

Seeking within the self in *The Metres of Boethius*

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ABSTRACT

The metrical sections of the Old English *Boethius* have traditionally been regarded as little more than mechanical versifications of the relevant portions of the entirely prose version. This article, however, argues that *The Metres of Boethius* present an ambitious psychological discourse. The adaptations made during the versification process allow the poet to expand upon the prose source and place greater emphasis on the care of the inner mind. The model of the mind in the *Metres* owes much to the tradition of vernacular poetry, in which the mind is a separate, wilful part of the self, in need of restraint. Yet the *Metres* are also indebted to the tradition of their ultimate Latin source, in which the mind has the ability and, indeed, the responsibility, to monitor its own inner depths. This article demonstrates that the *Metres*-poet engages with both traditions, crafting a strikingly original model of the mind.

In the Old English translation of Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis*, traditionally attributed to Alfred the Great,¹ the translator makes a distinction between the outer surface of the mind and its inner core through the metaphor of the bark and pith of a tree:²

¹ For the case against Alfred's authorship of any of the translations attributed to him, see M. Godden, 'Did Alfred Write Anything?', *MÆ* 76 (2007), 1–23; however, Godden does acknowledge that 'the arguments against Alfred's personal authorship of the *Pastoral Care* are not overwhelming' (*ibid.* p. 14). For a response to Godden's article, see J. M. Bately, 'Did Alfred Actually Translate Anything? The Integrity of the Alfredian Canon Revisited', *MÆ* 78 (2009), 189–215; see further J. M. Bately, 'Lexical Evidence for the Authorship of the Prose Psalms in the Paris Psalter', *ASE* 10 (1981), 69–95; J. M. Bately, 'The Alfredian Canon Revisited: One Hundred Years on', *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. T. Reuter (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 107–20; and J. M. Bately, 'Alfred as Author and Translator', *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. N. G. Disenza and P. E. Szarmach, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 58 (Leiden, 2014), 113–42. David Pratt offers a 'minimalist' perspective on the authorship debate, focusing not on whether Alfred wrote the texts attributed to him, but rather emphasizing 'Alfred's contemporary image as author' (D. Pratt, 'Problems of Authorship and Audience in the Writings of King Alfred the Great', *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. P. Wormald and J. L. Nelson (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 162–91, at 170).

² The original Latin reads: 'Sed plerumque hii qui subire magisterium pastorale cupiunt, nonnulla quoque bona opera animo proponunt; et quamvis hoc elationis intentione appetant, operaturos tamen se magna pertractant; fitque ut aliud in imis intentio supprimat, aliud tractantis animo superficies cogitationis ostendat. Nam saepe sibi de se mens ipsa mentitur, et fingit se de bono opere amare quod non amat, de mundi autem gloria non amare quod amat' (*Regula pastoralis* I.9) ('Generally those who aspire to pastoral ruling are also proposing to themselves some good works

Ac ðonne he wilnað to underfonne ða are & ðone ealdordome, he ðencð on ðam oferbrædelse his modes ðæt he sciele monig god weorc ðæron wyrcan, & he ðencð mid innewearde mode ðæt he gierned for gilpe & for upahafenesse ðæs folgodes, smeageað ðeah & ðeahtigað on hiera modes rinde monig god weorc to wyrccanne, ac on ðam piðan bið oðer gehyded. Ac on utewardum his mode he liehð him selfum ymbe hine selfne bie ðæm godum weorcum; licet ðæt he lufige ðæt he ne lufað: ðisses middangeardes gilp he lufað, & he licett swelce he ðone onscunige, & him ondræde.³

As Benjamin Saltzman notes, this metaphor of the bark and pith of the mind is original in the Old English translation.⁴ The ‘pith’ is an apt metaphor for the deep, innermost part of the mind, which the ruler, in the midst of all other concerns, is at great risk of neglecting. The Old English *Pastoral Care* sets out to remind rulers that

as well, and though they have such aspirations from the motive of pride, busy themselves thinking that they will do great things. Hence it is that the motive hidden within is one thing, and what is taking place on the surface of their conscious mind is another. For the mind often lies to itself about itself, and makes believe that it loves the good work, when actually it does not, and that it does not wish for mundane glory, when, in fact, it does’ (Gregory I, *Règle Pastorale*, ed. B. Judic and F. Rommel, trans. C. Morel, 2 vols., Sources Chrétiennes 381–2 (Paris, 1992) I, 156–8, lines 1–10; translation from Gregory I, *Pastoral Care*, ed. and trans. H. Davis, Ancient Christian Writers 11 (Westminster, MD, 1950), 36).

³ *Pastoral Care*, ch. IX. *King Alfred’s West-Saxon Version of Gregory’s Pastoral Care*, ed. and trans. H. Sweet, Parts 1 and 2, EETS 45 and 50, os (London, 1871–2), 55, line 2–57, line 18. ‘But when he wishes to undertake honour and authority, he thinks on the covering of his mind that he will do many good works, and he thinks with inward mind that he yearns for glory and for exaltation of the office; though he considers and counsels in the bark of his mind to do many good works, in the pith something else is hid. But on the outside of his mind he lies to himself about himself concerning the good work; he feigns that he loves what he does not love; he loves the glory of this middle-earth, and he feigns as though he shuns that, and fears it.’ All translations from Old English are original, unless otherwise stated. For readings of this passage, see B. A. Saltzman, ‘The Mind, Perception and the Reflexivity of Forgetting in Alfred’s *Pastoral Care*’, *ASE* 42 (2013), 147–82, at 159–62; and K. O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Inside, Outside, Conduct and Judgment: King Alfred Reads the *Regula pastoralis*’, *Un tuo serto di fiori in man recando: Scritti in onore di Maria Amalia D’Aronco*, 2 vols., ed. S. Serafin and P. Lendinara (Udine, 2008) II, 333–45, at 341–3. A similar metaphor occurs in *De consolazione Philosophiae* and the Old English *Boethius*: see *De consolazione* 3p11, pp. 290–2, lines 62–8 and *Boethius* B34.269–79; for discussion of this metaphor, see Saltzman, ‘Mind, Perception’, pp. 162–5. All quotations and translations from *De consolazione* are taken from *Boethius: The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Lib. 74 (London, 1973). All quotations from the Old English *Boethius*, both prose and prosimetrical versions, are taken from *The Old English Boethius: an Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius’s De Consolazione Philosophiae*, ed. and trans. M. Godden and S. Irvine, with M. Griffith and R. Jayatilaka, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009) I; parenthetical references indicate the version of the text, chapter number and line number(s), with B referring to the B-text (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 180 (S.C. 2079), s. xi/xii), CP to a prose section from the C-text (London, British Library, Cotton Otho A. vi, fols. 1–129, s. x. med.) and CM to a metrical section from the C-text; CMP refers to the metrical preface. Editorial emendations and markers have been silently emended throughout.

⁴ Saltzman, ‘Mind, Perception’, p. 161.

they must constantly scrutinize not only their outward behaviour, but also their innermost selves, in order to ensure that what they do is pleasing to God. For example, a good ruler should be like those heavenly beasts who are ‘ymb eal utan mid eagam besett, & eac innan eageana full’ so that ‘hi mægen ðæm inncundan Deman on hire agnum inngeðonce lician’.⁵ The importance of monitoring the inner self is stressed in this Old English translation of Gregory’s work, long believed to represent King Alfred’s advice to his subordinates.⁶ In spite of recent objections to Alfred’s authorship of anything, similarities remain between the Old English *Pastoral Care* and the other texts of the so-called Alfredian corpus, including the Old English translations of Boethius’s *De consolazione Philosophiae*, Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, and the first fifty Psalms.⁷ The bark and pith analogy from the *Pastoral Care* serves as a reminder of the preoccupation with the mind that we encounter throughout the translations traditionally associated with Alfred.⁸ It cannot be said with any certainty that the poet of the metrical sections of the Old English *Boethius* knew the *Pastoral Care*; moreover, the morally-charged, Gregorian analogy of the bark and pith is quite different from the philosophy encountered in Boethius’s *De consolazione* and its Old English adaptations. However, what is clear is that, like the translator of the *Pastoral Care*, the poet of the *Metres of Boethius* is deeply concerned with the scrutiny of the innermost part of the self.

In Boethius’s *De consolazione*, Lady Philosophy teaches the character ‘Boethius’ that the inner mind has the ability to store a grain of profound truth.⁹ By remembering this truth, buried deep within the self, one has access to knowledge that transcends the mortal, bodily realm. ‘Boethius’ has, however, like *Boetius* or *Mod* (“mind”) in the Old English version, forgotten this truth: the outer self is unaware of the deep recesses hidden within it.¹⁰ While the Old English poet’s versification of the prose translation has traditionally been held in little regard,¹¹ in

⁵ *Pastoral Care*, ch. XXVIII. *King Alfred’s Version*, ed. and trans. Sweet, p. 195, lines 19–22. ‘Covered with eyes all over the outside, and also full of eyes within [so that] [...] they may please the internal Judge in their own inner thought’. Saltzman, ‘Mind, Perception’, p. 156.

⁶ P. Wormald, ‘Living with King Alfred’, *Haskins Soc. Jnl* 15 (2006 (for 2004)), 1–39, at 15, argues that the intended audience of the Old English *Pastoral Care* would have been made up of both secular rulers and bishops; for the argument that the translation was aimed only at bishops, see M. Godden, ‘Prologues and Epilogues in the Old English *Pastoral Care*, and Their Carolingian Models’, *JEGP* 110 (2011), 441–73, at 459–61; and M. Godden, ‘Alfredian Prose: Myth and Reality’, *Filologia Germanica* 5 (2013), 131–58, at 148–9.

⁷ Bately, ‘Alfred as Author and Translator’, pp. 125–8 and 130–6; Bately, ‘Lexical Evidence’, esp. pp. 94–5.

⁸ A. Faulkner, ‘The Mind in the Old English Prose Psalms’, *RES* 70 (2019), 597–617.

⁹ *De consolazione*, 3m11 (*Boethius*, ed. Rand *et al.*, p. 296).

¹⁰ K. Lenz, *Red and Frofer: Christian Poetics in the Old English Froferboc Meters*, Costerus ns 195 (Amsterdam, 2012), 76–8; *Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, II, 401–3.

¹¹ K. Sisam, ‘The Authorship of the Verse Translation of Boethius’s *Metra*’, in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 293–7, at 293 and 297; D. Donoghue, ‘Word Order

this article I will suggest that it is through, not in spite of, this versification process that the poet of the Old English *Metres of Boethius* produces a truly original model of the mind, in which introspection is foregrounded. As I will demonstrate, the poet draws not only on the Old English prose translation and the ultimate Latin source, but also the tradition of vernacular poetry in which he is working.¹²

BOETHIUS'S *DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIAE* AND
THE OLD ENGLISH VERSIONS

Boethius's *De consolatione Philosophiae*, a dialogue between a fictionalized version of 'Boethius' himself and Lady Philosophy, is prosimetrical in form, written in alternating prose and verse sections.¹³ Of the two versions of the Old English translation of *De consolatione*, one, known as the B-text (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 180), offers a wholly prose rendering, while the C-text (London, British Library, Cotton Otho A. vi) features versifications of most of the metres, interspersed among the prose sections.¹⁴ Despite the later date of Bodley 180,¹⁵ the entirely prose version is thought to precede the prosimetrical version,

and Poetic Style: Auxiliary and Verbal in the *Metres of Boethius*', *ASE* 15 (1986), 167–96, at 167–8; S. B. Greenfield and D. G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York, 1986), p. 245; and E. V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 234. On the other hand, Allan A. Metcalf defends the *Metres* against accusations that they are not original by arguing that they were never meant to be; instead, he suggests, they were intended as a dressing of portions of the prose text as verse which, he maintains, is successfully achieved (A. A. Metcalf, *Poetic Diction in the Old English Meters of Boethius*, *De Proprietatibus Litterarum*, Series Practica 50 (The Hague, 1973), 2–3). Moreover, Greenfield and Calder hold that 'at times, at least, they [*the Metres*] tighten the conception of the piece' (*New Critical History*, p. 245).

¹² I use masculine pronouns when referring to the *Metres*-poet to ease comprehension: however, it must be noted that it is entirely possible that the poet was female.

¹³ On the nature and purpose of the metrical sections, see G. O'Daly, *The Poetry of Boethius* (London, 1991); and J. Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford, 2003), p. 147.

¹⁴ See above, n. 3, for full bibliographical details of these manuscripts; see also H. Gneuss and M. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscript and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto, 2014), pp. 274–5 and 440, nos. 347 and 555. In all but one example (CM5, a versification of B6, which translates 1m7 in the Latin), the prose sections which should be versified but which are not lack an indicator in the prose text that *Wisdom* has begun to sing (*Alfred's Metres of Boethius*, ed. B. Griffiths (Pinner, 1991), p. 10; and Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, p. 234).

¹⁵ The B-text, Bodley 180, can be dated to the late eleventh or early twelfth century; the C-text, Cotton Otho A. vi, can be dated to the mid-tenth century (*Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, I, 12–13 and 22). Other attestations include Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 12 (J), which is Junius's copy of the B-text, with marginal variants from the prose sections of C, his copy of the verse of C and excerpts from the Latin *De consolatione*; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 86 (S.C. 5197), endleaf, also known as the Napier Fragment (N), which is, according to Godden and Irvine, 'a fragment of a single leaf, now lost'. Godden and Irvine observe that N is 'probably the earliest known copy of the text'; while Napier dated the fragment to the first half of the tenth century, Godden and Irvine offer evidence which could suggest a date between the ninth and

as is implied in the prose preface to the *Boethius*.¹⁶ While it has been widely recognized that the *Metres* are based on the Old English prose translation, rather than the Latin text,¹⁷ two important questions remain: firstly whether the *Metres*-poet was the same person as the prose author, and, secondly, if he was not, whether he had access to the Latin original of *De consolatio* or only the Old English translation.¹⁸ In any case, the adaptations made by the poet of the *Metres* suggest that, if he was in fact the original translator, he saw the versification process as an opportunity to give his earlier work new emphasis.

The relationship between the two versions has been the subject of recent debate. Erica Weaver has argued that the B- and C-texts should be understood as part of the *opus geminatum* tradition, in which prose and verse texts on the same

early tenth century, though Gneuss and Lapidge date it as late as the middle of the eleventh century (*Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, I, 34–5; and Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, p. 495, no. 643).

¹⁶ *Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, I, 44. Godden and Irvine date both versions of the translation to between c. 885 and the mid-tenth century (*ibid.* I, 8). The chronological priority of the prose is supported by examples where the prose text is much clearer than the verse, and the presence of prosaic syntactical structures and vocabulary in the poetry (*Alfred's Metres*, ed. B. Griffiths, pp. 9–10; and M. Griffith, 'The Composition of the *Metres*', *Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, I, 80–134, at 80). The prose preface, which alludes to the versification process, appears in the B-text, despite the fact that the text which follows is entirely prose. Junius 12 indicates that the C-text, prior to its fire-damage, would have contained both the prose and metrical prefaces (*Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, I, at 19). On the prose preface, which claims that King Alfred firstly translated *De consolatio* and then versified this prose translation, see further Godden, 'Did Alfred Write Anything?', p. 8; and N. G. Discenza, 'Alfred the Great and the Anonymous Prose Proem to the *Boethius*', *JEGP* 107 (2008), 57–76. On the possibility of the prose only being a preliminary stage for the prosimetrical version, see Sisam, 'Authorship', p. 294; however, M. Godden, 'Editing Old English and the Problem of Alfred's *Boethius*', *The Editing of Old English: Papers from the 1990 Manchester Conference*, ed. D. G. Scragg and P. E. Szarmach (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 163–77, at 167–8, has convincingly shown, based on the framing material in the B-text and the fact that Ælfric later made use of this text rather than the prosimetrical version, that it is unlikely that the entirely prose text was intended only as a preliminary stage.

¹⁷ J. W. Conlee, 'A Note on Verse Composition in the "Metres of Boethius"', *NM* 71 (1970), 576–85; *Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, I, 44.

¹⁸ B. Griffiths, *Alfred's Metres*, pp. 36–7, sees the poet and the prose author as one and the same, with the prosimetrical version serving as an opportunity for improvement, through consultation, or perhaps simply memory, of the Latin text, although he does observe that some of the changes 'take the verse further away from the Latin original'; see also D. Anlezark, 'Three Notes on the Old English *Meters of Boethius*', *N&Q* ns 51 (2004), 10–15. Lenz, *Red and Frofer*, pp. 12–13, argues that the *Metres* are at times closer to the Latin than the Old English prose version. M. Griffith, 'Composition of the *Metres*', p. 134, concludes that the *Metres*-poet was probably not the same person as the translator, although Godden and Irvine maintain that the evidence is inconclusive (*Old English Boethius*, I, 45). T. A. Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse* (Toronto, 2009), pp. 82–4, demonstrates that the poet's method, whatever his sources, was literate rather than oral.

subject complement one another.¹⁹ She suggests that Bede's two lives of Cuthbert, which make up an *opus geminatum*, can be seen as a model for the *Boethius*, arguing that Bede's preface to the prose life implies that the verse version is meant to be 'entertaining', compared with the 'more scholarly' prose version.²⁰ This division between serious scholarship and entertainment is analogous to the presentation of the prose and verse sections of the Old English *Boethius* in the metrical preface, which was once present in the Cotton manuscript, now preserved in Junius's transcript. Here, the *Metres* are presented as lighter and more engaging than the entirely prose translation, designed to catch the attention of the 'selflicne secg' (CMP.7).²¹

However, Susan Irvine has recently suggested that this reference to the 'self-regarding man' may only reflect the literary *topos* that poetry makes a refreshing counterpart to prose, rather than the reality of the intended audience.²² Irvine argues, moreover, that the *opus geminatum* form seems to have had an influence on the reception, rather than the composition, of the two versions: that is, that while the two versions may have been presented as a pair in later years, they were not envisaged as such by their creator(s).²³ The arguments advanced by Irvine invite a fresh look at the *Metres*. The claims of the metrical preface, that the poetry was designed to aid comprehension and prevent boredom, have somewhat clouded the judgement of modern readers and critics. Seeing the *Metres* in a new light, it is possible to observe their intellectual originality and independence from the prose source, especially in the poet's articulation of the relationship between the outer individual and the depths of their inner self.

INNAN AND INNE

It has long been established that the *Metres* show the influence of the Old English prose source. As Mark Griffith observes:

Some key singular features of the prosody of *Met* – proliferation of prosaic diction, the breaches of Kuhn's first law, the prominence of particles and proclitics and the consequent

¹⁹ E. Weaver, 'Hybrid Forms: Translating Boethius in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 45 (2017), 213–38; Weaver shows that the *opus geminatum* was far more common in early medieval England than the prosimetrum form.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

²¹ 'Self-regarding man'. On the translation of 'selflicne', see K. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Listening to the Scenes of Reading: King Alfred's Talking Prefaces', *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and its Consequences in honour of D. H. Green*, ed. M. Chinca and C. Young, Utrecht Stud. in Med. Literacy 12 (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 17–36, at 32–4.

²² S. Irvine, 'The Protean Form of the Old English *Boethius*', *The Legacy of Boethius in Medieval England: The Consolation and its Afterlives*, ed. A. J. McMullen and E. Weaver, Med. and Renaissance Texts and Stud. 525 (Tempe, AZ, 2018), 1–17, at 8–10.

²³ *Ibid.* pp. 15–17.

weakening of prosodic rules governing them, departures from the norms of precedence, loosening of the rules particular to light verses – betray the general influence, unique in the surviving corpus, of an OE prose original.²⁴

While the poet often omits the occasional word when versifying, especially adverbs and the conjunction *and*, he rarely omits whole clauses.²⁵ Indeed, he frequently amplifies the prose, adding not only individual words but whole clauses. Griffith notes that many of the poet's single-word additions are adverbs: most of these adverbs are very common, and largely otiose; nearly half occupy the first alliterating, metrically stressed position in the b-verse (the second half-line); many begin with vowels; and they generally modify 'verbs or participles in line-final position (which are taken or adapted from the prose)'.²⁶ Griffith concludes that this group of adverbs 'mainly comprises alliterative fillers deployed in a methodical fashion to convert a verb into a whole b-verse'.²⁷ Such adverbs are added, it seems, not only to pad out the b-verse, but also to provide alliteration where the existing element(s) of the b-verse, taken from the prose, do not alliterate with the material taken from the prose which falls into the a-verse.

The words *inne* and *innan* ('within', 'in', 'inside'), adverbs which can also be used as prepositions, would have offered the *Metres*-poet exactly the alliterative and metrical padding which Griffith describes.²⁸ Though some occurrences of *inne* could be dismissed as alliterative fillers, there are occasions where, though *inne* does fulfil a functional, alliterative role, its effect is not limited to the satisfaction of these metrical requirements. On a number of occasions, *inne* serves to highlight the emphatically interior location of the mind, as in the example from *Metre 5* below. In quotations from the *Metres*, bold text indicates noteworthy additions made during the versification process, and bold italicized text indicates noteworthy material which is present in the prose source.

Forðæm simle bið
se modsefa miclum gebunden
mid gedrefnesse, gif hine dreccean mot
þissa **yfla** hwæðer,²⁹ **innan** swencan;
forðæm þa twegeu tregan teoð tosomne
wið þæt mod foran mistes dwoleman,

²⁴ M. Griffith, 'Composition of the Metres', p. 133.

²⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 84–5.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 87.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 88.

²⁸ *Dictionary of Old English: A to I* online, ed. A. Cameron, A. Crandell Amos, A. diPaolo Healey *et al.* (Toronto, 2018), *s.v.* *inne* and *innan*.

²⁹ These two evils are excessive pride in prosperity and excessive despair in adversity.

þæt hit seo **ece** ne mot **innan** geondscinan
sunne for ðæm swertum mistum, ær ðæm hi geswiðrad weorðen.³⁰

In this metre, *Wisdom* (the Old English version of Lady Philosophy) warns *Boetius* of the dark mists which prevent the light of the ‘eternal sun’ from illuminating the mind within. Only with this interior illumination will *Mod* (‘mind’), as *Boetius* is sometimes known, be able to discover what it seeks. *Innan* features on two occasions in this passage, forming an envelope pattern.³¹ On the first occasion (41b), *innan* alliterates with *yfla*, a word taken directly from the prose, perhaps suggesting that *innan* was introduced in the b-verse to provide alliteration with *yfla*, as all vowels can alliterate with *y* in Old English poetry.³² The occurrence of *innan* in 41b accords exactly with Griffith’s observations about common adverbs added by the poet: it alliterates in the first position in the b-verse, begins with a vowel, and modifies the line-final verb *swencan*, which has been adapted from *ricsian* (B6.18) (‘govern’) in the prose.³³ Therefore it might be assumed that, here, *innan* was added simply to fill an alliterative gap and to convert the single verb *swencan* into a complete b-verse.

However, the addition of *innan*, which locates the error caused by the two evils of excessive pride and despair within the mind, amplifies the theme of interiority and establishes the inner self as a site of vigilant scrutiny. The image of the heavenly beasts ‘*innan eagna full*’ from the Old English *Pastoral Care* comes to mind here.³⁴ Moreover, the second occurrence of *innan* in this passage (44b) does not fulfil alliterative requirements in quite the same way, as it alliterates with *ece* in the a-verse, which is, like *innan*, additional. The addition of the second *innan* contributes to an elaborate envelope pattern, in which both b-verses (41 and 44) are made up of *innan* plus an infinitive, with the infinitive verb in each case governed by ‘mot’. The subject of *motan* (‘be permitted’) in the first instance is ‘either of these evils’; in the second, the ‘eternal sun’. As such, the envelope pattern neatly contrasts the two combatants: the evils which create the dark mist of confusion within the mind, and the eternal sun, which should illuminate the mind. The use of *innan* in this envelope pattern, while perhaps initially motivated by

³⁰ CM5.38b–45. ‘Therefore the mind is always greatly fettered with confusion, if either of these *evils* are permitted to torment it, afflict it **within**; for those two troubles together draw the mist of error in front of the mind, so that the **eternal** sun may not illuminate it **within**, because of the dark mists, until they are cleared.’

³¹ A. C. Bartlett, *The Larger Rhetorical Patterns in Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, Columbia Univ. Stud. in Eng. and Comparative Lit. 122 (New York, 1935), 9–29; on envelope patterns in the *Metres*, see p. 16.

³² See also CM25.19, in which *inne* likewise alliterates with vocabulary taken directly from the prose text.

³³ *Dreccan* (40b) has likewise been adapted from the verb *ricsian* in the prose source.

³⁴ ‘Full of eyes within’.

alliterative requirements, heightens the contrast between the forces of dark and light found in the prose, and specifically locates this struggle within the mind. This is not a conflict which takes place on the surface of the mind, but rather plays out in the hidden recesses of the inner self; this attention to introspection replaces the more general self-awareness advocated by the corresponding Old English prose chapter (B6).

Metre 16 likewise emphasizes the importance of monitoring one's inner self:

Se þe wille anwald agon, ðonne sceal he ærest tilian
þæt he his selfes **on sefan** age
anwald innan, þy læs he æfre sie
his unþeawum eall underðyded.³⁵

Lenz argues of both *Metre 25* and *Metre 16* that the 'stronger emphasis upon the mind than the individual in these meters indicates that the state of the mind influences the life of the individual'.³⁶ However, the pronouns in these opening lines of the metre resist straightforward interpretation. As *sefa* ('mind, heart') is a masculine noun, it is not clear where 'he' and 'his' belong: to the individual, or the mind. In one reading, the *sefa* is in danger of being subordinated to the vices of the individual; in the other, a wilful *sefa* endangers the individual. This blurring of agency is characteristic of the *Metres*-poet's ambiguous portrait of the mind, which appears as both a responsible arbiter of inner virtue and a site of interior moral disruption.

In any case, I would add to Lenz's observation that it is not just the state of the mind that is emphasized, but the innermost depths of the mind. While the poet may have decided to introduce *innan* because of its alliterative potential with *anwald*, which is present in the prose source (B29.79), the addition serves to develop the image of the mind as a physical space with (possibly concealed) depths.³⁷ The phrase *on sefan*, also additional in the verse, likewise contributes to this effect. Saltzman highlights the use of spatial markers in the bark-and-pith metaphor in the Old English *Pastoral Care*: 'on ðam oferbrædelse his modes'; 'on hiera modes rinde'; 'on ðam piðan'; 'on utewardum his mode' (emphasis added).

³⁵ CM16.1–4. 'He who wishes to have power must first strive to have *control* of himself **within, in his mind**, lest he/it ever be entirely subordinated to his/its vices.' *Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, II, 141 translates 'lest it [the mind] ever be wholly subjected to his vices'.

³⁶ Lenz, *Ræd and Frofer*, p. 92.

³⁷ It is worth noting that the word *ingeþanc* ('mind, intellect') does appear in a later part of the corresponding passage in the B-text (B29.87). This noun, with its *in-* prefix, may have contributed to the poet's increased emphasis on interiority in this metre.

He shows that the passage ‘focuses on the physical spaces within the mind’ and as such is able to create ‘a highly material map of the mind’.³⁸ I would argue that the use of the spatial markers *on* and *innan* in *Metre 16* produces a similar effect. While the poet deals elegantly with incorporealities elsewhere in his adaptation of Boethius’s *De consolations*,³⁹ here his preoccupation is with a material model of the mind, one which may be indebted to the psychology of vernacular poetry.

As Leslie Lockett and Malcolm Godden have shown, Old English poetry tends to depict the mind as a part of the body: it does not exist before the creation of the flesh, and it dies when the body dies; significantly, it is distinct from the soul.⁴⁰ For example, the poet of *The Seafarer* describes how the body will not be able to carry out its various operations after death: it will not be able to taste sweetness, nor feel pain, ‘ne hond onhreran ne mid hyge þencan’ (*The Seafarer* 96).⁴¹ The *hyge* (‘mind’), then, is analogous to those organs which experience taste and touch and, like the tongue and the skin, it does not survive death. According to Lockett, although the author of the prose *Boethius* was influenced by this vernacular distinction between mortal *mod* (‘mind’) and immortal *sawol* (‘soul’), the translation follows Boethius’s philosophy of the unitary soul: that is, that the mind and the soul are both part of the same incorporeal entity, and both live on after the death of the body.⁴² Unsurprisingly, the *Metres* show far greater indebtedness to the poetic tradition than the prose *Boethius*, yet the poet also maintains much of the philosophy of the ultimate Latin source. The mind of the *Metres* is one element of the transcendental, unitary soul and, at the same time, the flesh-bound *hyge* of vernacular poetry.

The *sefa* (‘mind, heart’) in *Metre 16*, surrounded by the spatial markers *on* and *innan* (the latter in a stressed, alliterating position), does not seem to belong to this incorporeal model of the unitary soul. It has more in common with the *mod* of vernacular poetry, which is corporeal, alienable from the transcendental soul, and often depicted as a container. The ‘mind-as-container’ motif, as it is termed by Britt Mize, is employed on several occasions in the *Metres*: for example, *wordbord* (CM6.1b) (‘store of words’); *breostcofa* (CM9.32b) (‘breast-chamber’); *gewitloca* (CM10.12b and

³⁸ ‘On the covering of his mind’; ‘in the bark of his mind’; ‘in the pith’; ‘on the outside of his mind’. Saltzman, ‘Mind, Perception’, p. 161.

³⁹ For example, *Metre 20*, a rendering of 3m9, which derives from Plato’s *Timaeus*; see especially the account of the threefold soul, which exists equally throughout the body, not just in one place (CM20.176–203).

⁴⁰ L. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (Toronto, 2011), pp. 33–43; M. Godden, ‘Anglo-Saxons on the Mind’, *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 271–98, at 289.

⁴¹ ‘Nor stir its hand nor think with its mind’. *The Exeter Book*, ed. G. P. Krapp, ASPR III (London, 1936), p. 146.

⁴² Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, pp. 316–25. For a slightly different interpretation, see Godden, ‘Anglo-Saxons on the Mind’, pp. 274–5.

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CM12.26b) ('intellect-locker'); *incofa* (CM22.18a) ('inner chamber'); *runcofa* (CM22.59a) ('secret chamber'); and *ferhðloca* (CM24.5a) ('heart-locker').⁴³ All of these compounds present the mind as a separate, enclosed space within the self. As in the *Pastoral Care*, where 'on ðam piðan bið oðer gehyded', this interior space has the potential to conceal knowledge, vices and desires from the outer self.⁴⁴

ON MODE AND ON BREOSTUM

The preposition *on*, then, serves to frame the mind or heart in spatial terms, as in the example from *Metre 16* (*on sefan*, CM16.2). This simple formula of *on* plus a word for the mind appears throughout Old English poetry, as a handful examples will demonstrate; in every case, the word for mind or heart also appears in the *Metres*, similarly modified by *on*.

Ða wearð folctoga forht on mode
(*Daniel* 724).⁴⁵

Beadohilde ne wæs hyre broþra deap
on sefan swa sar swa hyre sylfre þing
(*Deor* 8–9).⁴⁶

Ða ðær Iudas wæs
on modsefan miclum geblissod.⁴⁷
(*Elene* 874b–875)

hwæþere him on ferhþe grew
breosthord blodreow.⁴⁸
(*Beowulf* 1718b–1719a)

he nyste ræda nanne
on gewitlocan.⁴⁹
(*Judith* 68b–69a)

⁴³ B. Mize, 'The Representation of the Mind as an Enclosure in Old English Poetry', *ASE* 35 (2006), 57–90; and 'Manipulations of the Mind-as-Container Motif in *Beowulf*, *Homiletic Fragment II*, and Alfred's *Metrical Epilogue to the Pastoral Care*', *JEGP* 107 (2008), 25–56.

⁴⁴ 'In the pith something else is hid'.

⁴⁵ 'Then the leader of the people was afraid in his mind.' *The Junius Manuscript*, ed. G. P. Krapp, *ASPR* I (New York, 1931), p. 131.

⁴⁶ 'The death of her brothers was not so painful to Beadohild in her mind as her own situation.' *The Exeter Book*, ed. Krapp, p. 178.

⁴⁷ 'Then Judas was there greatly filled with bliss in his mind.' *The Vercelli Book*, ed. G. P. Krapp, *ASPR* II (New York, 1932), p. 90.

⁴⁸ 'Nevertheless, in his heart his mind [literally 'breast-hoard'] grew bloodthirsty.' *Beowulf and Judith*, ed. E. V. K. Dobbie, *ASPR* IV (London, 1954), p. 53.

⁴⁹ 'He did not know any intelligence in his mind [literally 'intellect-locker'].' *Beowulf and Judith*, ed. Dobbie, p. 101.

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Wearð me on hige leohte
utan and innan, siðþan ic þæs ofætēs onbat.⁵⁰
(*Genesis B* 676b–677)

The use of *on* ('in') in these examples creates what Mize calls 'subjectivizing moments', drawing us into the mind of the individual in question.⁵¹ The compound *genitloca* (literally 'intellect-locker') from *Judith* is an excellent illustration of the mind-as-container motif, with the mind imagined as a receptacle for the intellect. In the example from *Genesis B* the mind is understood to have an outer and inner part, just as in the bark-and-pith metaphor in the Old English *Pastoral Care*. Especially relevant for the *Metres*, with its emphasis on clear perception, is the fact that both parts of Eve's *hyge* ('mind'), the inner and the outer, can be illuminated.

Innovations made by the *Metres*-poet emphasize that it is this inner mind of the individual, apparently distinct from their outer, superficial self, which has the capacity to know true happiness, as in *Metre 12*:

Þu *meaht* eac *mycle* þy eð on *modsefan*
soða gesælða sweotolor gecnawan⁵²

In this example, the phrase *on modsefan* may have been added by the *Metres*-poet to alliterate with the words *meaht* and *mycle*, drawn from the B-text: 'And eac micle ði eð þu miht þa soðan gesælða gecnawan' (B23.12–13).⁵³ However, the addition of this phrase also serves to locate the very act of recognizing true happiness within the *modsefa*. The simple *on [mode]* formula (in which *mod* stands for any word for the mind or heart) is a shorthand for the mind-as-container motif, evoking an enclosure which can be kept separate and hidden from the self.

The *Metres*-poet's use of adverbs and prepositions such as *innan* and *on*, then, contributes to a material model of the mind which seems to have its roots in vernacular poetry. As the compound *breostbord* in the above example from *Beowulf* illustrates, however, Old English poets could go further than this in their spatialisation of the mind, often specifically locating the mind within the breast.⁵⁴ Using a

⁵⁰ 'I was lit up in my mind, outside and inside, after I tasted the fruit.' *The Junius Manuscript*, ed. Krapp, p. 131.

⁵¹ B. Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities: the Old English Poetics of Mentality* (Toronto, 2013), p. 6. See Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 55, on the use of prepositional phrases such as *on* in the 'localization of mental states in the heart or chest'.

⁵² CM12.22–3. 'You *can* also *much* the easier recognize true happiness more clearly *in your mind*.'

⁵³ 'And also you can much the easier recognize true happiness'.

⁵⁴ Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, pp. 54–7; Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', p. 290; E. Jager, 'Speech and the Chest in Old English Poetry: Orality or Pectorality?', *Speculum* 65 (1990), 845–59;

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variant of the *on [mode]* formula, *on breostum* ('in the breast'), the *Metres*-poet heightens the materiality of his model of the mind, adding an almost fleshly dimension. In *Metre 21*, *Wisdom* laments that treasures will not illuminate the eyes of the mind, enabling them to perceive true happiness:

ac hi swiðor get
monna gehwelces modes eagan
ablendað on breostum, þonne he hi on beorhtran gedon.⁵⁵

As in *Metre 5*, the inner self struggles against forces which would prevent it from seeing clearly. Here, though, interiority is given a specific spatial location through the additional phrase *on breostum*, which may have been included to alliterate with *ablendað* (see B34.200), although two alliterating elements in the a-verse are by no means essential. The effect of the phrase *on breostum* here is to locate the eyes of the mind, the very faculty which searches for transcendental truth, within the breast: a material space within the body.⁵⁶

A similar materializing effect can be identified in *Metre 19*, in which the recognition of true happiness is located not just in the possibly abstract space of the *mod* or *sefa* but, specifically, within the breast:

Ac ðæt is earmlicost ealra þinga
þæt þa dysegan sint on gedwolan wordene
efne swa **blinde** þæt hi **on breostum** ne magon
eaðe gecnawan hwær þa ecan good,
soða gesælða, sindon gehydde.⁵⁷

Again, the adverbial phrase *on breostum* could be dismissed as an alliterative filler, introduced to find alliteration for *blinde*. However, the location of both the eyes of the mind and the individual's ability to know *on breostum* lends a material dimension to *Mod's* journey towards enlightenment, situating the means of divine revelation

and E. Jager, 'The Word in the "Breost": Interiority and the Fall in *Genesis B*', *Neophilologus* 75 (1991), 279–90.

⁵⁵ CM21.25b–27. 'But they **blind** further still each man's mind's eyes **in his breast**, instead of making them brighter.'

⁵⁶ Lockett holds that 'only a small fraction of Anglo-Saxon authors used the hydraulic model as a conceptual metaphor; for the rest, cardiocentric psychology and the hydraulic model were literal representations of their conceptualization of the mind and its behaviours' (*Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, p. 111). That is to say, the phrase *on breostum* would have been largely understood to refer to the literal breast.

⁵⁷ CM19.28–32. 'But that is the most wretched of all things, that the foolish have become in error so very **blind** that they cannot easily know **in their breast** where the eternal good, true happiness, is hidden.' Cf. B32.81–3.

within the chest cavity. However, while the use of the formulas *on [mode]* and *on breostum* can be seen to draw upon the tradition of vernacular poetry, the mind of the *Metres* is not wholly in line with the container-like mind of Old English poetry. The container-minds of this poetic tradition are alienable from the self, lockable repositories of valuable knowledge and dangerous secrets. Though the *Metres*-poet is certainly in dialogue with this model of the mind, he also draws upon the concept of the unitary soul found in both *De consolacione* and his Old English prose source which, as Lockett has demonstrated, is at odds with the vernacular location of the mind within the breast.⁵⁸ The mind of the *Metres* belongs to this unified self, responsible for moral introspection and self-scrutiny, but at the same time it resembles the hidden container within that self, potentially disruptive and disobedient.

METRE 22: SEEKING WITHIN THE SELF

Metre 19 laments the foolishness of those who are so blind ‘on breostum’ that they do not know where true happiness is *gebydde* (‘hidden’). In *Metre 22*, *Boetius* learns that this true happiness can be found within the self. This metre draws not only upon the Platonic philosophy of *De consolacione* to express this truth, but also the mind-as-container motif from vernacular poetry, which, while fundamentally incompatible with the Platonic idea of anamnesis, nonetheless offers a fitting model for imagining the process of introspection and recollection as described by Boethius.

As in the corresponding Latin metre (Book 3, *Metre 11*), Plato is invoked in *Metre 22* to support the idea that a grain of truth is buried within every mind, though it may be concealed by useless cares. Everyone has the ability to access this grain, and thus remember the truth, if they seek within the self.⁵⁹ The vernacular model of the mind is inherently inconsistent with this Platonic philosophy: corporeal in nature, this *mod* does not pre-exist or survive the body after death, and as such would be an inadequate receptacle for the Platonic grain of transcendental truth. In spite of this, the vernacular mind-as-container motif offers a surprisingly apt framework for the exploration of Plato’s theory, as it implies a secret chamber within the body of which, like the pith of the bark-and-pith metaphor, the outer self may be quite ignorant. Mize argues that the mind-as-container motif, which appears on a number of occasions in *Metre 22*, is not necessary for ‘the sense of the verse adaptation’ in this metre; rather, he identifies a trend also found in *The Metrical Psalms*, whereby the motif appears ‘to have been added for aesthetic reasons by Anglo-Saxon writers drawn to a traditional way of representing the mind that they felt was appropriate to the stylized poetic

⁵⁸ Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, pp. 17–18 and 316–25.

⁵⁹ On the prose version of this metre, see Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, pp. 319–21.

register'.⁶⁰ While Mize suggests that the motif has only a decorative, superficial function in the *Metres*, I would argue that, in line with many of the poet's apparently functional additions, this vocabulary serves to articulate the complex model of the mind in the *Metres*, and to amplify the themes of interiority and introspection found in the prose source.

When describing the useless contents of the mind which prevent it from reaching the truth, the poet employs the word *incofa* as a replacement for the more neutral *mod* of the prose source (B35.9):

He ongit siððan
yfel and unnet eal þæt he hæfde
on his **incofan** *aror* lange⁶¹

The prefix *in*, which fulfils the alliterative requirements of the line, serves to highlight the significance of the inner part of the mind in the quest for the grain of truth, while the second element, *cofa*, implies that this inner mind is something which might be hidden, perhaps from the outer self. The sense of concealment evoked by the mind-as-container motif here is echoed elsewhere in this metre, when the poet employs the compound *runcofa* (literally, 'secret chamber') to describe the location of hidden *rihtwisnes* ('reason'):

Forðæm hit is riht spell þæt us reahte gio
ald uðwita, ure Platon.
He cwæð þætte æghwilc ungemyndig
rihtwisnesse hine hræðe sceolde
oft gewendan into sinum
modes gemynd; he mæg siððan
on his **runcofan** *rihtwisnesse*
findan **on ferhte** fæste gehydde
modes sines mæst and swiðost
mid gedræfnesse dogora gehwilce
and mid hefnesse his lichoman
and mid þæm **bisegum** þe **on breostum** styreð
mon **on mode** mæla gehwylce.⁶²

⁶⁰ Mize, 'Representation of the Mind', p. 62.

⁶¹ CM22.16b–18. 'Afterwards he will perceive all that he had in his **inner heart** [literally, 'inner chamber'] for a long time **before** to be evil and useless.'

⁶² CM22.53–65. 'For it is a true story which the old philosopher told us long ago, our Plato. He said that anyone unmindful of reason must quickly and often turn himself into his **mind's memory**; afterwards he can find **reason** in his **secret chamber, in his heart**, hid fast, most and most greatly by his mind's daily confusion and by the heaviness of his body and by the **troubles** which **in the breast** stir man **in his mind**, all the time.'

Lenz suggests that *runcofa*, which appears nowhere else in Old English literature, ‘transforms the concept of memory from a familiar force within the individual into an unknown and sacred presence’.⁶³ Far from a superficial or decorative poetic technique, this mind-as-container vocabulary amplifies the idea of the inner mind as a repository which can contain both sacred truth and evil or useless thoughts. Although the corresponding Old English prose chapter (B35) does not make use of the mind-as-container motif, Boethius’s Latin metre does describe the mind as a *thesaurus* (‘treasury’).⁶⁴ Whether or not the poet was aware of the parallel, the choice of *runcofa* in this metre recalls the image of the treasure store from the original Latin verse; however, the brief allusion to the mind as a treasury in the Latin becomes a central motif in the Old English adaptation of the verse, deepening the sense of the mind as a hidden and mysterious chamber within the self.

The additional phrases *on breostum* and *on mode* in this passage may have been selected in order to fill metrical or alliterative gaps, but their effect, presenting the mind in spatial, even fleshly terms, is striking nonetheless. Likewise, the phrase *modes genzynd* (‘mind’s memory’), in place of the *genzynd* (‘memory’) of the prose (B35.26), contributes to the idea that the mind has its own hidden repositories of memory which may have been forgotten by the outer self. The mind in this metre resembles the mind of vernacular poetry, a chamber separate and secret from the outer self, lodged within the breast. Nonetheless, in line with the philosophy of the Latin source, the mind is responsible for monitoring this concealed enclosure: ‘gesecege his mode’, *Wisdom* instructs, that it can find within itself all that it previously sought without (CM22.13–15).⁶⁵

Metre 22 reveals that the eyes of the mind must turn inward to discover forgotten truth, but as the *Metres* show, not every mind knows this. In *Metre 19*, *Wisdom* describes the way in which people are fooled into thinking that they have found truth:

þonne hi **habbað** þæt hiora **hige** seceð
wenað þonne swa gewitlease
ðæt hi þa soðan gesælða hæbben.⁶⁶

Here, the *hyge* (‘mind’) seeks out true happiness: but it is looking in the wrong place. The minds of the foolish do not understand that they need to be reflexive, to

⁶³ K. Lenz, ‘The Star-like Soul in the *metra* of the Old English *Boethius*’, *ASE* 39 (2010), 139–62, at 156.

⁶⁴ *De consolatione*, 3m11, line 6 (*Boethius*, ed. Rand *et al.*, p. 296).

⁶⁵ ‘Let him say to his mind’.

⁶⁶ CM19.45–7. ‘When they **have** what their **mind** seeks the foolish believe that they have true happiness.’

look within themselves.⁶⁷ This *hyge* resembles, rather, the mind or heart of *The Seafarer*:

Forþon nu min hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan,
min modsefa mid mereflode
ofer hwæles eþel hweorfeð wide,
eorþan sceatas, cymed eft to me
gifre ond grædig⁶⁸

Just as the bird-like mind of the seafarer, the mind of the foolish man seeks fulfilment in external things: as *Mod* learns, over the course of the Old English *Boethius*, true fulfilment can only be found when the mind looks not outwards, but inwards. It is no surprise, then, that the minds of the foolish come back, like the seafarer's, 'gifre ond grædig', unfulfilled.⁶⁹

The desire of the *hyge* to be free of the breast, to fly over the sea and the surface of the earth, is typical of the vernacular depiction of the mind or heart as wilful and passionate, requiring restraint.⁷⁰ While *Metre 16* does urge that worldly authority must be counted as meaningless without sufficient rule of the inner self, the *Metre*-poet tends not to present the mind as unruly, struggling to get free and in need of constant restraint, as it appears in much Old English elegiac verse, in particular. Two near-identical poetic maxims exemplify this vernacular tradition of restraining the unruly mind: 'Stieran mon sceal strongum mode' (*The Seafarer* 190a) and

⁶⁷ On reflexivity in the prose *Boethius*, see H. Fox, 'An Ethical History for the Self: the Liberius *Exemplum* in the Old English *Boethius*', *The Legacy of Boethius in Medieval England*, ed. McMullen and Weaver, pp. 71–88.

⁶⁸ *The Seafarer* 58–62a. 'For now my mind journeys out of my breast [literally, 'breast-locker']; my mind journeys far, with the sea's flood, over the whale's dwelling, the surfaces of the earth, comes back to me, eager and greedy.' *The Exeter Book*, ed. Krapp, p. 145. In his discussion of these lines, Matto highlights the strangeness of the speaking subject identifying not with the 'suddenly mobile spirit', but with the body which this spirit urges on; the subject's identification with the physical body, rather than the 'detachable spirit', moreover, comes at the point in the poem where the subject turns to the overt 'Christian denunciation of the life of the flesh'. However, as Matto goes on to observe, the part of the speaker that flies across the sea is not the 'transcendent' *sawol*, but rather the 'nontranscendent inner-mind', the *modsefa* (M. Matto, 'True Confessions: *The Seafarer* and Technologies of *Sylf*', *JEGP* 103 (2004), 156–79, at 170–1).

⁶⁹ 'Eager and greedy'. This same collocation, *gifre ond grædig*, appears in *Soul and Body II* (69a), describing the *molcnyrmas* (67a) ('earth worms') which devour the dead body (*The Exeter Book*, ed. Krapp, p. 176); while it is to be assumed that the *modsefa* of *The Seafarer* experiences a spiritual, rather than literal, greediness, it is nonetheless striking that the *modsefa* experiences a desire analogous, at least in part, to the very material corpse worms. I am grateful to Helen Gittos for pointing this out to me in a session at Leeds International Medieval Congress where I presented an early version of this paper.

⁷⁰ Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', pp. 287–8.

‘Styran sceal mon strongum mode’ (*Maxims I* 50a).⁷¹ Here, the mind is presented as an independent entity which must be governed by some other part of the self. The lines from *Metre 22*, ‘mid þæm bise gum þe on breostum styreð / mon on mode mæla gehwylce’ (CM22.64–5), echo these gnomic statements aurally, though the similar-sounding verbs *stieran/styran* and *styrian* have quite different meanings, ‘steer, restrain’ and ‘stir’, respectively.⁷² While the proverb advocates steering or restraining the wilful mind, *Metre 22* makes the rather unsettling observation that troubles stir the mind from within. Thomas Bredehoft has argued that the *Metres*-poet plundered Old English poetry in his versification of the prose source, so it is certainly possible that the poet is drawing on a memory of this maxim here.⁷³

Regardless of whether the poet knew *The Seafarer* or *Maxims I*, it is clear that these lines serve quite a different purpose from the universalizing statement found in those two poems. For the *Metres*-poet, care of the inner self is not about steering the wayward mind in the right direction; rather the mind, as one part of the unitary soul, is responsible for examining its own inner depths, in order to clear away the troubles which prevent the individual from perceiving hidden truth and reason. Therefore, the *Metres*-poet is at once in contact with the vernacular tradition, and departing from it: while he locates the container-like mind within the breast, this mind is not the wilful *hyge* of vernacular poetry, but rather one component of the unitary soul.

As outlined above, the poet’s depiction of the inner mind as a container, or contained within the breast, serves to complement the theory of recollection found in the *Metres*, which is at its most prominent in *Metre 22*. The mind-as-container model allows the poet to present the mind as buried deep within the chest cavity, or as a container with its own hidden depths. The adverbs and prepositions *inne*, *innan* and *on* all contribute to this image of the mind-as-container, with the grain of truth buried deep within. In *Metre 25*, for example, *Wisdom* describes the effect of immoderate pleasures on proud kings:

Ponne hi *gebolgene* weorðað, him wyrð **on breostum inne**
beswungen sefa on hraðre mid ðæm swiðan *welme*
*hatheortnesse*⁷⁴

⁷¹ ‘One must restrain a strong mind’. *The Exeter Book*, ed. Krapp, pp. 146 and 158. See Godden, ‘Anglo-Saxons on the Mind’, p. 288.

⁷² ‘By the troubles which in the breast stir man in his mind, all the time’. While it can be difficult to distinguish between these two verbs, it should be noted that *stieran* takes either a dative or genitive object, while *styrian*, when transitive, takes an accusative object. As ‘mon’ (CM22.65a) is in the accusative, the verb in this line must be *styrian* (‘stir’).

⁷³ Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse*, pp. 86–99.

⁷⁴ CM25.45–7a. ‘When they [pride and conflict] are *swollen*, his mind is *scourged in the heart*, *within the breast*, with the great *surge of hot-heartedness*.’

This excellent example of what Lockett terms the hydraulic model of the mind is also found in the prose translation: ‘and þonne hi weorðað gebolgen þonne wyrð þæt mod beswungen mid þam welme þære hatheortnesse’ (B37.19–20).⁷⁵ However, while the prose features only one word for the mind, *mod*, the metre includes three separate terms for the mind or something which contains it: the *sefa* (‘mind’) is in the *breþer* (‘heart, breast’) and both, it seems, are within the *breost* (‘breast’). Michael Matto observes that the word *breþer* ‘fairly unambiguously refers to the physical holding place of the mind or soul – that is, the chest cavity’.⁷⁶ The *sefa*, then, is buried within two physical containers, firstly the *breþer*, and then the *breost*. Following not long after *Metre 22*, this image of the mind deep within the breast, while ultimately drawn from the tradition of vernacular poetry, in fact supports the Platonic concept of the mind found in *De consolatione*, in which the grain of truth lies buried in forgotten depths.

CONCLUSION: THE MEMORY OF WISDOM

As this article has demonstrated, words and phrases in the *Metres* which might be written off as alliterative or metrical fillers can in fact be shown to develop the imagery and ideas found in *De consolatione* and the Old English prose translation. The increased focus on interiority and the inner mind is just one area where the poet exploits the necessities of the versification process in order to amplify the themes of the prose, or at times subtly shift the direction of the argument, and it is to be hoped that greater attention will be paid to the skill and artistry of the *Metres*-poet in other areas, even when the material he introduces seems to have been motivated by the functional requirements of alliteration or metre. One intriguing example of the *Metres*-poet’s thoughtful adaptation of the prose source can be found in *Metre 7*, in which *Wisdom* teaches *Mod* that one must build the house of wisdom on solid ground:

Ac se ðe ecan agan wille
soðan gesælda, he sceal swiðe fion
ðisse worulde wlite, wyrce him siððan
his modes hus, þær he mæge findan
eaðmetta stan unigmet fæstne,
grundweal gearone; se togliðan ne þearf,
þeah hit wegge wind woruldearfoda
oððe ymbhogena ormete ren,
forþæm on þære dene drihten selfa

⁷⁵ ‘And when they are swollen then the mind is scourged with the surge of hot-heartedness’. On the hydraulic model in Old English prose, see Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, pp. 87–108; on this particular example, see pp. 103–4.

⁷⁶ Matto, ‘True Confessions’, p. 170.

þara eadmetta eardfæst wunigað,
þær se wisdom a wunað on gemyndum.⁷⁷

The conclusion to the parallel section in B12 reads: ‘forþam þe Crist eardað on þære dene eadmodnesse and on þam gemynde wisdomes’ (B12.16–18).⁷⁸ The version in the B-text is arguably ambiguous: what does it mean for Christ to live in ‘the memory of wisdom’? *Metre 7* makes far greater sense, especially when viewed from the point of view of the Platonic *Metre 22*; in fact, it could even be said that this early metre actually anticipates *Metre 22*, with its reference to wisdom dwelling within the memory, in the same place as God. In *Metre 7* wisdom becomes a counterpart to humility: the philosophical concept of anamnesis, discovering forgotten wisdom within one’s memory, is given a Christian hue, in accord with the increased reference to Christianity in the prose translation.⁷⁹ The *Metres*-poet, then, does more than mechanically churn out metrically adequate versions of the appropriate sections of the prose *Boethius*. Rather, the *Metres* offer an ambitious discourse on the relationship between the outer self and the inner depths of the mind.

⁷⁷ CM7.29–39. ‘But he who wishes to possess the eternal, true blessings, he must entirely eschew this world’s beauty, make for himself then his mind’s house where he can find the stone of humility, excessively firm, a ready foundation; it will not need to collapse though the wind of worldly troubles or the excessive rain of anxieties should shake it, for the Lord himself dwells steadfast in the valley of that humility, where wisdom lives forever in memories.’

⁷⁸ ‘For Christ dwells in the valley of humility and in the memory of wisdom’. There is no parallel for either version in *De consolatio* 2m4, the corresponding Latin metre (*Boethius*, ed. Rand *et al.*, p. 198).

⁷⁹ *Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, I, 66–8.