/stomach or heartdisease or ache or *modseocnes* or weakness (my translation).

[595] Caelius Aurelianus, *Celerum Passionum* II.xxx (ed. and transl. Bendz and Pape pp. 240–241). 'Als allgemein bezeichnen sie diejenige Krankheitsform, die ihre Existenz in der Speiseröhre und im Magenmund hat, wodurch auch ein beissender Schmerz in den soeben genannten Partien entsteht … Als speziell aber bezeichnen sie diejenige Form, die mit Schwiss und einem schwachen Puls einhergeht, über die wir uns jetzt zu sprechen vorgenommen haben.' 'That is called common *cardiacus* whose origin is in the stomach and the pylorus, where lacerating pain torments the parts mentioned above ... and that is called special when there is sweat and weak pulse which is what we plan to discuss' (my translation).

[596] Cassius Felix, *De Medicina*, LXIV (ed. Rose, p. 156). 'a disease of the convulsions of the membrane of the heart, from which happens exhalation of the air through severe perspiration, swollen heart membranes resulting from preceding violent cold or due to frequent vomiting or due to burning, that is due to inflammation' (my translation).

cavity, *modseocnes* is not a disease. It is a stressful status of the *mod* that causes physiological symptoms.

The last terms amongst the neutral mental disorder expressions are variants of *gewit*. *Gewit* as we have already mentioned, denotes the intellectual aspect of man. The absence of *gewit* in the Old English corpus can express a wide variety of states. Ælfric uses *ungewittigan* of young children, e.g. those that are at the age of baptism and those that were slain on Herod's command, so up till the age of 2, e.g. in 'Sermo in Epiphania Domini'[597] and in 'Natale Innocentium Infantum'.[598] But he also uses *ungewitte* of Saul when the evil spirit drives him mad in 'Sermo excerptus de libro regum'.[599] The translator of the Old English version of Gregory's *Dialogi* also chose *ungewittigness* and *gewitleas* when writing about the man with *phrenesis*.[600] In *Leechbook* II.xxvii we have discussed above, the result of a 'cold and moist' stomach is *brægenes adl* and *ungewitfæstnes* – in line with the explanation in entry i, where it was established that the humours in the stomach can cause psychical maladies. Since *brægenes adl* is not found anywhere else in the Old English corpus, and appears only once in the leechbooks, it is quite likely that it was not an active member of the Old English vocabulary and as such, it does not give us much hint as to what *ungewitfæstnes* might mean here. It is very likely that this passage is also a transmission as the majority of *Leechbook* II, but unfortunately hitherto it has not been identified, so we do not know how the original goes. *Ungewitfæstnes* also appears only once in the corpus, however, based on the other *gewit*-compounds, we know that it is the absence of *gewit*. But as we have seen, privative *gewit*-compounds have such a broad range of meaning that it is very difficult to decide on what part of the spectrum *ungewitfæstnes* stands. The suffix *–fæst*, nevertheless, expresses termination, so *ungewitfæstnes* might be rendered as 'a state of utter *gewit*-lessness'. But whether it is unconsciousness or loss of cognitive power or a state of extreme frenzy is unclear.

Entry lxiv is not much clearer either: 'Þis is balzaman smyring wiþ eallum untrumnessum þe on mannes lichoman biþ, wiþ fefre 7 wiþ scinlace 7 wið eallum gedwolþinge … Gif mon eac of his gewitte weorðe þonne nime he his dæl 7 wyrce cristes mæl on ælcre lime butan cruc on þam heafde foran se sceal on balzame beon 7 oþer on þam heafde ufan'.[601] The

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[597] Ælfric, 'Sermo in Epiphania Domini' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* II.iii, p. 50).

[598] Ælfric, 'Natale Innocentium Infantum' (ed. and transl. Thorpe, *Homilies* I.v, p. 84).

[599] Ælfric, 'Sermo excerptus de libro regum' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.xviii, pp. 284).

[600] Gregory III (ed. Hecht, *Dialoge*, p. 247.

[601] *BLch* II.lxiv (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 288–89). 'This is smearing with balsam for all infirmities which are on a man's body, against fever, and against apparitions, and against all delusions … Also if a man becomes out of his wits, then let him take part of it, and make Christ's mark on every limb, except the cross upon the forehead, that shall be of balsam, and the other also on the top of his head'.

entry contains leechdoms for all sorts of strange maladies and shows a strikingly different mentality than the first half of *Leechbook* II. Contrarily to previous entries where the diseases were explained and treated in terms of humourism, in this entry we find conditions caused by apparitions, delusions, and 'strange calamities'. According to the leechdom, if someone 'of his gewitte weorðe', petroleum should be drank and the sign of the cross has to be made on the limbs, and also the cross has to be made with balsam on the forehead and on the top of the head. The essential bit in this entry is that the *gewit*-condition is grouped together with maladies that have very strong supernatural connotations and these as a group are treated similarly, with an almost omnipotent balsam and Christian ritual elements. *Scinlac*, as we have seen is possibly a frightful vision causing seizure-like symptoms, but *scin*-compounds are also used in the sense of malicious magic aimed at someone. For instance, in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, in St. Basilius's story a man falls in love with a woman who originally was to be a nun. In order to get her, the man seeks help at a *dryman* (sorcerer), who applies *scinncræft* on the woman, and thus she falls sick with burning desire towards the man.[602] While *gedwolþing* is a word that is often used for heresy, condemned magic and delusion. There is a strong sense of being awry and deluded in *gedwol*-compounds and it can be found frequently in texts in connection with idolatry. The *OEHE* reports that

[f]orðon ðe monige ðone geleafan, þe hie hæfdon, mid unrihtum weorcum idledon, ond swylce eac manige in ða tid þæs myclan woles 7 moncwildes gymeleasedan ðæm gerynum þæs halgan geleafan, mid þæm hie gelærade wæron, 7 to ðæm dwoligendum læcedomum deofulgylda ofestton 7 scyndon; swa swa hie þæt sende wite from Gode Sceppende þurh heora galdor oþþe lyfesne oððe þurh hwylce hwugu deogolnesse deofolcræftes bewerian mehton.[603]

The *dwoligendum læcedomum* is connected to *deofolcræft* in the passage of the *OEHE*, while *gedwolcræft* is connected to *scinlac* and *galdorcræft* in one of the *Blickling Homilies* and is used in a discussion about the inhabitants of hell: 'On helle beoþ þeofas, & flyteras, & gitseras þe on mannum heora æhta on woh nimaþ, & þa oformodan men, & þa scinlæcan þa þe

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[602] Ælfric, 'De Sancto Basilio' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.iii, pp. 72).

[603] *OEHE* IV.xxviii (ed. and transl. Miller, pp. 362–63). 'For many profaned the faith, which they held, by unrighteous acts, and also many, at the time of the great pestilence and mortality, neglected the sacraments of the holy faith, in which the were trained up, and hastened and flocked to the delusive remedies of their idols; as if they could avert the punishment sent from God their creator, by their incantations or charms or some secrets of devilish craft.'

galdorcræftas & gedwolan begangaþ, & mid þæm unwære men beswicaþ & adwellaþ, & hi aweniaþ from Godes gemynde mid heora scinlacum, & gedwolcræftum'.[604]

Gedwolþing in the leechdom, especially as it is beside *scinlac*, is no ordinary condition: it is most probably a type of malevolent magic aimed at the someone who will thus need a treatment of smearing with balsam and the signs of the cross. The symptoms might resemble those of *scinlac*, and since *scinlac*, *gedwolþing* and the *gewitte weorðe* condition share roughly the same treatment, they were seen as having something in common similarly to leechdom xli in *Leechbook* III, where curing a *gewitseoc man* shares the same entry as *feondes costung*, *ælfsiden* and *lencten adl*.

Entry xli gives directions on preparing a salve against devil's temptations, *ælf*-magic and lent-disease, and provides a treatment against *gewit*-sickness using this salve:

Þeos sealf is god wiþ ælcre feondes costunga 7 ælfsidenne 7 lencten adle. Gif þu wilt lacnian gewitseocne man gedo bydene fulle cealdes wætres dryp þriwa on þæs drences, beþe þone man on þam wætre 7 ete se man gehalgodne hlaf 7 cyse 7 garleac 7 cropleac 7 drince þæs drences scenc fulne 7 þonne he sie bebaþod smire mid þære sealfe swiþe 7 siþþan him sel sie wyrc him þonne swiðne drenc utyrnendum.[605]

These four conditions share the same salve and must be treated with almost the same treatment, although the treatment for *gewitseocnes* is more complex than the others. The ingredients of the salve need to be set under an altar and nine masses have to be sung over them; in addition, the *gewitseoc* man has to eat a 'hallowed bread'. Mental disorders expressed with *gewit*-compounds therefore can vary between profane and significantly supernatural conditions.

Mental conditions that I termed 'neutral' consist of a wide range of symptoms including both profane and supernatural maladies. They reveal a more native Anglo-Saxon pool of diseases than the previously discussed somatic diseases and most of them are terms that are applied both to supernatural and profane mental disorders. Nonetheless, terms expressed with

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[604] 'Dominica V. in Quadragesima' (ed. and transl. Morris, 61–2) 'In hell are thieves, chiders, covetous men, who deprive men wrongfully of their property, proud men, and magicians who prctise enchantments and deceptions, and deceive and mislead unwary men thereby, and wean them from the contemplation of God by means of their sleights and deceptions.'

[605] *Lch* III.xli (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 334–35). 'This salve is good for every temptation of the fiend, and for a man full of elfin tricks, and for typhus fever. If thou wilt cure a wit sick man, put a pail full of cold water, drop thrice into it some of the drink; bathe the man in the water, and let the man eat hallowed bread, and cheese, and garlic, and cropleek, and drink a cup full of the drink; and when he hath been bathed, smear with the salve thoroughly; and when it is better with him, then work him a strong purgative drink.'

mod-compounds tend to denote profane conditions, which might be surprising given the theory that malfunction of the *mod* results in mental disorders. However, this surprising discovery does not diminish the theory: rather it might bring us closer to Anglo-Saxons' original view on madness. This is what we shall see in the next section examining the supernatural terms.

5.2.3.3 SUPERNATURAL MENTAL DISORDERS

For the sake of ease, I further divide the category of supernatural madness to four subcategories: madness induced by demons, madness induced by *ælfe*, madness induced by other Germanic supernatural beings and madness induced by humans. There is an inherent difference between the first and the other three; namely that the former can be originated to Christian thought and the latter is Germanic folkloric inheritance. Although it has long been expounded that labelling certain elements Christian or Germanic (or pagan) in Anglo-Saxon medicine is problematic,[606] there is still use in establishing these categories. Jolly has explained that there is no such thing as a 'pagan element' in the leechbooks: elements of folklore and religion with Germanic roots have been synthesised by Christians and amalgamated into a Christian worldview by the time of the leechbooks. Supernatural creatures belonging to the Germanic pagan world were not seen as members of a pagan fauna, but as members of the Christian demonic lot. Bearing this in mind, I still distinguish between Christian and Germanic supernatural beings because madness-inducing properties of Germanic supernatural beings reach back to times older than the synthesis of the two worldviews, the madness they induced bore different attributes and meanings than their Christianised counterparts. Therefore, they form separate groups and examining them separately is more efficient in our pursuit of exploring Anglo-Saxon madness. The previous sections proved that there was indeed some sort of a difference recognized by Anglo-Saxons between the typologies of cases of insanity, which is not just an anachronistic projection of modern evaluation of the sources. As the medical sources suggest, Anglo-Saxons were aware of mental disorders sprouting from profane somatic grounds and mental disorders induced by supernatural beings. The sources indicate that the supernatural approach was innate to Anglo-Saxon culture, and Christian demon possession could easily blend with the native ideas. Therefore, while I appreciate the view that distinctions

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[606] See e.g. Karen Louise Jolly's 1996 book

of Christian versus pagan should not be forced upon the post-Conversion era, I believe that the Christian and pagan Germanic elements of madness can indeed be treated separately in terms of madness-inducing agents and this approach is fruitful and efficient in this dissertation.

5.2.3.3.1 DEMON POSSESSION

The first category is the most obvious one: cases of 'devil-sickness', demon possession, which might not be a solely Christian idea; nonetheless, its complex as it appears in Anglo-Saxon medicine is of Christian origin. The cases are literally termed as 'devil-sickness' in Old English: *feond seocnys* or *deofol seocnys* – we use the term demon possession as it is the accepted modern term for the symptoms. Demon possession as a condition is mostly paired up in remedies with other mind-altering afflictions, especially with other supernatural conditions; and if it stands alone in the remedy, it still tends to be in the proximity of remedies of other mind-altering afflictions in the text.[607] The locations of demon possession remedies clearly show that they were thought of as conditions that affect the spiritual part of man and contaminate it. The *mod* is attacked which also affects behaviour: the possession impinges on the sufferer's actions, and they might do things they normally would not. Thus, the ailment that primarily manifests in outer phenomena like sickness, convulsions and behavioural issues has a very strong inner association as well. Demon possession is both a physiological and a spiritual disease. It is, therefore, strongly tied to temptation and sin and often requires clerical intervention to remedy. Possession by a supernatural entity was most probably not alien to Anglo-Saxons; however, the Christian dimension of sin and temptation was new to them and somewhat different to the native possession concepts. Demon possession was not in itself considered a sin: it could be seen as punishment, as testing, or even as pure chance – or rather, bad luck. Nonetheless, it still contaminated people and caused them to act against Christian values. This was the novelty in the 'Christian-type possession': it was an unholy state that one had best get rid of as soon as possible.

As mentioned before, the number of supernatural mental disorders in *Leechbook* III far outweigh those of *Bald's Leechbook*, especially those that are attributed either to demons or to *ælfe*, whereas remedies for somatic and neutral insanity prevail in *Bald's Leechbook*. It is

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[607] E.g. LB III.lviii for *feondes costunge* is followed by lxi against *ælfcynn*, *nihtgenga* and *mann þe deoful mid haemþ*.

interesting and illuminating to examine how these different types were combined and how they interacted, hence, I will examine the demon induced madness cases combined with somatic disorders, then those with neutral and lastly those with pagan elements. This approach coincides with analysing *Bald's Leechbook* first and then *Leechbook* III and *Lacnunga*.

The very first remedy that mentions *feondseocnys* in *Leechbook* I.lxiii provides a short description as to what it means: 'Wiþ feond seocum men, þonne deofol þone monnan fede oððe hine innan gewealde mid adle'.[608] The fact that this is the very first remedy for demon possession in the *Leechbooks* and that this is the one that gives the explanation is remarkable. No other remedy gives any description of demon possession. If we consider the three parts of the *Leechbooks* as one big entity then the fact that the explanation was added to the very first instance might suggest that it is a general introduction to the phenomenon and that all other instances of demon possession can be expected to manifest in the same way as described here, ie. being controlled by devils by diseases from within. *Fedan* means to nourish, nurture, sustain,[609] while *gewealdan* means to control, command, have power upon.[610] The fact that the devil *gewealde* the afflicted person implicates that the person commited something under this control; as we could see in the hagiographies, demon possession not only involved convulsions and physical sickness but also entailed behavioural issues. In her 2008 article, Emma Cohen defined possession in very similar terms: she called 'pathogenic' possession where 'the presence of the spirit entity is typically manifested in the form of illness', while she called 'executive' possession when 'the spirit entity is typically represented as taking over the host's executive control, or replacing the host's "mind" (or intentional agency), thus assuming control of bodily behaviours'.[611] This typology is based on humans' natural cognition and as such, it is universal and timeless: it is as valid for today's societies as it is for past societies.[612]

The fact that demon possession could make people do what they would not do otherwise was apparently recognised by Anglo-Saxons. Certain penitentials, while not of Anglo-Saxon origin but still in Anglo-Saxon use, permit saying masses for suicide committed under demon possession.[613] As previously established, *mod* was thought to be the factor that determined how

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[608] *BLch* I.lxiii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 136–37). 'For a fiend sick man, or demoniac, when a devil possesses the man or controls him from within with disease'.

[609] 'fedan', *Bosworth-Toller*.

[610] 'gewealdan', *Bosworth-Toller*.

[611] Cohen, 'Spirit Possession', p. 103.

[612] Cohen, 'Spirit Possession', pp. 121–22.

[613] Capitula et fragmenta Theodori Operum, ex diversorum scriptis excerpta: 'De vexatis a diabolo, et de iis qui se occidunt', *Ancient Laws and Institutes*, p. 65.

people behaved, it was will-power; thus demon possession, being a loss over self-control and behaviour could indeed be interpreted as an infliction of the *mod* by the Anglo-Saxons.

Somatic mental disorders also affected the *mod*; however, demon possession, having supernatural origins, was deemed more dangerous. This is demonstrated by entry lxiii in *Leechbook* I which is the first of the mental sequence in the book: this part up til remedy I.lxvi discusses conditions that involve altered mental states some of which have already been mentioned. The entry contains remedies for *feond seoc men*, *bræcseoc men*, and *weden heort* of which the latter two have been covered. The remedy for *feond seocnys* is the most cumbersome of the three:

Wiþ feond seocum men, þonne deofol þone monnan fede oððe hine innan gewealde mid adle. Spiwedrenc eluhtre, bisceopwyrt, beolone, cropleac, gecnua tosomne, do eala to wæta, læt standan neahterne, do fiftig lybcorna on 7 haligwater. Drenc wiþ feondseocum men of ciricbellan to drincanne: gyþrife, glæs, gearw, elehtre, betonice, attorlaþe, cassuc, fane, finul, ciricragu, Cristes mæles ragu, lufestice, gewyrc þone drenc of hluttrum ealað, gesinge seofon mæssan ofer þam wyrtum, do garleac 7 haligwæter to 7 drype on ælcne drincan þone drenc þe he drincan wille eft. 7 singe þone sealm beati inmaculati 7 exurgat 7 saluum me fac deus, 7 þonne drince þone drenc of ciricbellan 7 se mæssepreost him singe æfter þam drence þis ofer domine sancte pater omnipotens.[614]

Entry I.lxiii connects *feondseocnys, bræcseocnys* and *weden heorte* by listing them under the same entry. However, a distinction is apparently made between these three: *feondseocnys* and *weden heorte* need a more elaborate treatment than *bræcseocnys* and they also put more emphasis on a possibly clerical figure who needs to complete certain actions involving the patient and the ingredients. While in case of *feondseoc* and *weden heort* psalms, litanies, even twelve masses need to be sung, the treatment of the *bræcseoc* only requires an unknown number of masses sung over the plants. The morphology of the word does not reveal whether 'mass' is in plural or singular; it might even be possible that only one mass is needed.

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[614] *BLch* I.lxvi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 136–39). 'For a fiend sick man, or demoniac, when a devil possesses the man or controls him from within with disease; a spew drink, or emetic, lupin, bishopwort, henbane, cropleek; pound these together, add ale for a liquid, let it stand for a night, add fifty libcorns, or cathartic grains, and holy water. A drink for a fiend sick man, to be drunk out of a church bell; githrife, cynoglossum, yarrow, lupin, betony, attorlothe, cassock, flower de luce, fennel, church lichen, lichen of Christ's mark or cross, lovage; work up the drink off clear ale, sing seven masses over the worts, add garlic and holy water, and drip the drink into every drink which he will subsequently drink, and let him sing the psalm, Beati immaculati, and Exurgat, and Salvum me fac, deus, and then let him drink the drink out of a church bell, and let the mass priest after the drink sing this over him, Domine, sancte pater omnipotens.'

The remedy for *feondseocnys* prescribes that 'se mæssepreost him singe æfter þam drence þis ofer' (after the drink the priest should sing this over him) so it involves the priest in the healing ritual, but in the remedy for *bræcseocnys*, direct involvement of the priest is not required, as lay people could also place the herbs under the altar – or have them placed there. Nevertheless, more activity is required from the patient in the form of almsgiving and prayer. This might imply that *bræcseocnys* was not as severe as *feondseocnys* or *weden heorte*: the patient may not be conscious or responsible for their actions during *feondseocnys*, hence the emphasized activity of the healer, as opposed to the *bræcseoc* who is fully aware of their deeds and might be subject to paroxysms only periodically. Possibly, *feondseocnys* and *weden heorte* needed a more complex ecclesiastical intervention because of their physiological severity; however, it is also possible that *bræcseoc*, being a member of the group of somatic mental disorders, did not require so severe clerical intervention due to its profane nature. Its humoral aetiology was recognized by the writer of the remedy, who deemed it unnecessary to seek heavenly help to such an extent as with *feondseocnys* and *weden heorte*; and in general, the somatic-natural background of *bræcseocnys* was recognised as opposed to the supernatural character of *feondseocnys* and *weden heorte*.

The second instance where demon possession is paired with somatic disorders in the same remedy is entry i in *Leechbook* II which we have largely covered above: 'Eac of þæs magan adle cumað monige 7 missenlica adla geborstena wunda 7 hramma 7 fyllewærc 7 fienda adl 7 micla murnunga 7 unrotnessa butan þearfe 7 oman 7 ungemetlica mete socna 7 ungemetlice unlustas 7 cisnessa 7 sara inadle on wifes gecyndon 7 on fotum 7 blædran 7 unmode 7 ungemetwæccum 7 ungewitlico word'.[615] As noted, the entry seems to be a translation and the placing of *fienda adl* beside somatic disorders was not a conscious Anglo-Saxon choice; it was rather a rendering of *epileptias*. Interestingly, these two entries are the only ones where demon possession stands together with somatic mental disorders. 'Devil-sickness' always occurs together with non-somatic mental afflictions in the remedies, bolstering the theory that demon possession and various forms of non-somatic madness were considered related. The structure of the remedies in *Leechbook* III supports this assumption, since conditions that appear to be mind-altering are grouped together and 'form a coherent series of remedies against spiritual, malevolent force, which, nonetheless, are manifested in physical symptoms and can be cured with natural ingredients properly brought into relation with the spiritual macrocosm'.[616] Remedies lxiv and lxvii in *Leechbook* III are in line with this trend:

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[615] *BLch* II.i (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 174).
[616] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 158.

Wið deofle liþe drenc 7 ungemynde do on ealu cassuc elehtran moran finul ontre betonice … gesing xii mæssan ofer þam drence 7 drince him biþ sona sel. Drenc wiþ deofles costunga þefan þorn cropleac … gehalga þas wyrta do on ealu halig wæter 7 sie se drenc þær inne þær se seoca man inne sie 7 simle ær þon þe he drince sing þriwa ofer þam drence Deus in nomine tuo saluum me fac.[617]

Wið deofol seoce do on halig wæter 7 on eala bisceop wyrte … sele him drincan … Eft spiwe drenc wið deofle nim micle hand fulle secges 7 glædenan do on pannan geot micelne bollan fulne ealaþ on bewyl healf gegnid xx lybcorna do on þæt þis is god drenc wiþ deofle.[618]

As discussed above, entry lxiv provides the same remedy for devil and *ungemynd*, which presumably denotes here a mental disorder of supernatural origin, and the entry also covers the rather indefinite *deofles costung* (devil's temptation) which can be basically anything as it will be demonstrated later.[619] The drink has to be blessed and either a fragment or the whole Psalm 53(54) has to be sung three times each time the drink is administered, which essentially puts the treatment in a ritual frame. The *spiwe drenc* in the next entry can help expel the demon by inducing vomiting which is a universal treatment for demon possession seen in many cultures. As these remedies demonstrate, the physical and the spiritual are closely intertwined: devil sickness and temptation are treated with drinks and prayer.

Demons and temptation are often manifested by incubi and succubi in the Middle Ages. The notion of incubi and succubi can apparently be traced in entry III.lxi, which is a remedy for people whom the devil has intercourse with. Although the entry does not have explicitly madness-related expressions, it lists supernatural beings that interfere with humans' normal functioning, and there is reason to believe that all these beings had impact on the *mod* of the sufferers. According to Jolly, these beings are 'things that go bump in the night – invisible,

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[617] *Lch* III.lxiv (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 352–53). 'A lithe drink against a devil and dementedness. Put into ale cassuck, roots of lupin, fennel, ontre, betony … sing twelve masses over the drink, and let the man drink, it will soon be well with him. A drink against temptations of the devil; tufythorn, cropleek … hallow these worts, put into some ale some holy water, and let the drink be in the same chamber as the sick man, and constantly before he drinketh sing thrice over the drink, "Deus! In nomine tuo salvum me fac"'.

[618] *Lch* III.lxvii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 354–57). 'For one devil sick; put into holy water and into ale bishopwort … give the man to drink … Again, a spew drink against the devil; take a mickle hand full of sedge, and gladden, put them into a pan, pour a mickle bowl full of ale upon them; boil half, rub fine twenty libcorns, put them into it; this is a good drink against the devil'.

[619] See pp. 159–70.

malicious beings who harm not only physically but also spiritually'.[620] The remedy is a salve against 'ælfcynne 7 nihtgengan 7 þam mannum þe deofol mid hæmð' and *yfel costung*.

> Wyrc sealfe wiþ ælfcynne 7 nihtgengan 7 þam mannum þe deofol mid hæmð genim eowohumelan wermod bisceopwyrt … Do þas wyrta on an fæt sete under weofod sing ofer viiii mæssan awyl on buteran 7 on scearfes smerwe do haliges sealtes fela on aseoh þurh clað. Weorp þa wyrta on yrnende wæter. Gif men hwilc yfel costung weorþe oþþe ælf oþþe nihtgengan smire his ondwlitan mid þisse sealfe 7 on his eagan do 7 þær him se lichoma sar sie. 7 recelsa hine 7 sena gelome his þing biþ sona selre.[621]

Ælfcynn will be discussed later on, *nihtgenga* has already been touched on; thus we are left with *mannum þe deofol mid hæmð* and *yfel costung*. *Mannum þe deofol mid hemð* literally means 'people with whom the devil has intercourse'. The word used for 'people' is specifically a general term that includes both sexes, so the malady was thought to befall both men and women. According to Hall, the phrase

> could denote the victims of rape by the Devil or devils, or it could denote people who, by willingly having sex with devils or the Devil, gain powers to do harm … [b]ut if any function of the remedy from those listed at the end corresponds to the function stated at the beginning, it would be the *yfel costung*, suggesting that the *dēofol* in the first sentence is assaulting victims – in which case the remedy is for and not against the *menn*.[622]

The remedy also describes the preparation and usage of a salve that must be smeared on various body parts 'gif men hwilc yfel costung weorþe oþþe ælf oþþe nihtgengan'.[623] This last sentence reflects the opening list of the perpetrators: *ælfcynne* resonates with *ælf*, *nihtgenga* with *nihtgenga*, and presumably *mannum þe deofol mid hæmð* with *yfel costung* which thus expressively equates the incubi/succubi experience with temptation and probation. Some or possibly all of these conditions also seem to involve physical pain, as the salve is to be smeared

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[620] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 159.

[621] *Lch* III.lxi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 344–45). 'Work thus a salve against [ælfcynn] and [nihtgenga] and for the [people] with whom the devil hath carnal commerce; take the ewe hop plant … put these worts into a vessel, set them under the altar, sing over them nine masses, boil them in butter and sheeps grease, add much holy salt, strain through a cloth, throw the worts into running water. If any ill tempting occur to a man, or an elf or [nihtgenga] come, smear his forehead with this salve, and put it on his eyes, and where his body is sore, and cense him with incense, and sign him frequently with the sign of the cross; his condition will soon be better'.

[622] Hall, *Elves*, p. 127.

[623] If any ill tempting occur to a man, or an elf or [nihtgenga].

both where the 'body is sore' and where temptation besieges people: the eyes and the forehead through which the way leads to the mind – although this is more of a Christian idea rather than the Anglo-Saxon *mod*-in-the-chest notion. Smearing the aching body parts have a double effect: physiological and spiritual. The salve could have an analgesic effect due to its components or the rubbing may have caused hyperaemia which may have had a benevolent effect. Also, the salve could consecrate the affected body part and thus dislodge the demon. As Jolly mentions with regards this remedy, '[t]he cross in any form was a powerful weapon against such delusions by the Devil, because its inherent meaning caused a reorientation in an individual's perspective, refocusing attention on the true reality found in Christ'.[624]

Demon possessions are often described as manifested in convulsions which might be the case here, hence the need for treating various body parts; however, it is quite probable that the affliction of devil-intercourse also involved mental symptoms. As we have already established, *nihtgenga* was thought to affect the *mod*, and as we will see later, the same can be stated of *ælf*-diseases too. Furthermore, this entry is part of the mental section of *Leechbook* III: it stands amongst recipes for *deofle*, *ungemynd*, *ælfadl* and *wedenheort*. Considering that the *deofol-mid-hæmð* 'disease' is part of the mental section and shares treatment with two ailments strongly associated with mental disorders, the question whether it really produced mental symptoms is an open one. Intercourse with the devil, if involuntary, does not necessarily have to lead to madness, although a state of the likeness of what we nowadays call a post-traumatic stress disorder might be reckoned.[625] However, even if there were no mental symptoms whatsoever, the event might have been regarded powerful enough to contaminate the *mod* thus requiring an equally powerful exorcism and thus also being a justified member of the *mod*-afflicting maladies. Even if the intercourse was not consensual, the sinfulness of the act lingers on: it impurifies the body, it impurifies the *mod*. If, however, the intercourse was voluntary, deciding to commit such a sinful act could be considered madness in itself as we have seen in the case of Ælfric; but it certainly bears witness of a *mod* that is corrupt. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the pathogenesis of the *deofol-mid-hæmð* 'disease' was thought to involve such strong mental and behavioural abnormalities as those we have seen in hagiographies; in which case, it can be considered a full-blown member of the madness category. Whichever is the case, the *mod* is badly impaired and requires supernatural treatment.

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[624] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 87.

[625] In a recent study, 95 rape victims were examined and 94% were diagnosed with PTSD, see Rothbaum et al. In a world where devils were very real, it can be assumed that involuntary intercourse with them caused a similar amount of distress as for modern victims.

A somewhat broader and vaguer malady term is *feondes* or *deofles cost(n)ung. Feond* originally means enemy, foe, but it also frequently means devil;[626] while *costung* or *costnung* means temptation, tribulation, trying.[627] Although *feondes costung* has a Biblical overtone, some of the instances of *feond* in the medical sources are quite ambiguous and raise doubt as to whether the entry is about a supernatural perpetrator or someone from the mundane realms. Still, the word is used frequently in biblical contexts which provides ground for the assumption that the instances of *feond* in the medical sources mostly refer to devils. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that calling illnesses *feond* goes back to archaic ideas as primitive societies often address illnesses with euphemism. A surviving example to this mechanism might be the recurring formula in the *Nine Herbs Charm*: 'þu miht wiþ þam *laþan ðe geond lond færð*' where the 'loathsome one' most plausibly refers to an illness spirit.[628] As for *costung*, the Lord's Prayer in Matthew VI.13 says 'lead us not into temptation' which in the Old English version is rendered as 'ne gelæd þu us on costnunge'.[629] Furthermore, the Old English version of Bede's *HE* describes the Diocletianic Persecutions by the phrase '[a]nd þæs ðe þa seo costnung ðære ehtnesse gestilled wæs'.[630] *Costnung* can express both temptation and testing calamities that 'try men's souls'. In this sense, when conditions are described in medical texts as *feondes costung*, we have to bear in mind that the category is extremely broad and can mean a very wide variety of maladies: not only can it mean anything spiritually and physically painful that may be viewed as being sent by God to test the sufferers' steadfastness, but also anything that can be perceived as the devil's temptation, pleasant and unpleasant alike, or even calamities in the form of human malevolence. In a culture where the spiritual wellbeing is closely connected to the physical wellbeing this opens the possibility to consider practically any condition as *feondes costung*. Following the idea that supernatural beings can cause supernatural *mod* diseases, *feondes costung* is also expected to cause something similar; hence we need a close inspection of the remedies to decide whether this is true.

Feondes costung always appears as a member of a list except in one remedy. There is no definite trend as to what types of diseases it is paired with which suggests that the term covers a range of different conditions. Nonetheless, if *mod*-afflicting conditions and 'ordinary' conditions are both included in a remedy, *feondes costung* tends to be listed amongst the *mod*-

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[626] 'feond', *Bosworth-Toller.*

[627] 'costung', *Bosworth-Toller.*

[628] *Lcn* lxxvi, (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 60–61). 'you have power against *the loathsome one* that travels throughout the land'.

[629] Matthew VI.13 (ed. Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 12).

[630] *OEHE* I.viii. (ed. and transl. Miller, pp. 42–3). 'When the trials of this persecution quited down'.

afflicting ones instead of among the ʿordinaryʾ ailments. It is worth noting that *feondes costung* does not occur at all in *Leechbook* I, it occurs only once in *Leechbook* II, while most of the cases are in *Leechbook* III and a handful in *Lacnunga*. The instance of *feondes costung* in *Leechbook* II is part of a list by the end of the book and represents something of an exception, as it is overwhelmingly supernatural compared to the whole of *Leechbook* II: the book that is the most heavily influenced with the humoral-somatic approach has a closing section of mainly supernatural afflictions and entry lxv where our *feondes costung* resides is one example. The entry displays a number of remedies for various afflictions, for instance, lung disease, dysentery and *ælf* in separate units.[631] The unit of the entry that contains *feondes costungum* presents remedies for jaundice, ʿsudden sicknessʾ, and ʿto keep the body healthyʾ: ʿTo gehealdanne lichoman hælo mid drihtnes gebede þis is æþele læcedom. Genim myrran 7 gegnid on win swilce sie tela micel steap ful 7 þicge on niht nestig. 7 eft þonne restan wille þæt gehealdeþ wundorlice lichoman hælo 7 hit eac deah wiþ feondes costungum yflumʾ.[632] There is no indication that the *feond* in question causes any form of madness or denotes any serious condition. Keeping *feondes costung* at bay is rather the spiritual equivalent of keeping the body healthy. A similar case is the recipe for a ʿgood morning drinkʾ in *Lacnunga* clxx. The drink is for ʿeallum untrumnessum þe mannes lichoman iondstyriað innan oððe utanʾ.[633] The ailments this drink treats range from various brain diseases, to bloating, and itchy skin – and of course ʿælcre feondes costungeʾ.[634] Again, there is no sign that would suggest that this *feond* causes madness-like symptoms. The situation is more like what Jolly described: this medical approach ʿrefuses to make clear distinction between the physical and the spiritual when treating what troubles an individualʾ.[635] All sorts of temptation can be treated similarly to physical and somatic diseases, and somatic diseases can be perceived as forms of temptation. Furthermore, in a Christian context temptation is a disease of the mind and soul that is healed by the Saviour. This idea echoes in Ælfricʾs homilies I described in Chapter 4 and the idea of the ʿdisease of the mind and soulʾ is translated to Anglo-Saxon ears as disease of the *mod*, hence the vague line between *feondes costung*, somatic disease, and insanity.

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[631] Separation is not very well articulated: the first letter of each ʿparagraphʾ is slightly distinct from the text.

[632] *BLch* II.lxv (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 294–95). ʿTo keep the body in helath with prayer to the Lord: this is a noble leechdom: take myrrh and rud it into wine, so much as may be a good stoup full, and let the man take it at night fasting, and again when he will rest; that wonderfully upholdeth the health of the body, and it also is efficacious against the evil temptings of the fiendʾ.

[633] *Lcn* clxx (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 116–17). ʿall infirmities that agitate a personʾs body from within ot from withoutʾ.

[634] *Lcn* clxx (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 118–19). ʿeach temptation of the devilʾ.

[635] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 153.

Somewhat more obvious cases are the remedies where *feondes costung* stands in the presence of more pronounced mental disorder expressions in addition to organic diseases. In entry xii of *Leechbook* III, a recipe of a drink is provided that is good for ʻheafod ece ⁊ wiþ ungemynde ⁊ wiþ eagwærce ⁊ wiþ ungehyrnesse ⁊ breost wærce ⁊ lungen adle ⁊ lenden wærce ⁊ wiþ ælcre feondes costunga'.[636] Or in III.i where little stones found in birds' stomachs are prescribed for ʻheafod ece ⁊ wiþ eagwærce ⁊ wiþ feondes costunga ⁊ nihtgengan ⁊ lencten adle ⁊ maran ⁊ wyrtforbore ⁊ malscra ⁊ yflum gealdor cræftum'.[637] I will discuss these afflictions one by one later on; for the time being it suffices to say that each of them harm people with the help of supernatural power and impinge on the *mod*. In these cases, we really face the chameleon-like nature of the term *feondes costung*: it could mean anything, it could cover any type of condition that was experienced as a probation. The physical distress could be translated into spiritual terms by perceiving a bodily disease as a divine testing; and vice versa, the spiritual struggle of temptation could be rendered physical by perceiving it as a disease that God can cure. And as soon as a condition ascends to a spiritual level, inherently the soul steps in: spiritual ills are always conditions of the mind and soul – the conditions of the *mod*. Nonetheless, the way *feondes costung* appears in these remedies rather implies an expression of completeness: it aims to demonstrate the omnipotence of the remedies and emphasises their all-purpose character.

The environment that we might find more fitting for *feondes costung* is the company of other supernatural agents like elves and other demonic beings. Indeed, *feondes costung* appears more frequently beside supernatural disease-agents than beside organic diseases. In *Leechbook* III, *feondes costung* is cured together with *ælfsiden*, which is a type of *ælf* magic; *ælfadl*, literally *ælf*-disease; *lencten adl*, which is identified as typhus and is associated with altered mental states; and other supernatural agents already touched on. These remedies involve elaborate liturgical actions and are imbued with Christian references, while most of the conditions are clearly mind-altering inflictions. Devils and *ælf*-related mental ailments are treated similarly in contrast with neutral and somatic mental ailments showing that the difference of the aetiologies and the natures of the conditions were recognised. Remedy xxix in the *Lacnunga* cures *ælfsiden* and *feondes costung* with an elaborate treatment:

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[636] *Lch* III.xii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 316–17). ʻhead ache and for *ungemynd* and for eye ache and for deafness and breast pain and lung disease and loin pain and for every temptation of the devil'.

[637] *Lch* III.i (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 306–17). ʻhead ache, eye pain, and for the devil's temptations, and for *nihtgenga*, and for lent disease, and for the *mare*, and for *wyrtforbor*, *malscra* and evil incantations.'

Writ on husldisce: 'In principio erat uerbum' usque 'non conprehenderunt', et plura 'Et circumibat Ihesus totam Galileam docens' usque 'et secuti sunt eum turbe multe'; 'Deus in nomine tuo' usque in finem

Nim cristallan 7 disman 7 sidewaran 7 cassus 7 finol, 7 nim sester fulne gehalgodes wines; 7 hat unmælne mon gefeccean swigende ongean streame healfne sester yrnendes wæteres; nim þonne 7 lege ða wyrta ealle in þæt wæter 7 þweah þæt gewrit of ðan husldisce þærin swiðe clæne; geot þonne þæt gehalgade win ufon on ðæt oþer.

Ber þon to ciricean; læt singan mæssan ofer, ane 'Omnibus', oðre 'Contra tribulatione', þriddan 'Sancta Marian'.

Sing ðas gebedsealmas: 'Miserere mei Deus', 'Deus misereatur nobis' … ; 7 bletsa georne in ælmihtiges Drihtnes naman 7 cweð, 'In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti sit benedictum'; bruc syþþan.[638]

Considering the extremely high number of litanies, psalms, and biblical quotes this remedy prescribes, *ælfsiden* and *feondes costung* must have been serious ailments. It has been argued that *ælfsiden* was a mind-altering affliction,[639] therefore, the *feondes costung* mentioned here is also very likely to be a mental condition – or at least the mental aspect of it was addressed. Regarding this pair of maladies Hall notes that ʻ[t]he pairing again suggests that the two threats were similar enough that one remedy could cater for both, but could hint at the same time that they were not synonymous' and adds that there is no reference to the nature of these ailments, in addition, the irregular organisation of *Lacnunga* does not make it possible to make any secure inferences to it.[640] Storms says of this leechdom that it is ʻa strange mixture of Christian and pagan elements' and that prayers, the masses and the consecrated wine are Christian but the washing off, the peculiar use of water and the virgin is pagan.[641] Nevertheless,

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[638] *Lcn* xxix (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 16–17). ʻThis is the holy drink for elfish magic and for all the temptations of the Devil: Write on a paten: "In the beginning was the word" as far as "comprehended it not", and furthermore "And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching" as far as "and great crowds followed him": "God in your name" until the end …

Take *crystallium* and *disme* and zedoary and cassuc and fennel, and take a full sextarius of consecrated wine; and have a virgin fetch in silence against the current half a sextarius of running water; then take and place all the plants in the water and wash the writing off the inside of the paten very cleanly; then pour the consecrated wine from above onto the other [liquid].

Then carry it to church; have masses sung over it, first "By all [the saints]", second "Against trouble", third "Holy Mary".

Sing these precatory psalms: "God have mercy on me", "God in your name" … ; and zealously bless [it] in the name of almighty God and say, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit let it be blessed"; then use it'.

[639] E.g. in Hall, *Elves*.

[640] Hall, *Elves*, p. 121.

[641] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 234.

Jolly comments on this view that '[Storms] confuses folklore with pagan religion, form with content' and that the power of words and the use of water 'were not overtly pagan even if they predated Christianity, and they were rational within an early medieval worldview'.[642] Nonetheless, the complexity of the rituals clearly shows that treating the conditions required supernatural help, simple herbal concoctions were not enough.

The condition of *monoþseoc* in *Leechbook* III most possibly conceals demon possession as well, although the complexity of the remedy is not comparable to the previous ones: 'Wiþ þon þe mon sie monaþ seoc nim mere swines fel wyrc to swipan swing mid þone man sona bið sel. Amen'.[643] My previous findings demonstrated that *monaþseocnys* was attributed to demon possession and it has been argued that beating with a whip most plausibly had exorcistic purpose.

The *deofol* and *feond* related conditions were both familiar and new to Anglo-Saxons. On the one hand, they were aware of supernatural beings who induced altered mental states, physical and mental disfunctions. The concept was not novel to them, and they could easily associate the devil-diseases with native Anglo-Saxon beliefs of supernatural afflictions. On the other hand, the novelty these conditions brought was the strong association of sin and contamination. Temptation interlaced the state of being in a *feond*-related condition; temptation and sinful behaviour was either the result of the disease or the origin. In addition, even if the notion of sin was not present in all the cases (considering that the sources show that some instances arose with no special reason) the very presence of the *deofol* contaminated the sufferer's *mod*. In a Christian context, this may have been much more threatening than being possessed by an *ælf* in a pagan context as it will be shown in the next section.

5.2.3.3.2 MENTAL DISORDERS INDUCED BY *ÆLFE*

In its disease-afflicting feature, the Germanic so to say 'counterpart' of *deofle* is *ælf*. Of course this is an over-simplified statement, as we have already mentioned that *ælfe* cannot be fully considered Germanic in the medical corpus, and their status and function in Anglo-Saxon culture took on a very different form; however, *ælfe*'s disease-causing activity is very similar

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[642] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 141.
[643] *Lch* III.xl (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 334–35). 'In case a man be lunatic; take skin of a mereswine or porpoise, work it into a whip, swinge the man therewith, soon he will be well. Amen'.

to that of the devils'. In his extensive research on *ælfe*, Alaric Hall established that they were associated with seductive and at the same time dangerous beauty, and were thought to be able to afflict physical and mental ailments: they were associated with internal pains, cutaneous diseases, fevers and 'mind-altering ailments', e.g. delusions and hallucinations; however, their mind-altering potential might have had a respected prophesying dimension as well.[644] Hall further suggests that otherworldly beings, like *ælfe* might have been thought 'to have inflicted the ailment in response to some transgression by the sufferer. They would in this reading exist as an ordered threat to a transgressing individual'.[645] In this respect ailments they inflict as a so-called punishment are akin to ailments inflicted by demons when they are thought to be sent by God not as testing but as rebuking by letting demons wreak havoc on transgressing humans. Demons and *ælfe* that cause diseases in response to trangressions are, hence, in a sense, maintainers of order, and diseases coming from them are natural effects. *Ælf*-related diseases are thus parts of the order of nature. There is a strong association of *ælfe* with delusions, fevers and altered mental states even outside the medical corpus and the glossaries we have already discussed.[646] *Ælfe* thus exhibit duality: on the one hand, they can bestow a nearly divine prophesizing mental state; on the other, an *ælf*-inflicted altered mental state can be a very inconvenient condition inflicted upon humans, as well as the other bodily infirmities *ælfe* were responsible for.

Based on Old English morphology, personal names and Old Norse evidence, Hall concludes that *ælfe* were associated with gods and humans and were contrasted with monsters; and that most likely this system 'existed in the common ancestors of Old English and Norse, so we must infer that Anglo-Saxons brought it with them when they migrated to Britain'.[647] The prophecy-bestowing character of *ælfe* is apparently a survival of this period and demonisation slowly began after the Conversion: '[a]moral creatures such as elves were gradually "demonized" to fit into the Good-Evil paradigm of the Christian moral universe. This process enhanced their similarity to demons … elves began to resemble the fallen angels who seek to inflict internal and permanent harm on humans and their works, demons for Christian ritual to exorcise'.[648] BL Royal 2 A. XX (the Royal Prayerbook) contains a prayer where elves are clearly paralleled with Satan: the word *aelfae* is used as an equivalent to *Satanae*.[649] The process

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[644] Hall, *Elves*.
[645] Hall, *Elves*, p. 117.
[646] Hall, *Elves*, p. 123.
[647] Hall, *Elves*, pp. 66–7.
[648] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 136.
[649] Hall, 'Meanings', p. 79.

of demonisation might have taken part in attributing disease-causing potency to *ælfe*. As seen above, prophesying power was thought to be granted by *ælfe*, which, although certainly must have had inconvenient implications in Anglo-Saxon pagan society, might not have been such a burden altogether as madness was in later times, although various phases of it could resemble madness. The act of prophesying might have been imbued with a negative tone in Christian times along with the madness-like phases. There is ample evidence of elves making people go crazy in Scandinavian folklore as well, although the stories I have come across all went through Christianisation; hence, it cannot be known for sure how it was in pagan times.

There are various conditions in the medical corpus that are expressed with *ælf*-related terms and are supposedly mind-altering ailments: *ælfadl*, *ælfsogoþa*, *ælfsiden*, *ælfcynn*, and simply *ælfe*. *Ælfadl*, as Hall reasoned, is 'probably simply a generic term, denoting any *adl* caused by an *ælf* or *ælfe'*; and since *ælfsogoþa* is in the same entry, he inferred that *ælfsogoþa* was a subcategory of *ælfadl*.[650] Symptoms of *ælfsogoþa* are identified as jaundice, its treatment involves complex liturgical elements and saying exorcism-like texts. Jolly believes that the entry includes 'possibility of a mental disturbance'.[651] The use of *elehtre* (lupin) also indicates that we have a condition that involves mental abnormalities. As already noted, there is a markedly frequent use of lupin in remedies for ailments whose names express mental disorders or are caused by supernatural beings suggesting that these conditions might often have involved seizure-like states. While lupin is used only in a few 'ordinary' cases like indigestion or consumption of poison, it is present in nearly all the remedies that appear to involve mental disorders.

As entry III.lxii suggests, treatments for *ælfsogoþa* are also suitable for treating *ælfadl* and *ælcre feondes costunge*. The treatments include saying litanies, masses, prayers and fuming the patient, while two texts resembling exorcism are also prescribed:

Writ þis gewrit Scriptum est, rex regum et dominus dominantium byrnice beronice lurlure iehe aius aius aius Scs Scs Scs dominus deus Sabaoth amen alleluiah. Sing þis ofer þam drence 7 þam gewrite: Deus omnipotens pater domini nostri Iesu Cristi per impositionem huius scriptura expelle a famulo tuo N Omnem Impetum castalidum de capite de capillis de cerebro de fronte de lingua de sublingua de guttore de faucibus de dentibus de oculis

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[650] Hall, *Elves*, p. 105.
[651] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 162.

de naribus de auribus de manibus de collo de brachiis de corde de anima de genibus de coxis de pedibus de compaginibus omnium membrorum intus et foris. Amen.[652]

After singing the above, an additional one needs to be sung over the drink: 'Dominus omnipotens, pater domini nostri Iesu Christi, per impositionem huius scripturae et per gustum huius expelle diabolum a famulo tuo'.[653] The two exorcism texts apparently aim at two separate origins of the disease: one is against *castalidum*, the other against *diabolum. Diabolum* is the word that hints at *feondes costunge*, while *castalidum* at *ælfe* as there are various glosses that demonstrate that *ælfe* were associated with *castalidas*.[654] Thus the entry clearly shows a parallel between *ælfe* and the devils: both are treated with the same recipe and both are 'exorciseable'. Nevertheless, it also shows that *ælfe* and the devils were distinguished enough to require two different exorcisms. The symptoms of *feondes costunge* in this entry might have resembled *ælfsogoþa*, hence the same treatment; but the agents of the disease were regarded as different, hence the separate exorcisms.

The dominant symptom of *ælfsogoþa* might have been internal pain and the mental symptoms might have been only secondary; however, other *ælf*-diseases are markedly more mental. As Hall demonstrated, *siden* or *sidsa*, cognate to Old Norse *seiðr* denoting a type of magic, was apparently a significant disease-causing factor that originates from *ælfe* or at least they were capable of it.[655] *Ælfsiden* is mentioned in three (implicitly four) remedies (I have already covered almost all of them above in connection with other ailments). Hall translates *ælfsiden* as 'magic of *ælfe*', *ælfe* being the source of *siden*.[656] In the recipes, *ælfsiden* is treated together with conditions as *feondes costung* and *gewitseocness* showing the common mental feature. As Hall demonstrated, *ælfsiden* 'is particularly associated [with] varieties of fever, particularly *lenctenadl*',[657] which is identified as a type of typhoid fever with occasional hallucinations.

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[652] *Lch* III.lxii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 348–50). 'Write this writing: "It is written, king of kings and lord of lords. Byrnice, Byrnice, lurlure iehe aius aius, aius. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Amen. Alleluiah." Sing this over the drink and the writing: "Omnipotent God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the imposition of this writing expell from your servant N. all attacks by the elves of the head, hair, brain, forehead, tongue, under the tongue, throat, jaws, teeth, eyes, nostrils, ears, hands, neck, arms, heart, soul, knees, hips, feet; of the whole complex, both internl and external. Amen"' (transl. Olds, p. 147).

[653] *Lch* III.lxii (ed. and transl. Cockayne, p. 351). 'Almighty God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the imposition of this and through the taste of it expell the devil from your servant N' (tranls. Olds, p. 148.)

[654] Hall, *Elves*, pp. 79–87.

[655] Hall, *Elves*, pp. 94, 119.

[656] Hall, *Elves*, p. 119.

[657] Hall, *Elves*, p. 129.

The manifold types of *ælf*-attacks and that they can possibly be traced to different types of *ælfe* is implied by *Leechbook* III.lxi where the recipe of a salve is given against a whole race of *ælfe* together with *nihtgenga* and possible incubus-succubus phenomena: ʽWyrc sealfe wiþ ælfcynne 7 nihtgengan 7 þam mannum þe deofol mod hæmð'.[658] *Cyn* means a kind, race, nation, tribe,[659] and thus the remedy suggests that there was a whole race of elves, possibly with all sorts of tricks up their sleeves to inflict various types of ills.

Fear of elf-diseases is well attested throughout Scandinavia as well. The Schleswig amulet dated to the 11th or 12th centuries mentions elves beside demons, pestilences and all infirmities: ʽIn nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi coniuro vos demones sive albes ac omnes pestes omnium infirmitatum ac omnes interiectiones in unicum deum patrem omnipotentem ac Iesum Christum filium eius ac spiritum sanctum, ut non noceatis famulo dei neque in die nec in nocte nec in ullis horis'.[660] Furthermore, Codex Upsaliensis C 222 has a marginalia that instructs the reader to write the following Latin text in lead ʽagainst elves' (*contra elphos hoc in plumbo scribe*): ʽAdiuro uos elphos elphorum gordin, ingordin. Cord'i et ingordin. gord'i per patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum' where *Gordin* and *Ingordin* are ʽelf-names' that occurred in several Scandinavian texts.[661]

Sadly, the leechbooks focus on treatment and are taciturn on symptoms, hence we do not know what sort of symptoms were thought to be caused by *ælfe*. We can only rely on our inferences and speculations derived from contexts where *ælfe* occur, and these contexts imply that although *ælfe* could have caused several types of ailments, there was indeed a very strong mental trait.

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[658] *Lch* III.lxi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 344–45). ʽWork thus a salve against the elfin race and nocturnal goblin visitors and for [people] with whom the devil hath carnal commerce.'

[659] ʽcyn', *Bosworth-Toller*.

[660] Simek, ʽElves', p. 26. ʽIn the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I conjure you demons and elves and all pestilences and all infirmities and all interventions in the only God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit that you do not harm the servant of God during the day nor in the night nor in any hour' (my translation).

[661] Simek, ʽElves', p. 31. ʽI adjure you elves of elves gordin, ingordin. Cord'i et ingordin. gord'i through the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' (my translation).

5.2.3.3.3 MENTAL DISORDERS INDUCED BY OTHER GERMANIC SUPERNATURAL BEINGS NIHTGENGA

As it has been already established, the condition where one is afflicted by *nihtgenga* probably involved a hallucinatory-delusional state, but the text of the *OEH* did not make it obvious whether *nihtgenga* denoted a condition or the agent of the condition. The text of *Leechbook* III, on the other hand, sheds light on another aspect of *nihtgenga*: physicality. *Nihtgenga* occurs in three leechdoms; in two of the instances, it is treated together with other malicious supernatural beings. In III.i little stones taken from swallows' maws are intended to cure various maladies:

> sec lytle stanas on swealwan bridda magan 7 heald þæt hie ne hrinan eorþan ne wætre ne oþrum stanum beseowa hira iii on þon þe þu wille do on þone mon þe him þearf sie him biþ sona sel hi beoþ gode wiþ heafod ece 7 wiþ eagwærce 7 wiþ feondes costunga 7 nihtgengan 7 lencten adle 7 maran 7 wyrtforbore 7 malscra 7 yflum gealdor cræftum.[662]

Furthermore, in III.lxi *nihtgenga* is treated together with *ælfcynn*, *deofol* and *evil* costung. These remedies strongly suggest that *nihtgenga* was, after all, conceived of an agent of disease. Tying little stones on the sufferers does not reveal much of the nature of the condition; however, the other two remedies do suggest a certain physicality apart from the visionary nature established in *OEH*. In both remedies, a salve needs to be smeared on the patient: entry III.lxi even instructs to smear the eyes, the temples and where the body is sore. These two leechdoms imply that *nihtgenga* did not merely involve hallucinations and dreadful sights, it might have been thought to entail more on the physical level.

The idea of *nihtgenga* possibly reaches further back before Anglo-Saxon times: it is also present in Old Icelandic sagas and its base might have been occurrences of nocturnal epilepsy: according to a study regarding sleep and epilepsy, '[e]pisodic nocturnal wanderings, an unusual parasomnia involving ambulation, unintelligible speech, screaming, and complex and variably violent behavior, are also often ultimately found to be an expression of nocturnal partial

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[662] *Lch* III.i (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 306–7). 'seek in the maw of young swallows for some little stones, and mind that they touch neither earth, nor water, nor other stones; look out three of them; put them on the man, on whom thou wilt, him who hath the need, he will soon be well. They are good for head ache, and for eye wark, and for the fiends' temptations, and for night goblin visitors, and for typhus, and for the night mare, and for knot, and for fascination, and for evil enchantments by song'.

epilepsy'.[663] A sleepwalker wandering about mumbling and occasionally screaming might easily have been perceived as someone who was haunted by ghosts or possessed. They were not only to be protected from themselves or from other people's malevolence while wandering about in a half-unconscious state, but also from the 'dreadful visions' that plagued them and were possibly thought of as the cause of their state. The seizures of people suffering from paroxysmal sleep-related disturbances indeed resemble those being possessed by malicious supernatural beings: '[n]octurnal frontal lobe epilepsy (NFLE) may be characterized by varying phenotypes: paroxysmal arousals with brief hypermotor movements, motor attacks with complex dystonic and dyskinetic features, or episodic nocturnal wandering often mimicking sleepwalking … abrupt awakening, and stereotypical motor behavior with vocalization and violent or dystonic-dyskinetic movements'.[664]

As the description above suggests, sleepwalking often co-occurs with phenomena earlier associated with possession in various conditions, thus it might have been easy for the onlooker to assume involvement of supernatural beings in these cases.

Even though it is risky to resort to Icelandic sagas when discussing Anglo-Saxon conditions, the parallel between the Anglo-Saxon *nihtgenga* and the Icelandinc *night-walker* (*kveldriða*) is too blatant to turn a blind eye to. In *Eyrbyggja saga*, we can learn of the unfortunate case of Gunnlaug, who apparently got attacked by a *kveldriða* and as a result lay unconscious for months and looked as if he had been trampled upon.[665] There are two nouns in the text that are of interest: *marlíðendur* and *kveldriða*. According to Fritzner's Old Norse dictionary, *marlíðendr* describes beings that ride people to death at night as *kveldriður* and *myrkriður*. Its root *mara* is cognate with the Old English *mære*. A *kveldriða* and a *myrkriða* are female figures that were imagined riding in the dark causing harm and death to people.[666] *Kveld* means 'night', *myrkr* means 'dark' and *riða* means both 'riding' and 'cold fever'.[667] In the saga, a *kveldriða* is a person who previously seemed to be an ordinary member of society, a simple human being but is now suspected of being somewhat of a supernatural threat. Whether being a *kveldriða* is innate or is a state that can be obtained later in life is a question. It is also a question whether being a *kveldriða* means being a human with a special ability or if it is a species other than human. The only thing certain is that *kveldriða* is a serious threat to people.

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[663] St. Louis, 'Epilepsy'.
[664] St. Louis, 'Epilepsy'.
[665] *Eyrbyggja Saga* XVI (eds. Sveinsson and Þórðarson, pp. 28–29).
[666] 'kveldriða', 'myrkriða', Fritzner, *Ordbog*.
[667] 'kveld', 'myrkr', 'riða', Fritzner, *Ordbog*.

Not only does it cause physical injuries, it attacks people's minds as well: Gunnlaug lay *vitlaus* before the door which both means unconscious and mad.

Of course, we cannot take for granted that *kveldriða* was identical to *nihtgenga*; nonetheless, there are certain aspects that are similar. Both happen during the night, both are the work of supernatural agents and both result in physical injuries, while both implicitly involve mental afflictions as well. *Kveldriða* caused a *vitlaus* state while *nihtgenga* indicates hallucinations and possibly abnormal behaviour attributed to the influence of a supernatural agent.

Mære

There are also further similarities between Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon disease-inducing supernatural agents. As mentioned, *marlíðendr* was thought to ride people causing injuries in Scandinavian literature, and the Anglo-Saxon medical recipes also feature two beings that were associated with riding and oppressing: *mære* and *dweorg*. *Mære* survives in Modern English 'nightmare', while the Indo-European root **mer-* means to crush, to grind, to plunder.[668] Kiessling argued that the word *mære* refers to Grendel in lines 103 and 762 in Beowulf,[669] and in relation to this theory, Neville also mentions that Grendel's mother 'shares with the *incuba* the technique of sitting on human victims' crushing them.[670] Some glossaries use the word *mære* for glossing *incuba*, *satyrus* and *pilosi*.[671] In the medical corpus, *mære* occurs in *Bald's Leechbook* I and *Leechbook* III.

Mære in *Bald's Leechbook* I entry lxiv is in the same entry as *leodruna* and *ælfsiden*, although a different treatment is prescribed for them: 'Gif mon mare ride, genim elehtran 7 garleac 7 betonican 7 recels, bind on næsce, hæbbe him mon on 7 he gange in on þas wyrte'.[672] Entry i in *Leechbook* III also recommends a ligature to *mære* along with other supernatural ailements: 'sec lytle stanas on swealwan bridda magan 7 heald þæt hie ne hrinan eorþan, ne

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[668] Kiessling, 'Grendel', p. 194.
[669] Kiessling, 'Grendel', p. 191.
[670] Neville, *Representations*, p. 109.
[671] Hall, 'Maran', p. 313.; Neville, *Representations*, p. 106.
[672] *BLch* I.lxiv (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 140–41). 'If a *mare* or hag ride a man, take lupins, and garlic, and betony, and frankincense, bind them on a fawns skin, let a man have the worts on him, and let him go in to his home'.

wætre, no oþrum stanum. Beseowa hire III on þon þe þu wille. Do on þone mon þe him þearf sie. Him biþ sona sel'.[673]

Hall has extensively analysed the occurrences of *mære* in the Old English corpus and he has shown that the word *mære* is 'etymologically related to an Indo-European root *mer-, to do with crushing, pressing and oppressing';[674] and that it was most plausibly a 'female supernatural being which pressed down on and raped people', although male forms of the word also occur elsewhere.[675] In glosses it is also associated with the Latin *incubi* and the nymph Echo, presumably because of the seductive aspect. The nocturnal aspect is reinforced in Scandinavian literature where, as it has been noted before, it is associated with the night and darkness. In addition, the *Ynglinga* saga tells the story of Vanlandi who was killed by a *mara* in his sleep: he cried out while asleep and saying that a mare was trampling him and it crushed him so that he soon died.[676] The night time activity and the crushing is similar to the Anglo-Saxon mære.

Nevertheless, Knight argues that the nocturnal aspect is only attested in sources later than the Anglo-Saxon age.[677] We can conclude that *mære* was mostly a female supernatural being that trampled on people causing them injuries, unconsciousness, mind-altering afflictions, and sometimes death; in addition, it might have been associated with dark, night and sleep.

DWEORH

Another sickness afflicting being that is apparently connected to sleep is *dweorh*, 'dwarf'. In De Vriend's edition of the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*, entry x says 'Ad verrucas tollendas stercus canis albi tunsum cum farina, turtulam factam ante hore accessionis dato aegro, manducet et sanatur; si autem nocte ad eum accedunt, simili ratione dato ante accessionem, vehemens fit accessio, deinde minuitur et recedet'.[678] The Old English version

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[673] *Lch* III.i (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 306–7). 'seek in the maw of young swallows for some little stones, and mind that they touch neither earth, nor water, nor other stones; look out three of them; put them on the man, on whom thou wilt, him who hath the need, he will soon be well',

[674] Hall, 'Maran', p. 299.

[675] Hall, 'Maran', p. 311.

[676] Sturluson, 'Ynglinga Saga' 16 (ed. Linder and Haggson, p. 14).

[677] Knight, 'Night', p. 41.

[678] *MdQ* X.17 (ed. De Vriend, p. 267). 'To get rid of *verruca,* white dog's dung to be mixed with flour, the cake made of it to be given to the sick before the hour of its approach, one eats it and gets cured; if it comes in the night to one, similar portion is to be given before the approach, the violent fit then decreases and departs' (my translation).

renders it: ʿDweorg onweg to donne, hwites hundes þost gecnucadne to duste 7 gemænged wið meolowe 7 to cicle abacen syle etan þam untruman men ær þær tide hys tocymes, swa on dæge swa on nihte swæþer hyt sy, his togang bið ðearle strang; 7 æfter þam he lytlað 7 onweg gewiteþʾ.[679]

Verruca is a skin condition, a wart. It is quite uncharacteristic of a wart to ʿcomeʾ as a fit in certain hours and that it can be ʿviolentʾ. As De Vriend himself notes, ʿ[i]n the Latin version of this cure, … the title is clearly that of a different recipe. The OE version was either taken from an exemplar which had the correct title, or it was provided with the correct title by the translatorʾ.[680] Prof. Arsenio Ferraces-Rodríguez kindly brought to my attention that in the new edition of *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* that is based on Sextus Placitus version alpha, this entry appears as two different recipes, one as ʿAd verrucas tollendasʾ and the other as ʿAd fugandas febresʾ (ʿTo chase away feverʾ). Indeed, the recurring spells that come in a predictable hour of the day or night rather resemble malaria and the fever associated with it than warts. As it has been noted before, symptoms of malaria can be delirium, convulsions, even hallucinations, therefore, Anglo-Saxonsʾ ascribing the condition to the infliction of a supernatural being fits into the cultural pattern.

There are two other entries for the treatment of *dweorg* in *Lacnunga*, entries lxxxi and lxxxvi:

lxxxi, A

Writ ðis ondlag ða earmas wiþ dweorh:

+ T + ωA. 7 gnid cyleðenigean on ealað; Sanctus Macutus, Sancte Uictorici.

lxxxi, B

Writ ðis ondlag ða earmas wiþ dweorh:

+ T + p + T + N + ω + T + UI + M + ωA. 7 gnid cyleþenigean on ealað; Sanctus Macutus, Sancte Uictorici.[681]

Entry lxxxvi

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[679] *MdQ* X.17 (ed. De Vriend, p. 266). ʿTo get rid of a *dweorg*, white dog's dung to be ground to dust and to be mixed with flour and to be baked into cake, should be given to the sick to eat before the hour of its approach, whether by day or by night it is, his ʿapproachʾ can be severely strong; and after it decreases and departsʾ (my translation).

[680] De Vriend, *The Old English*, p. 337.

[681] *Lcn* lxxxi (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 70–71). a, Write this along the arms for fever: + T + ωA. And crush greater celandine in ale: Saint Machutus, Saint Victorius.

b, Write this along the arms for fever: + T + p + T + N + ω + T + UI + M + ωA. And crush greater celandine in ale: Saint Machutus, Saint Victorius.

+ Wið dweorh: man sceal niman VII lytle oflætan swylce man mid ofrað, 7 writan þas naman on ælcre oflætan: Maximianus, Malchus, Iohannes, Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion. Þænne eft galdor þæt heræfter cweð man sceal singan, ærest on þæt wynstre eare, þænne on þæt swiðre eare, þænne bufan þæs mannes moldan; 7 ga þænne an mædenman to 7 ho hot on his sweoran, 7 do man swa þry dagas; him bið sone sel.

Her com ingangan inspidenwiht.

Hæfde him his haman on handa, cwæð þæt þu his hæncgest wære.

Legde þe his teage an sweoran. Ongunnan him of þæm lande liþan.

Sona swa hy of þæm lande coman þa ongunnan him ða liþu colian.

Þa com ingangan deores sweostar.

Þa geændade heo, 7 aðas swor

ðæt næfre þis ðæm adlegan derian ne moste,

ne þæm þe þis galdor begytan mihte,

oððe þe þis galdor ongalan cuþe.

Amen. Fiað[682]

Of entry lxxxi a and b, Pettit says that '[i]t appears that essentially the same remedy is duplicated. Whether the second version is a correction of the first, or whether its expanded symbolic inscription genuinely confers autonomy on them both cannot be determined'.[683] Regarding Machutus, Pettit notes that he 'was credited with power over devils'.[684]

Entry lxxxvi is one of the most debated remedies in Anglo-Saxon medicine. The meaning of *dweorh* itself is not completely agreed on, and the charm raises even more questions:

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[682] *Lcn* lxxxvi (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 72–73). + For fever: one must take seven little sacramental wafers such as one makes offertory with, and write these names on each wafer: Maximianus, Malchus, Iohanees, Martimianus, dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion. Then afterwards one must sing the incantation that is related hereafter, first into the left ear, then into the right ear, then above the crown of the person's head; and then let a virgin go to him and hang it on his neck, and let it be done so for three days; he will soon be better.
'Here came walking in an *inspiden* creature.
It had its bridle in its hand, said that you were its horse.
It laid its reins on your neck. They began to travel from the land.
As soon as they left the land then the limbs began to cool.
Then came walking in the beast's sister.
Then she interceded, and swore oaths
That this [*i.e.* this beast] might never harm the sick person,
Nor the person who could obtain this incantation.
Or who knew how to recite this incantation.
Amen. Let it be done.'
[683] Pettit, 'A Critical Edition' II, p. 523.
[684] Pettit, 'A Critical Edition' II, p. 524.

There have been several attempts to read the action and to characterise the nature of the whole charm, with differences of opinion concerning certain fundamental difficulties – namely the nature of the affliction (dweorh) to be remedied, the referent of hit, the nature of the inspidenwiht, the referent of þu and of (hy) ongannan, and the nature and motivation of the deores sweostar.[685]

Pettit collected the various analyses and interpretations of these questions and concluded that the 'commonest view today' considers the *inspidenwiht* to be 'some form of nightmare demon which once rode a man', but that '[n]one of [the] interpretations seems … entirely satisfactory'.[686] Considering the use of the names of the Seven Sleepers and the analogue in the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*, he believes that 'the charm is to cure a fever (possibly a convulsive fever) caused by a possessing disease demon'.[687] Further, that the incantation 'recounts a past-tense narrative of how such a beast (*deor*) was thwarted in its attack, probably of a sick man (*ðæm adlegan*), and of how its sister pledged future immunity from attack by the beast'.[688] Storms also believes that *dweorg* is fever.[689] Regarding *inspidenwiht*, he reads it as 'in spider wiht' meaning 'in spider form'. Even though he points out that the word *spider* does not occur in any other Old English text, he bases his interpretation on the assumption that the word *inspidenwiht* denotes a spider-being:

The spider is a benevolent spirit that has come in to help in driving out the disease spirit. To that purpose he uses his web to bridle the dwarf. The disease spirit is addressed and told that it is going to be used for the spider's steed, and that it will be harnessed. So it will have to obey the spider. They set off from the land and immediately they, i.e., the disease spirit and the spider, began to cool and the fever began to leave off.[690]

Nevertheless, it has to be emphasised that the text is corrupt at the word *inspidenwiht* and it is now barely decipherable what it could have been originally: the –n- in inspidenwiht is 'poorly formed on an erasure of a letter possessing an ascender'.[691] Skemp's opinion agrees

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[685] Pettit, 'A Critical Edition' II, p. 530.
[686] Pettit, 'A Critical Edition' II, p. 532.
[687] Pettit, 'A Critical Edition' II, p. 533.
[688] Pettit, 'A Critical Edition' II, p. 534.
[689] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 168.
[690] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 169.
[691] Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon*, p. 73.

with Pettit's and Storms' in that the charm is meant to treat a convulsive disease'; however, he argues that the *inspidenwiht* is the dwarf himself.[692] Bonser, on the other hand, identifies *dweorg* with nightmare, and ultimately, with elves, as he claims that 'elves were regarded as the source of apparitions, especially at night, and therefore, of nightmare'.[693]

Attacks by dwarfs resulting in illness in the Old English sources are not a unique phenomenon. The Danish Ribe cranium bears a runic inscription that 'invokes a divine triad for help against dwarfstroke'.[694] Furthermore, dwarves in Norway were believed to be 'torturing spirits for all creatures' (*plageånd for kreaturene*), in addition, there was a special cattle disease that was called *dvergskot*, dwarf-shot, eerily bearing a resemblance to our Anglo-Saxon *ælf*-shots.[695]

To sum up, evidence indicates that *dweorg* was a condition that was most likely characterised by intermittent fever and the high fever possibly caused altered state of consciousness and hallucinations of the sick. Altered state of consciousness and hallucinations hinted at intrusion by supernatural beings, while possible convulsions assumed the physical abuse and the 'riding' of this invisible supernatural being.

POSSIBLE MENTAL ISSUES INDUCED BY HUMANS

For the sake of completeness, a couple of terms need to be mentioned which are not included in the table of madness expressions based on the *Thesaurus of Old English*. There is no straightforward evidence that conditions resulting from activities denoted by these terms were regarded strictly speaking madness; however, since they co-occur with conditions denoting mental disorders and they also have a supernatural overtone, they must be examined to eliminate the chance of missing valuable data.

Contexts where these terms appear suggest that they expressed maleficent agency and activity carried out by humans aimed at other humans. The terms in question are *leodrune*, *uncuþ sidsa*, *drycræft*, *wyrtforbor*, *malscra* and *yfel gealdor cræft*. *Leodrune* appears together in the same remedy with *mære* in *BLch* I.lxiv; *uncuþ sidsa* appears with *ælf* in *BLch* II.lxiv; *drycræft* in *BLch* II.lxvi with a number of various conditions; while *wyrtforbor*, *malscra* and

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[692] Skemp, 'Old English', pp. 293–94.
[693] Bonser, *Medical*, pp. 164–65.
[694] Macleod and Mees, *Runic*, p. 116.
[695] Halvorsen, 'Dverger'

yfel gealdor cræft appear together in the same remedy with *mære*, *feondes costung* and *nihtgenga* in *Lch* III.i. All of them are clustered together with mind-altering afflictions, hence there is reason to suppose that they were considered similar in some way.

The meaning of *leodrune* is difficult to define: on the one hand, the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* suggests that it denotes a witch, a 'wise woman' with the analogy of *hellerune* = 'pythonissa',[696] as 'pythonissa' is glossed as *hellerune* and *hægtesse*.[697] In addition, according to MacLeod and Mees, the word 'sorceress' was expressed similarly in Gothic and Old High German: *haliurunnæ* and *hellirûna* respectively.[698] Cockayne, translated it as 'rune lay' and explained it in a footnote as 'heathen charm'.[699] Hall, however, pointed out that '*[l]ēoðurūn* denotes Christian holy mysteries'.[700] Conversely, Meaney believes that it 'probably originally denoted a tutelary goddess, later (like hægtesse) downgraded to mean "witch"'.[701] Entry lxiv in *BLch* I contains *leodrune*: 'Wiþ ælcre yfelre leodrunan 7 wið ælfsidenne, þis gewrit writ him þis Greciscum stafum'.[702] As the sentence itself shows, there is a parallel between *ælfsiden* and *yfel leodrune*. The entry also offers a treatment for *mære*, but clearly there is a stronger analogy between *ælfsiden* and *leodrune*. This would imply that *leodrune* rather expresses an act than a being, as it is paired up with the activity (*ælfsiden*) instead of the being (*mære*). Yet, we cannot be certain that the organising principle of this leechdom was that of aetiology, so far it proved to be rather based on symptoms. Hence, the condition caused by *leodrune* is most plausibly similar to what was caused by *ælfsiden*.

As it has been noted, *sidsa* is a type of magic that was conducted by *ælfe* and was harmful to people. *BLch* II.lxv opens the possibility for another type of *sidsa* other than originating from *ælfe*: 'Wiþ ælfe 7 wiþ uncuþum sidsan gnid myrran on win 7 hwites recelses em micel 7 sceaf gagates dæl þæs stanes on þat win drince iii morgenas neaht nestig oþþe viiii oþþe xii'.[703] As the sentence suggests, the remedy is good for *ælfe* and *uncuþ sidsa*, which, one the hand, presupposes a certain similarity between the two but also distinguishes between them. We know that *ælfsiden* exists as a category of ailments, and the fact that *uncuþ sidsa* stands beside *ælfe* suggests that there is a phenomenon similar to *ælfsiden* but with a different origin.

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[696] 'hellerune', *Bosworth-Toller*.

[697] Wright, *Vocabularies* I, col. 188.

[698] Macleod and Mees, *Runic*, p. 5.

[699] Cockayne, *Leechdoms* II, p. 139.

[700] Hall, *Elves*, p. 124.

[701] Meaney, 'The Anglo-Saxon View', p. 22.

[702] *BLch* I.lxiv (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 138–39). 'Against every evil [*leodrune*] and [*ælfsiden*] write for the bewitched man this writing with Greek letters'.

[703] *BLch* II.lxv (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 296–97). 'Against and elf and against [*uncuþ sidsa*], rub myrrhe in wine and as mickle of white frankincense, and shave off a part of the stone called agate into the wine, let him drink this for three mornings after his nights fast, or for nine, or for twelve'.

As Hall put it, the remedy can be interpreted as 'against an *ælf* (no doubt using *sīdsa*) but also against *sīdsa* of an unknown source'.[704] The sources do not reveal any other supernatural being that resorts to *sidsa*, and the adjective *uncuþ* emphasises the fact that its origin is obscure; hence the only certainty is probably the symptoms which determined the condition to be named *sidsa*. Considering that the main trait of *ælfsiden* is mental affliction, it can be assumed that *uncuþ sidsa* and *sidsa* in general also produced the same symptoms.

Drycræft can be translated as 'sorcery' according to the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* and it literally means the power/might/art of a sorcerer.[705] It comes up in, for instance, the Confessional of Pseudo-Egbert, *Confessionale et Poenitentiale Ecgberti Archiepiscopi Eboracensis*. The Confessional might be of Frankish origin and parts of it are thought to have been translated by Egbert; however, the question of its authorship is still open.[706] Entry xxix in it is *Be wife gif heo drycræft begæð* (De muliere, si artem magicam exerceat)[707] and entry xxx is *Be wife gif heo hire cyld þonne hit acenned bið mid drycræfte acwelð* (De muliere, si infantem suum, postquam natus est, arte magica occiderit).[708]

29. Gif wif drycræft 7 galdor 7 unlibban wyrce fæste xii monað oððe iii æfæstenu oððe xl nihta gewite hu mycel seo fyren sig. Gif heo mid hine unlybban man acwelleð fæste vii winter

Si mulier artem magicam, et incantationes, et maleficia exerceat, xii menses, vel tria legitima jejunia, vel xl dies jejunet: sciatur quantum sit flagitium[709]

30. Wif seoþe to æwyrpe gedo hire geeacnunga on hire hryfe 7 cwelle ymbe xl nihta þæs ðe heo þam sæde onfo ærþam þe hit gesawlod þære swa swa myrðra fæste iii winter 7 æghwylcere wucan ii dagas to æfenes 7 iii æfæstenu gif heo beorþor forleose i gear oððe iii æfæstenu.

Mulier quae utero conceptum excusserit, et xl diebus post semen receptum occiderit, antequam animatus fuit, quasi homicida iii annos jejunet, et qualibet hebdomada ii dies

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[704] Hall, *Elves*, p. 120.
[705] 'dry', 'drycræft', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[706] Pollock Oakley, *English Penitential*, p. 132.
[707] On the woman that commits *drycræft*
[708] On the woman that kills her child with *drycræft* after it has been born.
[709] *Ancient laws* (ed. Thorpe, p. 154–55) 'If a woman does *drycræft* and incantation and poisonous potion, she should fast for 12 months or for 3 legal fasts or 40 nights, she should know what a great sin that is. If she kills someone with her potion, she should fast for seven winters' (my translation).

ad vesperam, et iii legitima jejunia; si partum perdiderit, annum unum vel iii legitima jejunia.[710]

Entry xxix forbids various forms of magical activities including *drycræft*, while entry xxx forbids abortion 40 days after conception. Even though the text of the entry does not declare any words that express magical activities, the title makes it clear that the abortion was thought to be achieved through *drycræft*.

Further examples of *drycræft* appear in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*. For instance, in St. Basilius's story mentioned above, *scinncræft* is applied by a *dryman* in order magically to enforce love on a woman.[711] In the 'De Sancto Iuliano et Basilissa', the pagan Martianus and the Christian Julian are confronted. Martianus' son, Celsus saw Julian 'and how God's angels flew along beside him', quickly ran to his feet and 'forsook the base gods, and acknowledged Christ with all his heart', whereupon Martianus and his wife 'sorrowful in mind' asked Julianus 'hwi woldest þu amyrran min ancennedan sunu þurh þinne drycræft and to þinum criste geweman beheald ure sarnysse and urne sunu forlæt[712]

In both examples, *drycræft* (or *scinncræft* done by a *dryman*) is spoken of as a power that is aimed at a subject to alter the subject's mind. Unlike the entries in the *Confessional* where *drycræft* was associated with physical harm, i.e. death, these examples show that *drycræft* was capable of causing mental disorders as well: a strong desire that manifests in sickness and a 'personality disorder' that makes the subject turn away from his loved ones and his previous ideologies, and might in today's terms classify as obsessive. Even if the term 'mental disorder' might sound forced regarding the above symptoms, we can state that the texts attest to the Anglo-Saxon belief that *drycræft* could be employed for mind-altering purposes.

In the second Leechbook of Bald, the term *drycræft* occurs in entry lxvi in connection with the precious stone jet, *gagate:* 'Be þam stane þe gagates hatte, is sæd þæt he viii mægen hæbbe … Syxte mægen is þæt drycræft þam man ne dereþ se þe hine mid him hæfð'.[713]

The entry does not specify what type of *drycræft* the jet can ward off, so possibly it is *all* types, be it mental or physical harm. The belief in medical efficacy of precious stones is well

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[710] *Ancient laws* (ed. Thorpe, p. 154–57) 'A woman who causes an abortion of the fetus (conception) in her womb, and kills [it] after forty days after she received the seed, before it was ensouled, shall fast as a murderess for three years each week on two days till evening [and] in three [forty-day] periods. If she loses the child (fetus) [she shall fast] for one year or during three fasting periods [i.e.] periods of forty days' (transl. Elsakkers, p. 408, n91).

[711] Ælfric, 'De Sancto Basilio' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.iii, pp. 72).

[712] Ælfric, 'De Sancto Iuliano et Basilissa' (ed. and transl. Skeat, *Lives* I.iv, pp. 102–3). 'Why wouldst thou destroy my only son by thy sorcery, and seduce him to thy Christ? Behold our sorrow, and let our son go'.

[713] BLch II.lxvi (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 296–99). 'Of the stone which hight agate. It is said that it hath eight virtues … The sixth virtue is, that sorcery hurteth not the man, who has the stone with him'.

known.[714] *Drycræft* does not occur elsewhere in medical sources and symptoms are not mentioned in entry lxvi. We can only guess based on the analogy of Ælfric's story that it could have involved mental conditions as well. The fact that it is included in *Bald's Leechbook* shows that treatment of *drycræft* was considered to belong to medicine as well; however, the instance of *drycræft* in the medical sources does not contribute much to our understanding of Anglo-Saxon madness.

Meaney tentatively calls the last three terms, *wyrtforbor*, *malscra* and *yfel gealdor cræft* instances of 'black magic'.[715] *Lch* III recommends the same remedy for these conditions as for *nihtgenga*, *feondes costung* and *mære*; namely using a ligature of little stones found in swallows' maws.[716] *Wyrtforbor* literally means plant-restraint,[717] but since it is a hapax legomenon, not much is known about it. *Malscra* and *malscrung*, on the other hand, gloss *fascinatio*[718] and *malscrung* also occurs in the *Nine Herbs Charm* in *Lacnunga*:

> + Fille 7 Finule, felamihtigu twa:
>
> þa wyrte gesceop witig Drihten,
>
> halig on heofonum, þa he hongode; …
>
> Stond heo wið wærce, stunað heo wið attre,
>
> seo mæg wið III 7 wið XXX,
>
> wið feondes hond 7 wið freabregde,
>
> wið malscrunge minra wihta.[719]

In the *Nine Herbs Charm*, the translation of *freabregde* is a bit problematic, but if we accept Pettit's suggestion that it was a 'spasm or seizure such as was thought to result from demonic possession', then *malscrung* neatly fits into the list of supernatural mind-altering inflictions.[720] Occurrences of *malscra* and *wyrtforbor* are scarce, as opposed to *[yfel] geldor*

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[714] For detailed analysis of precious stones, see Garrett's dissertation *Precious Stones in Old English Literature*
[715] Meaney, 'The Anglo-Saxon View', p. 21.
[716] *Lch* III.i (ed. and transl. Cockayne, pp. 306–7).
[717] 'wyrtforbor', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[718] Pettit, 'A Critical Edition' II, p. 500.
[719] *Lcn* lxxvi (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 64–65).
+ *Fille* and Fennel, two very mighty ones:
The wise Lord created these plants.
Holy in the heavens, when he hung; …
It stands against pain, it crashes against poison,
It has power against three and against thirty,
Against the hand of the Enemy [*i. e.* Satan] and against (?)severe seizure,
Against the bewitchment of evil creatures.
[720] Pettit, 'A Critical Edition' II, p. 499.

cræft with its derivations of *geldor*, *galdor* and its verb *galan*. The *Old English Dictionary* translates *galdor* as 'incantation, divination, enchantment, a charm, magic, sorcery; incantātio, cantio, carmen, fascĭnātio'.[721] We have already seen instances in the *Confessional of Pseudo-Egbert* and the *Pseudonymous Canones Eadgari* above of *galdor*. It was punished on the grounds that it was lethal or injured people. It was also forbidden as a pagan practice. The word *galdor*, however, is also used throughout the leechbooks whenever an incantation or prayer is to be sung which does not strictly belong to liturgy. In some cases, *galdor* is expressively distinguished from *gebed* (prayer) when they occur in the same remedy:

> 7 þis gealdor singe ofer:
>
> 'Acre arcre arnem none ærnem beoðor ærnem, nidren, arcun cunað ele harassan fidine.'

…

> Singe ðas orationis ofer:
>
> 'Domine, sancte Pater, omnipotens eterne Deus, per inpositionem'[722]

Thus, *galdor* does not necessarily denote a harmful act. It is more of a name of a ritual act, a method as something must be uttered, and this method often assumes a magical nature: it is a way in which transcendental forces can be addressed. As Jolly puts it,

> when early medieval legal or homiletic texts placed galdra with other 'magic' practices, such as sorcery (*wiglung* and *drycræft*), they were placing them in opposition to the religious truth of Christianity, since scientific knowledge was not a separate category from relevatory knowledge. These texts banned galdra because of their association with demonic and evil practices; in other contexts, such as the medical texts, the word lacks these prohibited associations, implying acceptance of the practice.[723]

Yfel geldor cræft, on the other hand, makes it clear that this incantation is that of the evil and harmful kind. The existence of these expressions presupposes that there was a concept in Anglo-Saxon society according to which it was possible to cause bodily harm by means of

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[721] 'galdor', *Bosworth-Toller*.
[722] *Lcn* lxii (ed. and transl. Pettit, p. 64–65).
'and sing this incantation over it:
"Acre arcre arnem none ærnem beoðor ærnem, nidren, arcun cunað ele harassan fidine" …
Let him sing these prayers over them
"Domine, sancte Pater, omnipotens eterne Deus, per inpositionem"'.
[723] Jolly, *Popular*, p. 101.

magic and by the power of words. What is more, this is not just a matter of 'cursing', this is a well-developed, systematised phenomenon with distinguishable types, because *wyrtforbor, malscra* and *yfel geldor cræft* are not mere synonyms – they are co-hyponyms. Further, their association with headache, being out of one's mind, *feondes costung* and further mind-altering afflictions suggests that they had similar symptoms.

CONCLUSION

As it has been demonstrated, the topic of Anglo-Saxon mental disorders is a complex and difficult one. Not only because the curtain of a thousand years obscures it from our eyes, but because the state of madness itself is equivocal and ambiguous, even in our times. It is difficult to assess whom to consider mad and it was the same in the past, especially if we are looking back for roughly a thousand years and our vision is confined to limited sources. Nevertheless, the contours of Anglo-Saxon madness have been defined in my dissertation. As I have mentioned already, this topic is surprisingly neglected, hence this dissertation is meant to fill this lacuna and serve as a humble starting point for further discussion and research. The topic of Anglo-Saxon mental disorders is under-represented and undiscussed in the fields of Anglo-Saxon studies, in the history of medicine, in the history of psychology and in cultural history. I hope to change this situation with this dissertation and pave the road to more detailed research and to a deeper understanding of Anglo-Saxon madness.

The Anglo-Saxon view of madness is as intricate and as manifold as the Anglo-Saxon worldview: different cultural elements are mixed in different layers of society in very different ways. This is partly the reason why the phenomenon is so difficult to describe. It can be assumed that among literate layers of society the Graeco-Roman and the Christian influences were more dominant, while Germanic folkloric influences prevailed amongst the common people. This is not to say, nevertheless, that there were no overlaps: most probably all three elements were present to a certain extent in all the layers. These categories are largely in line with the aetiologies as well: religious texts mostly contain cases of supernatural mental disorders that are induced by demons; texts influenced by Graeco-Roman medicine contain mental disorders that are somatic in origin; while Germanic folkloric elements demonstrate madness induced by supernatural beings as well as profane 'neutral' madness which stems from the Anglo-Saxon impression of mind-soul *mod* and body. Again, there are overlaps: the instances discussed in the dissertation reveal that religious texts acknowledge the existence of somatic mental disorders; somatic theories can be intertwined with demonic causations, while Germanic folkloric elements are neatly interlaced. The other difficulty one can face in the pursuit of Anglo-Saxon madness is the fact that we only have remnants of literate layers' sources. What the everyday Anglo-Saxon thought about madness remains hidden from the modern eye.

Taking these difficulties into consideration, I applied two methods in my research: on the one hand I collected expressions from the *Thesaurus of Old English* that relate to the phenomena of madness and analysed texts that contain them; on the other hand, I examined the Anglo-Saxon mind-soul *mod* and theorised that its malfunction could have been viewed as madness by Anglo-Saxons and analysed relevant sources from this perspective. Both methods proved to be useful both in inferring what was considered madness but also in what was *not* considered madness. The sources suggest that the decisive factors of deeming a case madness were visibly behavioural signs. The most obvious state, however, that could have been considered madness was the raging fury that is attested by the various and abundant instances of the word *wod*. *Wod* and its derivations are used in all sorts of sources: in religious writing, in poetry and to a lesser extent in medical writing. It is the most straightforward and most frequently occurring expression, hence it can be inferred that irrationally furious aggression and rage were considered forms of madness, be it supernatural or profane. Prophesying, probably alienated and unintelligible speech was also attributed to mental disorder, very often induced by supernatural beings such as *ælfe*. Hallucinations, visions, and various delusions were also part of the madness-palette, again induced by supernatural beings. While involuntary motoric manifestations like seizures could also be attributed to mental disorders. It can also be concluded that there was a strong tendency to regard mental disorders having supernatural origin: Germanic supernatural beings went hand in hand with devils inflicting mental disorder-like symptoms, and somatic theories and symptoms were also synthesised with supernatural elements. Somatic and profane theories were also acknowledged, but they existed cheek by jowl alongside the supernatural.

I have established in my introduction that distinguishing between madness and mental disorder is irrelevant in the context of Anglo-Saxon England. Nevertheless, careful examination of the sources indicate that it is indeed worth assuming some sort of a difference. The manifestation, perception, and aetiology of madness were manifold and the differences between them sometimes nuanced, sometimes blatant. The relation between *wod* and other Old English madness expressions can almost be paralleled to the modern madness–mental disorder relation: *wod* is used for expressing undefined madness, while other mental disorder terms all denote certain types of madness with special attributes, special circumstances, special contexts, and special aetiologies. Conditions concerning malfunction of the *mod* were also recognised by Anglo-Saxons as something not quite amounting to an organic ailment but not considered madness either. In a way, the way they regarded madness and mental disorders resembled the modern perception in the sense that it was supple, pliable, confused, and hazy.

Although our view and approach towards madness has gone through immense changes since the time of the Anglo-Saxons, the essence has remained the same: we do not understand it. As Gomory *et al* stated,

> Over time, … organic medicine has demonstrated dramatic scientific advances in its understanding of the nature and aetiology of disease, but mental/psychological medicine has failed to provide a similarly unified explanatory framework for its targeted problems. Psychiatry is the sole medical specialty lacking physiological validation for any of its particular entities, including the ones it considers most serious and persistent.[724]

The reason the discourse on Anglo-Saxon madness is so elusive and nebulous is because as the sources suggest, it was so for Anglo-Saxons themselves, just like it is for us still after 1000 years. And the reason it is hard to establish definite statements about Anglo-Saxon madness is that the sources sketch only indefinite lines over the phenomenon. Nevertheless, I hope to see further discoveries with more defined and more revealing brush strokes in future research.

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[724] Gomory *et al*, 'Madness', p. 124.

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